

**Cross-Cultural Analysis of Principals' Leadership in
Elementary Schools:
Case Studies of Government Funded Schools in Abu Dhabi**

تحليل بين الثقافات لإدارة مدراء المدارس الابتدائية: دراسة حالات من مدارس
أبوظبي الممولة حكومياً

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH

The thesis explores, through an interpretive framework, school leadership practices in Abu Dhabi Emirate and the embedded school leadership model. The Abu Dhabi School Model is derived from the US and is currently being implemented as a new model of school leadership that includes a cross-cultural dimension. This new approach is based on the assumption that the international literature does not adequately capture the cross-cultural domain and cultural factors that influence leadership practices in Abu Dhabi schools. Four theoretical models are used to explore leadership practices in the UAE: Burns's transforming/transactional leadership theory (1978), Klann's Good Leadership Model (2007), Branine's Arab Organisation Model (2011) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) Cross-Cultural Model.

The methodology adopted is a qualitative hermeneutic approach designed to capture the authentic, subjective meaning of leadership to the participants. Three sources of data were used in understanding the nature of leadership practices in Abu Dhabi schools, interviews with teachers, head teachers, vice principals, principals and cluster managers, school document analysis and material culture observations. Several themes are identified as a result of this study that influence leadership practices: cultural influences, the importance of culture building, cross-cultural influences, leadership style/direction and policy implications. Based on these findings an Emirati model of principal leadership has been developed that includes factors specific to the UAE culture. Further qualitative and quantitative research is recommended to investigate these exploratory findings, which offer a unique cross-cultural perspective as a basis for understanding leadership in UAE schools.

ABSTRACT IN ARABIC

تستكشف هذه الدراسة ، عبر إطار تفسيري، ممارسات القيادة المدرسية في إمارة أبوظبي و نموذج القيادة المتضمن في نموذج مدارس أبوظبي (المستمد من الولايات المتحدة) و المطبق حالياً في المدارس الحكومية عبر الثقافات المختلفة الموجودة في المدارس . بني هذا التوجه الجديد على فرضية أن مراجعة الأدبيات العالمية لا تعكس و بشكل دقيق تأثير العوامل الثقافية و تأثير إختلاف الثقافات على القيادة المدرسية في مدارس أبوظبي. لقد تم إختيار أربعة نظريات لاستكشاف القيادة المدرسية في أبوظبي: نظرية بيرن (1978) للقيادة التحويلية/المباشرة ، نظرية كلان (2007) لنموذج القيادة الجيدة ، نموذج برانين (2011) للمؤسسات الإسلامية و نموذج ترومبينار و هامبدن-تيرنير (2012) لإختلاف الثقافات.

تَبَنَّتْ آلية البحث إطار تفسيري نوعي صمم لعكس التجارب و المعنى الحقيقي للقيادة المدرسية للمشاركين في البحث. و تم الإعتماد على ثلاث أنواع من المصادر لفهم طبيعة القيادة الإدارية في المدارس : المقابلات (مع المدراء و نواب المدراء والمدارس و رؤساء الأقسام و رئيس المجموعات) ، تحليل الوثائق و ملاحظة الثقافة و التراث في المدرسة.

نتيجة لهذه الدراسة تم تحديد عوامل مختلفة تؤثر على القيادة المدرسية : تأثير الثقافة، أهمية بناء العلاقات في المدرسة، تأثير الثقافات المختلفة ، تأثير توجه أو نموذج القيادة و تأثير السياسات على المدارس. بناءً على هذه الدراسة تم تصميم نموذج إماراتي للقيادة المدرسية يتضمن عوامل مميزة لثقافة دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. يوصى باتباع هذه الدراسة بدراسة موسعة كمية و نوعية للتحقق من نتائج هذه الدراسة الاستكشافية و التي توفر بُعد جديد و مميز لفهم القيادة المدرسية في دولة الإمارات مع وجود الثقافات المختلفة في الدولة.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my wonderful parents Mohammad Ragheb and Chafiqqa for inspiring me and encouraging me to follow this path and be where I am today. Without your love, inspiration and care I would never have been here.

To my amazing husband Hisham Ali Jaghel and my precious children Leen and Hadi for being patient with me and enduring my time at home away from home to complete my work.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Leadership in schools has been a major research topic in education for a number of decades, predominantly in Western countries, and only more recently in other parts of the world, like Hong Kong (e.g. Leung, 2014; Wong, 2010), the African states (e.g. Bush, Kiggundu and Moorosi, 2011; Christie, 2010), and Malaysia (e.g., Chhokar, Brodbeck and Hose, 2013; Pisapia, et al., 2009). Much of this new research has focused on finding more effective styles of school leadership such as distributed leadership (e.g., Fitzsimons, 2011; Gosling, Bolden, and Petrov, 2009), effective cross-cultural leadership (e.g., Aycan, Kanungo and Medonca, 2014; Branine, 2011; Dimmock and Walker, 2000; Leithwood and Duke 1998), authentic leadership and its positive effects on schools' culture (e.g., Cameron, 2013; Hames, 2007), and transformational leadership and positive effects on teacher's satisfaction (e.g., Avolio and Yammarino, 2013).

Many definitions of what constitutes good educational leadership have been presented within different theoretical and contextual frameworks. Definitions usually begin with leadership in general, where the common agreement is that it entails an intentional influence that is exerted by an individual over another, or group over other groups or individuals with the aim of structuring the relationships and activities within the group. The concepts of leadership often differ especially with regard to who exerts the influence, the purpose of the activity of influence and its intended outcomes. Characteristically, educational leadership takes the form of formal organisational positions within the school. Thus, discussion about educational or school leadership predominantly refers to the school principal, head teacher, the deputies and assistant principals and head teachers,

departmental heads, and heads of year (e.g., Chrispeels, Castillo, and Brown, 2000; Evers and Lakomski, 1996, Lakomski, Eacott and Evers, 2016; Hallinger, 2003 and Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2008).

However, Frost and Walker (2007) and House, Wright and Aditya (1997) argue that leadership is defined differently in different contexts. Therefore, there is a trend towards including cross-cultural dimensions when examining leadership (Javidan et al., 2006). Additionally, in recent years, reforms in many school systems have prompted a search for suitable school leadership styles that are capable of implementing reform programmes, as seen in the US (e.g., Bowles, 2014; Echevarria, Deborah and Kristin, 2006) and the UK (e.g., Brent, 2009; Datnow et al., 2003).

In the United Arab Emirates, the growth and globalization over a relatively short period of time has created a unique cultural context that has affected all aspects of lives in this growing nation including the educational system (Godwin, 2006). With the aim of reforming the UAE and place it as a leading prestigious country, the government-has initiated reform strategies with a focus on substantially changing the educational system (Davidson, 2005; Godwin, 2006).

To respond to the government initiatives in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the Abu Dhabi Educational Council (ADEC) introduced the New School Model approach (NSM) in 2009 to cycle one students (aged six to eleven years); the aim of which is ‘to support the learning of all students and improve their learning experience’ (ADEC, 2013, p. 22). Since then, the role of the school principal has been redefined. Where it was previously expected from the principal to manage the school on day-to-day basis (ADEC, 2013) it is now expected from the principal to be the ‘leading professional’

(ADEC, 2013, p. 19) in the school as he or she provides leadership and direction, gathers all stakeholders around the school's shared visions, and guarantees that it is managed to meet its aims and targets of the United Arab Emirates in general and ADEC's vision and mission in specific. However, leading people in general is a complex process as it is affected by many human factors (Kotter, 2007). Educational leadership during reform is a much more complicated process as it requires leaders to lead a change that others may not be familiar with, or may even resist, all while staying focused on driving the change while empowering all stakeholders towards a shared mission and vision (Goldring et al., 2008). According to ADEC's policy, the principal, with the continuous support of the senior leadership team, should be the driving force of change at a school.

To be able to study educational leadership in the UAE, it is important to take into account the unique background of the country and examine the policy agenda that currently drives educational change in the UAE.

Background of educational reforms in the UAE:

What is currently now known as the United Arab Emirates was formerly under British influence as Trucial States. The British government provided limited funds to develop these Trucial States (Dickson, 2012). At that time there were very limited schools and schooling systems. According to Godwin (2006), there were only about 20 schools that provided primary education for a few male students. After the Federation in 1971 the number of these schools increased to 74 schools. However, secondary and high school education were still underdeveloped. The rapid change in the

country and the discovery of oil provided the country with sudden enormous wealth. It provided the Sheikhs (rulers) with the resources needed to quickly develop its infrastructure and modernize the country at a rapid pace (Dickson, 2012). The need to invest in people's welfare was early recognised by the founder of the UAE Federation Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan. His vision was focused on building human capital through investing in education:

The real asset of any advanced nation is its people, especially the educated ones, and the prosperity and success of the people are measured by the standard of their education. (in United Arab Emirates Yearbook, 2003, p.30)

Wealth is not money. Wealth lies in men. This is where true power lies, the power we value. This is what has convinced us to direct all our resources to building the individual, and to using the wealth which God has provided us in the service of the nation (in United Arab Emirates Yearbook, 2003, p.45)

Since the federation in 1971, there have been significant changes in the educational system. It is currently divided into two sectors, private and public. The public sector provides free education for all Emirati Nationals while the private sector provides education primarily for expatriates with a minority of Emirati students (Macpherson, Kachelhoffer and El Nemr, 2007) although the numbers of Emirati students have been increasing steadily over the last few years. It consists of four tiers: levels that cover 14 years of education. Kindergarten (for children aged four to five years), primary education (ages six to eleven years), intermediate education (age 12-14 years) and secondary education (ages 15-17 years) (Shihab, 2001).

Yet, the educational system in the UAE is relatively new. With only 45 years of overall experience, the educational system has failed to prepare students to enter college at national and international levels (Provasnik, et al, 2012). Thus, the educational reform was highlighted as a national priority in the 2021 UAE vision and mission to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to study in a well-established school whether it is private or a government school (NQA, 2013). The reform focuses on several pillars: explicit explanation of policy and policy statements; a measure of school performance against international standards; setting a strategic plan to reform the educational system; sufficiently equipped schools with adequate financial and necessary human resources; and a reform of the management system (Litz, 2011). The restructuring of the policy was geared towards focusing on social development as well as academic achievements of students to prepare them to lead while preserving their national identity and culture. The goal of school performance measures is to prepare students for success against national and international standards. To make that possible the Ministry of Education initiated a ten-year strategic plan to restructure the curriculum and pedagogy as well as learning outcomes. To reform school management the Ministry of Education focused on empowering regional support centers while empowering leadership capacities at the school level (Stephenson, Dada and Harold, 2012; Stringer and Hourani, 2016).

UAE vision 2021:

The UAE 2021 vision is an ambitious initiative launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum under the patronage of his highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Sultan Al Nahyan and

the rulers of the Emirates to mark the golden jubilee of the Emirates' union at the closing of a Cabinet meeting in 2010. The aim is to extend the vision of late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan in investing in human capital and allowing the UAE to claim a leading role in the Middle East and internationally. The vision summary statement touches on six main pillars: a cohesive society and preserved identity, safe public and fair judiciary, competitive knowledge economy, first-rate education system, world-class healthcare and sustainable environment and well-developed infrastructure. Each of these is measured against a set of identified key performance indicators to map the progress that is made towards the desired outcomes. For example, by the year 2021 it is expected that the average scores of TIMSS (the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) for the UAE to be among the top 15 countries around the world. Moreover, the upper secondary graduation rate must be at 98%. Additionally, the enrollment rate in preschools (private and public) must be at 95%. Also, the average PISA (the Programme for International Student Assessment) scores should rank the UAE among the top 20 countries. Furthermore, the percentage of students mastering Arabic skills as measured by National Tests must be at 90%. Additionally, the percentage of highly effective teachers and effective school leadership must be at 100% for both public and private schools. Finally, the enrollment rate in foundation year programs in higher education must be at 0%. Each of these key performance indicators is measured on an annual basis to calculate the progress that the country is achieving towards the desired outcomes. In response to this initiative, the Ministry of Education and the educational councils that govern the educational systems in the Emirates have set an agenda to reform educational and pedagogical teaching approaches to achieve the desired outcomes.

Abu Dhabi Policy Agenda 2007-2008:

The Abu Dhabi Policy Agenda sets a clear pathway to drive the country's welfare and development by focusing on six main pillars. Providing a better health service system, high quality education, a more systematic approach towards legalizing labour conditions, providing a better civil service preserving local culture and heritage and controlling food distribution to ensure safety for all. The vision for enhancing educational services is to 'create a foundation for global leadership' through ensuring that the educational system matches international standards. The policy agenda set objectives based on the vision of his highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan who considered education to be the pillar to enable Abu Dhabi to reach excellence nationally and internationally. The main aim of this reform is to create 'a high quality, comprehensive system of education that applies world-class standards and expertise to improve educational outcomes' (p. 28).

The policy references two research studies by the Ministry of Education and Youth conducted in 2001 and 2005 which identifies the opportunities for growth in the Abu Dhabi Educational system based on comparisons between the current situation of the educational system of Abu Dhabi and two main countries, Singapore and Japan, regarding teacher's educational qualifications, teacher's pre-service training, length of the school year, dropout and failure rate and teacher's annual pay. The strategy that was set in the policy agenda focuses on three main elements: improving educational standards, enhancing teacher's professionalism and establishing a performance-based culture that focuses on the final output rather than the input of the educational system. The policy

also emphasises the importance of building leadership capacity within schools to be able to run their day-to-day operations without the need to be managed centrally by the governing body which can lead to informed decision-making regarding students' achievements. The policy also stresses the importance of including cultural awareness among students through the integration of cultural studies that allows for a deeper appreciation of UAE heritage and culture. The Abu Dhabi policy agenda sets a clear path with a promise to revise the agenda in the light of continuous measurement against the milestones. However, it does not clearly identify the performance indicators that the milestones are measured against as the Dubai 2021 vision and mission. Moreover, there has been no follow-up or updates on this policy in light of the government's performance. The policy agenda also announced that the educational system in Abu Dhabi will be closely monitored by the Abu Dhabi Educational Council.

Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030:

The Abu Dhabi Economic vision was published in 2008 in response to the Abu Dhabi Policy Agenda 2007-2008. The aim of this document is to create the long-term road map to boost Abu Dhabi economic growth. In this document there are nine pillars that were highlighted to ensure that the prosperous objectives, three of which relate directly to educational systems in Abu Dhabi: a sustainable knowledge-based economy; premium education, healthcare and infrastructure assets; and maintaining Abu Dhabi's values, culture and heritage. This document identifies one of the key current threats to the Abu Dhabi economic growth to be the mismatch between the requirements of the labour market and the educational foundations of young Emiratis. In order to fill these gaps,

the need to reform educational systems was highlighted as a major prerequisite to ensure the success of the government efforts to reach its goals. The need for informed decision-making through rigorous research was also emphasized. The aim of the educational reform is to ensure that graduates possess the necessary skills to lead the country's economic growth. The Abu Dhabi Education Council was identified as the agency charged with the responsibility to lead the reform initiative to ensure that the needed pedagogical changes are achieved.

In response to the Abu Dhabi Policy Agenda 2007-2008 and the Abu Dhabi Economic vision 2030, The Abu Dhabi Educational Council (ADEC) introduced the New School Model approach (NSM) in DATE, renamed the Abu Dhabi School Model (ADSM) in 2009 to Cycle One students (aged six to eleven years); the aim of which is 'to support the learning of all students and improve their learning experience' (ADEC, 2013, p. 22).

However, educational leadership during reform is a complicated process as it requires leaders to lead changes that others may not be familiar with, or may even resist (Goldring et al., 2008) ; it also includes a number of values and dynamics that cannot be easily quantitative measured but require instead an exploration to identify positive patterns that leads to successful leadership practices (English, 2011). Principals are also required to navigate through reform initiative remaining focused on driving the change while empowering all stakeholders towards a shared mission and vision.

There have been a number of studies conducted internationally to investigate the role of the principal in transforming schools while meeting visions and missions of schools (covered in detail

in Chapter Two). Yet, very little research has been conducted to examine successful leadership practices in the United Arab Emirates with the exception of few studies in the Gulf (e.g., Abdulla and Al-Homoud, 2001; Hvidt, 2011) and in the United Arab Emirates (e.g., Al-Taneiji and Mcleod, 2008; Hokal and Shaw, 1999; Pech, 2009; Thorne, 2011). Additionally, with globalization and the different models of organisational structures that are imported to the UAE, it is challenging to identify how educators view ‘successful leadership practices’. Without locally based research we will not be able to address our specific needs during the current reform initiative to meet the vision and the mission of the United Arab Emirates.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the thesis will be to explore, through an interpretive framework using a hermeneutic approach, school leadership practices in Abu Dhabi and the embedded school leadership model in the Abu Dhabi School Model (from the US) that is currently being implemented in the Emirate by focussing on participants’ conceptions and understandings of leadership in schools (see Van Manen, 2016). It is aimed at designing a school leadership model that includes a cross-cultural dimension. Since the environment in Abu Dhabi government schools is highly multicultural, as well as relatively new and in development as part of UAE institution building that has been going on for a number of years, the principal research question is: What kind of school principal leadership model is going to work well in AD schools under the reforms? The study aims to examine principals’ leadership styles based on Burns’s transforming leadership theory and to explore how principals lead in a multicultural context in an aim to identify a model of cross-cultural

transformational leadership appropriate to UAE schools. The model proposed for elementary school leadership may be a modified version of the one that is in the Abu Dhabi School Model.

This thesis will follow hermeneutic approach to understand the lived experience of the participants based on the work of Gadamer (Given, 2008; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The method, will therefore, be interpretive in nature (Van Manen, 2016). It will seek to understand social reality by going beyond the meaning in order to understand and explain the participant's experience on a micro- level. It will follow Gadamer's (2008) proposed path in exploring the role of language and human conversation to tackle the significance of human understanding. Hermeneutics as an activity is the effort to understand verbal or written communication. It aims to understand the language, traditions and culture of participants (Fairfield, 2012). It aims to interpret the lived experiences, culture and traditions that shape the perspective of the participants. It is achieved through the fusion of horizons (Van Manen, 2016) when the researcher integrates what is not familiar into a familiar context. The hermeneutic approach values the power of language. It recognizes that language is not only a tool that we use to communicate. Words, symbols and concepts are the very medium in which our thoughts take shape. Hermeneutic phenomenology does not seek to solve a problem or measure to determine 'effectiveness' (Gadamer, 1992), rather it seeks to understand the phenomena in question. Therefore, it does not use surveys and questionnaires or statistical procedures. It targets the meaning construction of the participants (Van Manen, 2016). This research approach encourages attentiveness to details and provides the researcher with insights to the lived experience of the participants.

There are a number of objectives that will be followed in exploring this topic:

1. Examine the Abu Dhabi School Model in relation to existing UAE National and Emirate vision statements and the policies related to the goals for education. Additionally, analysis of the roles of those leading the organizations involved will be examined, including the Ministry of Education and ADEC to determine whether they need modification for the UAE.
2. Examine the Abu Dhabi School Model for the kind of school leadership model that is embedded in it and determine how culturally appropriate it is, and whether it requires modification.
3. Collect information from elementary school principals on their understanding of their leadership roles as they practice them, how they understand the leadership model that exists in the Abu Dhabi School Model and related policy documents, and how this may affect their professional practice. Furthermore, the cross-cultural leadership issues that arise in the documents or in professional practice will be examined.
4. Collect information from school heads of faculty and teachers about the Abu Dhabi School Model leadership requirements including the following: how they understand it, what limitations they may see, what benefits it might bring, and any cross-cultural issues that may arise in the documents and in school principal leadership practices.
5. Collect information from the secondary literature on how Arab and Emirati culture and Islamic values are informing school leadership and identify the conceptions and understandings of leadership especially where cross-cultural differences exist and where issues have arisen.

6. Collect information about the school sites through material culture observations that demonstrate the styles of leadership activity and school culture, focusing on cross-cultural content, and the degree to which it is consistent with the Abu Dhabi School Model.

The importance of the first two objectives is to explore the change of the principal's role in the Abu Dhabi School Model and how it aligns with the vision and the mission statements of the United Arab Emirates. The importance of the third and fourth objectives is to gather information from principals and heads of faculty, who work very closely with the principal, about the principal's leadership practices and their understanding of meaningful school leadership, as well as any cross-cultural issues that might come as a result of document analysis and reviewing policy transfer modifications.

The importance of the fifth and the sixth objectives is to examine the unique nature of Emirati Arab culture and the Islamic values from a number of sources to further understand the cultural elements that shape school leadership and assess to what extent the culture is embedded in the work place.

Significance of the Study

This study aims to explore how principals and teachers understand school leadership practices in a cross-cultural context. Although many studies have been conducted internationally to examine principal's leadership practices in a cross-cultural context, there is a gap in the literature on school leadership that is pertinent to the Gulf countries and the UAE in particular (Abdalla and Al-Homoud, 2001; Al-Jaber, 1996 ; Macpherson, Kachelhoffer and El Nemr, 2007).

Moreover, there is not yet much literature on school leadership in the UAE, in Abu Dhabi, and very little on leadership under the reform with the Abu Dhabi School Model (see Abdalla and Al-Homoud, 2001). This is also why the study has to be exploratory because there is little data and it is not clear what is there – which Creswell (2013), Glesne (2011), Merriam (2009), Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue are the conditions under which exploratory research needs to be done.

Similarly, there is little on policy transfer literature involving modifications and adaptations of school leadership models for the region (see Aydarova, 2013; Budhwar and Mellahi, 2007; Godwin, 2006). The thesis will aim to contribute to these bodies of literature by reporting on people's understanding and practice of school leadership in the UAE, and by proposing a model for cross-cultural leadership that can be modified and used in a similar cultural context.

This thesis will contribute to the existing literature on leadership, educational leadership, leadership in UAE, and cross-cultural management.

Structure of Thesis

Following the Introduction, this thesis is organised into the five following chapters. The second chapter will present the theoretical framework of this study discussing Burns's (1978) transforming/transactional leadership model and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2000, 2012) cross-cultural model. It will then review the literature identifying the international, regional, and local key authors and studies relevant to this project in the fields of leadership, organisational

literature, educational leadership, policy studies and background to the United Arab Emirates education. The third chapter will discuss the methodology of the research study including: site and subject selection, the data collecting methods of interviews, focus groups, observation and document analysis, as well as ethical considerations and limitations of the study. The fourth chapter will present the findings from national document analysis, school observation data, school document analysis and participants interview data. Chapter Five will discuss the emergent themes in relation to the literature review conducted in this research study. Finally, chapter six will provide the conclusion and implications of this thesis and will suggest some further research opportunities to build on the findings of this thesis.

Chapter Two: Educational Leadership

This section discusses the relevant fields of literature for the study that will be examined in the thesis. This literature review is designed in six sections. Section one will discuss the theoretical framework of the research study. Section two will discuss the hermeneutic tradition and its significance for this thesis. Section three will discuss general leadership theories including educational leadership. Section four will discuss organizational theories and research studies including acculturation and cross-culture organization studies. Section five will discuss policy studies and theories. Section six will provide an overview of the educational system in the UAE and discuss some challenges that face the educational system.

Theoretical Framework

Given the complex nature of the topic and the importance of cultural elements and the multicultural dimension of the people working in the educational system in the UAE, one theory alone cannot accommodate the factors that need to be investigated. For this reason, a combination of theories has been selected that complement each other: Burns's (1978) transactional/transforming model of leadership along with the Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach's (1999) adaptation of transforming for the school setting, Klann's (2007) elements of good leadership, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2000, 2012) cross-cultural model for organisations and leadership, and Branine's (2011) work on leadership in Arab and Islamic countries.

Table 1 presents the elements of the theoretical framework and designates the primary research questions to be investigated in this thesis.

Table 1: Elements of the Theoretical Framework

	Burns's transformational leadership (1978) with Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999)	Cross-cultural/Multicultural Trompenaars and Hampdon Turner's (2000,2012)	Branine (2011) Islamic Leadership in Arabic and Islamic countries	Good leadership elements Klann (2007)
Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanctions and rewards. • Manager who seek compliance. • Transforming: • Elevating effect. Raises self-esteem. • Focus on end value. Modelling high expectations • Culture building Vision-shared goals • Individualized support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universalism/Particularism • Individualism/Collectivism • Neutral/Emotional • Specific/Diffuse • Achievement/Ascription • Internal/External • Past/Future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intention (Neyah) • Forever mindful about God (Taqwa) • Patience (Saber) • Consultation (Shura) • Kindness (Ihsan) • Sincerity (Ekhlas) • Truthfulness (Sidq) • Justice (Adel) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustworthy • Positive • Dependable • Care about people • Communicative • Team oriented • Visionary
Focus question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What elements of transforming leadership do these principals have? - To what extent it is evident in the school's culture? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what degree do teachers, principals and vice principal understand the vision and the mission of the school and ADEC? - Do they all see transforming leaders from the same angle? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent are these core values embedded/not embedded in the leaders' and followers' practices? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do followers in the school settings report these elements?

Burns' theory is chosen because it is cross-cultural and has been demonstrated by the work of Conger and Kanungo (1994) to apply internationally. Burns (1978) and Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) have been selected because their model involves not only the more managerial

transactional form of leadership, but includes the transformational, which is necessary for change and reform when building human capacity and cultural capital. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner along with Branine are chosen for the following reasons:

- 1- Their models relate very closely to the issues of developing good school leadership for the New School Model.
- 2- They complement Burns's model well.
- 3- Their frameworks work well to design data collection from
- 4- They have been more successful in transcending cultural and national differences through many studies (see Earley and Peterson, 2004; Ergeneli, Gohar and Temirbekova, 2007; Shahin and Wright, 2004; Thorne and Saunders, 2002). Also, Branine has been added to bring in important Islamic and Middle Eastern values that are highly relevant to the UAE.

Each of the theoretical frameworks will be presented in the following paragraphs with a detailed account of their importance and how they complement one another to assist in understanding successful leadership practices in a multi-cultural environment.

Burns's (1978) and Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach's (1999) Leadership Models

According to Goertzen, Nollette and Nollette (2011), one of the leadership theories that caused a significant shift in the debates and ideas on leadership is credited to Burns (1978). In his book 'Leadership', Burns argues that for years the literature of leadership and followership has been separated. He further argues that to be able to form a holistic view of leadership 'the study of

leadership must be lifted out of the anecdotal and the eulogistic and placed squarely in the structure and processes of human development and political action' (p, 29, 1978). The importance of Burns's theory comes from the fact that it is developed through contextualizing leadership in several countries and historical periods and cultures, and taking a complex socio-cultural, psychological and political perspective making it both more comprehensive than other theories and transferable across cultures and contexts (Humphreys and Einstein, 2003). Burns provides an overview of the contributions of various humanities and social science disciplines involved: psychology (the interpersonal influence between leader and followership), political science (power, conflict, organizational structure), history (concrete conditions), anthropology (cultural difference), language/linguistics (creation of a vision/ideology development, motivational influence), economics (the restriction or distribution of resources), sociology (group dynamics), education (developmental aspects of leader and followership, role of educational institutions in creating problems or solving them), philosophy (value analysis and morality). Below is a visual representation of the elements from which Burns draws his model

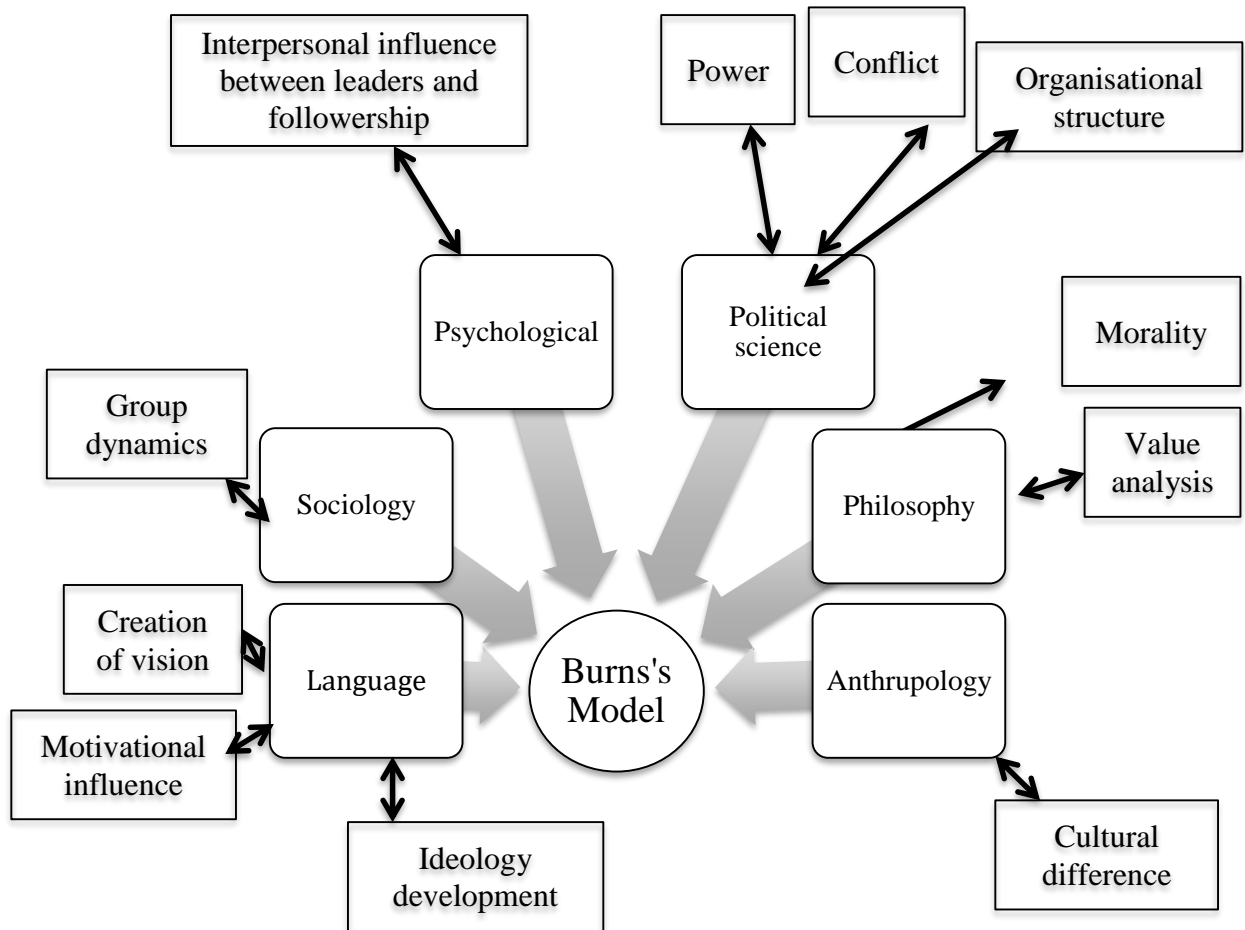


Figure 1. Aspects of Burns's Leadership Theory

(Adapted from Burns, 1978, pp. 1-5)

Burns's model, consisting of a distinction between a transforming and a transactional leader, defines transforming leadership as when 'one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality' (p. 83). Burns argues that transforming leadership has an 'elevating effect' on both leaders and followers, transforming leaders lead with transcendent values focusing on ends over means. Their values

include liberty, justice, equality and collective wellbeing for all whom they lead. (Burns, 1978; Gill, 2011). Goertzen, Nollette and Nollette (2011) explain that Burns's theory has a moral dimension because followers and leaders share 'motives, values and goals' (p. 84). This part of Burns's theory focuses on the social aspect of leadership (Clements and Washbush, 1999; Jones, 2012). Bass (1985) and Burns (1978) argue that transforming leaders act upon deeply held morals and values that are non-negotiable; consequently, they are able to unite followers' goals and beliefs that will lead to higher levels of commitment. Goethals, Sorenson and Burns (2004) argue that it is important for those who study educational leadership to ground their work in an international study referring specifically to Burns (1978), as one of the most accepted models in the academic literature as his model can be applied to many different cultures.

In contrast, transactional leaders initiate contact with followers, but do not engage with them, relying on a system of rewards and sanctions. A transactional leader, according to Burns, will only pay attention to followers' needs as they relate to assisting them with meeting their goals. In addition, Burns explains that transactional leaders lead with modal values focusing on means over ends. These values include honesty, responsibilities, fairness and keeping promises' (Burns, 1978, p. 120; Gill, 2011, p. 86). Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) explain that transactional leaders are managers who seek compliance from their followers to get tasks accomplished and seek to work on the current situation without considering the future needs of the organisation or the followers. Furthermore, they explain that transactional leaders will either be active, 'anticipat[ing] problems and rectify[ing] the follower's actions to remain on task' or passive, 'wait[ing] until the followers fail to meet goals and react[ing] on that' (p. 359).

Bass (1985), Burns (1978) and Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) explain that transactional and transforming leadership categories are not mutually exclusive, meaning, that a leader could be transforming and still use transactional styles at times. This is an important point for school leaders since they have many transactional responsibilities and requirements to meet but this does not prevent them from also cultivating a transforming side to their leadership.

Carr and Lipp (2006), Day (2000) and Zimmerli, Richter and Holzinger (2007) argue that Burns's transforming leadership is the most significant theory since it does not focus on the leader's effectiveness only, rather it adds a moral dimension to the leadership theory which describes how transforming leaders gather their followers and 'transcend' their strengths in a manner that encourages them to intrinsically perform to achieve the leader's vision. Burns's transforming theory is a multidimensional model that covers traits, situations, cultural and historical contexts, moral dimensions, and psychology of leadership, which are integrated into a relational framework.

Burns's theory inspired many studies in the field of management. Based on Burns's ideas, Bass and Avolio (1989) developed a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure the effectiveness of transformational qualities that leaders possess. However, their study eliminated the moral dimension that is very important in Burns's original theory (see Ciulla, 1995) and is important in this study given its cultural setting. Internationally, Burns's transforming-transactional theory inspired the work of many studies on leaders' ethics, such as Padilla, Hogan and Kiaser (2009), Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), Erickson, Shaw and Agabe (2007), and Simola, Batling and Turner (2010). Many books were written to examine the ethical role of a leader based on Burns's theory such as Price, (2006), Fryer (2013) and Ladkin (2010). In the Middle East, Burns's

transforming-transactional theory has been used to examine ethics and team motivation in Turkey (e.g., Erkultu, 2008; Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009; Ozaralli, 2003). Similarly, Burns's theory inspired several studies in Egypt about motivation, shared vision, and performance (e.g., Kabasakal, and Bodur, 2002; Mostafa, 2005; Sheikh, Newman and Al Azzeh, 2013).

In the Gulf region there appears to be a lack of research studies that examine applications of transforming-transactional leadership apart from a few examples (e.g., Alsalami, Behery and Abdullah, 2014; Bealer and Bhanugopan, 2014; Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji, 2012; Elkaleh and Samier, 2010; Shaw, Badri and Hukul, 1995).

Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) provided an adaptation of the transforming leadership of Burns's theory intended specifically for educational settings, presented in Figure 2 below.

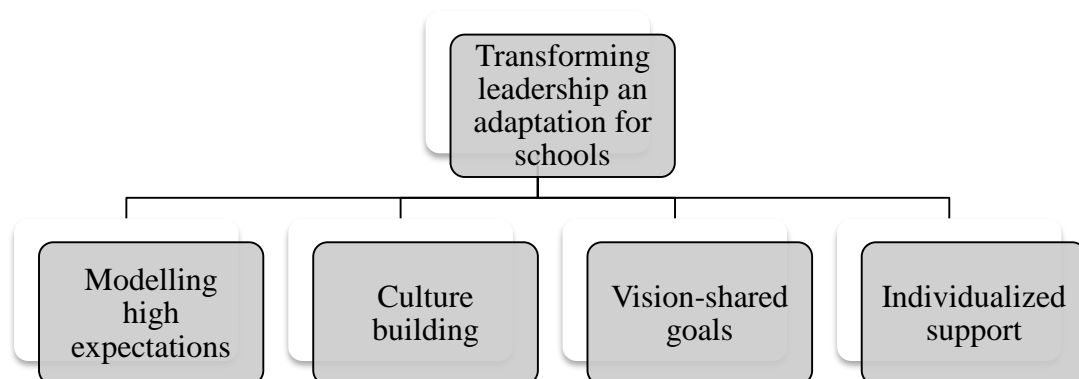


Figure 2. Transforming leadership model in educational settings

(Adapted from Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999, p. 42)

According to Hallinger (2003), this model of leadership has its advantages as it eliminates the notion that leadership is centralized in one figure - leadership might be shared, coming from teachers as well as principals. Moreover, this model implies an understanding of the needs of followers by integrating them into an understanding of leadership and its roles and linking organisational development to followers' needs.

The following paragraph will introduce Trompenaars- Hampden-Turner cross cultural model and will explain how it complements Burns's theory for the purposes of this thesis.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's Cross-cultural Model (2012)

Leadership style is highly affected by culture (Jack and Westwood, 2009), the large literature for which is discussed in the literature review below.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2000, 2012) provided a model that will be used as an additional framework for examining culture, which can complement Burns well since Burns emphasized societal context in his theory. It consists of seven elements, identified in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Seven Dimensions of cultural differences

	LH DIMENSION	RH DIMENSION	QUESTIONS ON CULTURE DIMENSIONS
1	Universalism	Particularism	What is more important? Rules or relationships?
2	Individualism	Collectivism	Do we function as individuals or groups?

3	Specific	Diffuse	Involvement, commitment and context. How separate do we keep our private and work lives?
4	Neutral	Emotional	Do we display emotions?
5	Achievement	Ascription	Do we have to prove ourselves to receive status, or is it given to us?
6	Past	Future	Do we do things one at a time or several things all at once?
7	Internal	External	Strategy and planning. Do we control our environment or are we controlled by it?

(Adapted from Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 50)

This model of multi-cultural dimensions places cultures along seven continua on a seven traits table that represents the interactions of human behaviour in the culture of the workplace. The importance of this model for this thesis over other cultural models (such as Hofstede, 1980) is that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2000) argue that when cultures come together in an organisation the leader must reconcile differences and think about ways where factors represented in the continua support each other for the success of multi-cultural management. For example, how can teams (collectivism) consist of creative individuals (individualism) (Trompenaar and Hampden-Turner, 2000)? This model will guide the researcher as it allows for the examination of principal leadership practices in order to enhance the functioning of the school with teachers and other staff.

The next Paragraph will explore Branine's model and will explain how it complements Burns's theory in capturing the moral diminution. This will be an added value for this research study as it targets Arab Muslim principals, vice principals, heads of faculties and teachers.

Branine's Arab Organisation Model (2011)

Branine's (2011) additional information on Arab cultures for organisations, leadership, and the importance of considering traditional tribal leadership as well as a mixture of Western colonial administration, will be included in this thesis since it could possibly affect the leadership style of principals in the UAE. Branine's (2011) work is important because he has examined the cultural features of Arab countries in the context of the cross-cultural literature. He argues that Islamic values should regulate human interactions in an Islamic culture. He identifies eight core values that come from the *Qur'an* (word of God) and *Hadith* (word of Prophet Mohammed), such as patience (*Saber*), trust (*Amana*), consultation (*Shura*), justice (*Adel*), truthfulness (*Sidiq*), sincerity and keeping promises (*Ekhlas*), kindness and care (*Ihsan*), forever mindful of Almighty God (*Tqaqwa*), and intentions (*Niya*) (p. 459). He also argues that a management and leadership study in the Arab world is highly influenced by culture and politics.

The following paragraph will explain Klann's good leadership model and will identify common good leadership practices based on that model. This will be an additional value to this thesis's framework as it aims to explore good leadership and it will not focus on the leadership effectiveness.

Good leadership Klann (2007)

'Good leadership' is a term that has long been used in the leadership field in business organisational settings, as well as educational settings. For example, Doh and Stumpf (2005) argue that good

leadership has a social and moral value. Also, Drouillard and Kleiner (1996) attribute 'good leadership' to moral foundation that is demonstrated by: integrity, honesty, fairness and humanity. Adair (1998), Kellerman (2012), Smith and Peterson (1988) and Drouillard and Kleiner (1996) argue that good leaders are communicative, integrate, have genuine interest in others, are team oriented, visionary and idea oriented, decisive and competent. In educational settings, well-established researchers have argued that good leadership is attributed to 'courage, caring, optimism, self-controlling and communicating' (see Bush, 2003; Gunter, 2004; Hodgkinson, 1991; Klann, 2007; Smyth, 1989). A model of good leadership must meet the vision of the country, the complex multicultural character of its society (Godwin, 2006) and school system, and must be able to continue building the system. This means that it requires people with vision and strong values; furthermore, a transforming dimension is necessary (Burns, 1978).

A combination of all four theories will be used in this thesis since this study will explore leadership styles of both Western and Emirati principals in Abu Dhabi government schools. Moreover, it is important to consider the different cultural factors that affect the leadership style/direction in schools since schools in the UAE are highly multi-cultural organisations; hence, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) seven traits considering Burns's transforming/transactional leadership theory will be used to exam how principals use these traits to motivate and overcome differences among followers in the school setting to gather them around shared vision and direction. Additionally, since school settings are in an Arab Muslim country, it is important to consider Arab cultural factors which relates very closely to the moral dimension of Burns's model of justice, liberty and equity. Good leadership model will add to the framework by identifying key characteristics (being trustworthy, dependable,

team-oriented and visionary) that contributes to the positive transforming and moral dimension of Burns's theory. The theoretical framework is presented in Figure 3 below.

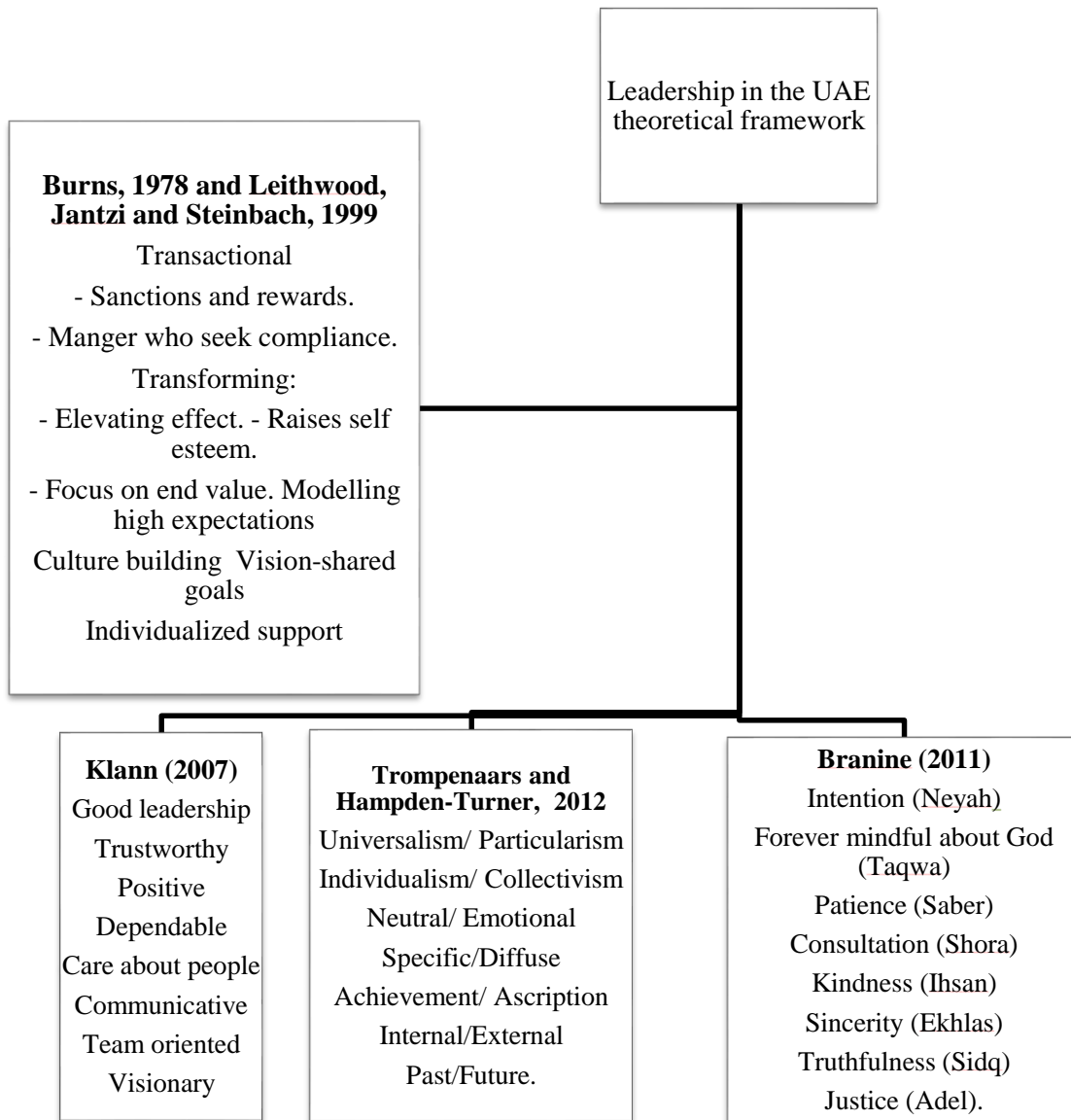


Figure 3. Leadership Across-Cultures Arab and Islamic elements

(Adapted from Burns, 1978; Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999; Klann, 2007; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012; Branine, 2011).

Hermeneutic Case Studies in Educational Leadership

Many authors promote and recommend the use of hermeneutics when studying leadership (e.g., Klenke, 2008), particularly in research using biographical data (Shamir, Dayan-Horesh and Adler, 2005), or in multicultural settings where interviews are used (e.g., Mäkilouko, 2004). It is also important when investigating authenticity in leadership (e.g., Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005) and has become a more commonly used constructivist approach, in contrast to rationalist and positivist research methods (Smith and Blase, 1991). Hermeneutics is now an established methodology applied in policy studies, particularly in public administration (e.g. Dryzek, 1982; Fischer, 1992; Fischer and Miller, 2006; Kay, 2009; Wagenaar, 2015; White, 1999) and educational administration (Ball et al., 2011; Corson, 1986; Fien, 2002; Maxcy, 1994; Rawolle and Lingard, 2008).

How to educate leaders is one of the oldest topics in history, going back to the times of the great philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, and more recently, Locke and others. The underlying theme for these leaders is the importance and role of introspection and self-reflection as resources for continued growth and development. In current times, there is an unprecedented amount of interest in the topic of leadership, more so educational leadership considering the prevalent belief that leadership is important to the future, and when approached in the wrong way can have profoundly negative implications for societies in general that could be difficult to undo in the future (Northouse, 2012). Despite the proliferation of theories of educational leadership in recent times, there have been growing concerns about their applicability with researchers, such as Pfeffer (2015), insisting that leadership in education as well as the discipline of leadership as a whole has more or

less failed. This is a state of affairs in the field despite large sums of money allocated and spent on leadership publications, training, speeches, conferences and other activities.

In the light of this dilemma, Grint (2007) argues that successful leadership is not built solely on good education or a set of skills that a leader might/might not have, rather it requires continuous 'reflective learning' like the hermeneutic approach of understanding. Similar studies were conducted to investigate the importance of hermeneutic approach to the learning of educational leaders (see Giles and Morrison, 2010; Halverson, 2004 and Kesson and Henderson, 2010).

In recent times there has been a renewal of interest in the central role of ethics to the training of educators. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) studied the types of challenges faced by school-level leaders, the nature of these dilemmas as well as their implications for leader training, preparation and application in real educational settings. The findings revealed that school-level leaders were mostly guided by expectations and policy guidelines of the school district, but often experienced cognitive dissonance between the policies and their guiding ethical values and beliefs developed in their early youth and life experiences. In particular, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) argues for the need to obtain a balance between praxis and hermeneutics, conscience and compliance, as well as theory and practice. This implies that educational leaders should have the capacity to demonstrate professional as well as moral accountability, desiring the best for their learners while upholding the ethics and standards of their profession. This calls for making critical choices between competing principles of practice and standards. The research utilizes hermeneutics as a method of truth seeking and developing robust approaches to understanding the world that facilitates meaningful transformations (see

Arredondo and Bauch, 2006; Dymrna and Shaw, 2010 and Moss, 2005).

Leadership

This section will first discuss general leadership studies and various theories and models that have contributed to an understanding of leadership in a variety of contexts and sectors. It will then examine leadership in Arab and Islamic contexts, followed by educational leadership, including in the Arabian Gulf, and review studies that examine a variety of participants in the educational system and organisations (e.g., school principals, teachers, government officials).

1. General Leadership Studies

Leadership is one of the most complex social concepts that has been extensively researched (Goethals, Sorenson and Burns, 2004; Goldring et al., 2008; Leithwood, 2008). Van Seters and Field (1990) argue that leadership was the focus of many organisational and psychological research studies over the last century. Numerous perspectives resulted in the emergence of many paradigms and theories of leadership, although the origins of leadership study can be found in the ancient world, beginning with the *Epic of Gilgamesh* in Mesopotamia (Hodgson, 1974), and carried through classical studies (e.g., Plato and Aristotle), through the classical Islamic period (e.g., Ibn Khaldun), and up through the early modern period (e.g., Hegel, 2004; 2010). The earliest modern comprehensive theory, upon which much contemporary leadership research still rests, is that of

Max Weber in *Economy and Society* (1968) where he developed a set of authority typologies, one of which is charismatic upon which many leadership theories rest (even indirectly).

The field of systematic empirical research on leadership gained intensity only in the 1930s (Mann, 1959 ; Stogdill, 1948), despite the fact that leadership as a phenomenon has been accounted for since the earliest days of human civilization. Greek heroes, Egyptian rulers, and patriarchs in religious history have the single commonality of leadership. As much as there are many definitions and theoretical expositions about what leadership entails, a universal premise in most of them is that leadership represents an effort to influence others and the associated power to generate conformity (Chemers, 2014).

Since the 1930s, research and theoretical explanations have grown cumulatively and a substantial body of knowledge exists about leadership and leadership studies. Much of this research revolves around the subject of the leader and immediate followers, while the most recent work has strived since Hofstede (2003) and Schein (2010) to espouse the types of culture and organisations within which leaders function, and the relationships between leaders with peers, superiors, and external stakeholders as well as the outcomes and implications of the leader's organisation. In addition, House, Wright and Aditya (1997) have pointed out that much of the extant body of knowledge on leadership and leadership studies reflects a distinctly Western orientation until the more recent cross-cultural movement in leadership.

House Wright and Aditya, (1997) report that it is also 'individualistic rather than collectivistic, stressing follower responsibilities rather than rights, assuming hedonism rather than commitment

to duty or altruistic motivation, assuming centrality of work and democratic value orientation, and emphasizing assumptions of rationality rather than asceticism, religion or superstition' (p. 410). In this section a variety of leadership, topics and orientations are explored that form a background that assists with analysing context-specific characteristics of leadership.

Day and Antonakis (2012) present an historical overview that discusses these paradigms and categorizes them into nine major themes based on the perspective used. The early paradigms in the twentieth century, which were mostly developed in the US, otherwise known as the 'personality era', focused on the traits that the leader has and suggested that leaders are born with specific characteristics and traits that prepared him/her for the role of leadership. Major theories of this era are the 'Great Man' (Carlyle, 1907) and 'Traits' (Bowden, 1926 and Kohs and Irle, 1920) theories (see Avolio, 2007; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991; Northouse, 2012). A broad array of studies has focused on the characteristics of leadership primarily concerned with identifying the specific traits that a particular typology of leadership is bound to espouse (House, 1977; House, Spangler and Woyke, 1991; Zaccaro, 2012 and Yukl, 2012). The trait-based research on leadership seeks to distinguish characteristics and points to leadership qualities where a lack of these is presumed to be an indication of a non-leader. Still, as Matthews and Crow (2003) observed, leaders are sometimes informal such as experts in their respective fields or specialists whose influence is based on their knowledge, skills and expertise in a particular subject, with groups of learners or persons who have acquired some social influence among peers and are able to influence the attitudes and perspectives of others.

The next phase focused on behavioural styles and how leaders treat their followers, two of which are the 'Managerial Grid Model' (Blake and Mouton, 1964) and 'Theory X and Theory Y' (Bass and Bass, 2009; McGregor, 1960; Northouse, 2012). The next, 'contingency,' era included the situation as a moderated variable in leadership studies (source); findings demonstrated that leadership style is determined by the relationship between the leader and the follower, as well as the task and the position of power. A common example of contingency approach is 'path-goal theory' (see Schriesheim et al., 2006; Schriesheim and Neider, 1996).

The following 'relational school of leadership era,' (Dansereau, Graen and Haga, 1975), which bears a stronger relationship to this study, argues that the effectiveness of leadership is determined by the quality of the relationship between the leader and his/her followers. The major theory of this period is Graen, Novak, and Sommerkamp's (1982), 'leader-member exchange' (LMX) that argues that good leaders are those with a high LMX factor where the followers trust their leaders, in contrast to those with a low LMX factor where the relationship between leader and follower is based on fulfilling obligations and duties (see Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Wang, et al., 2005). The 'skeptical era' (Meindl and Ehrlich, 1987 and Pfeffer, 1977) followed where researchers argued that there is no leadership theory and that successful outcomes are based on many environmental elements that are by and large outside of the leader's control (see Busse, 2014; Kouzes and Posner, 2006; Murphy, 2002).

The following phase occurred mostly in the 1980s and 1990s, and viewed leadership through a new organisational culture lens beginning with Shien (1985), arguing that leadership is not related to one individual; rather, it is a function of the culture of the whole organisation. The 'Culture era'

proposed a shift from the leader and outcome achievements to the quality of the work through 'values' (see Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, 2014; Bennis and Nanus, 2004; Moran, Harris and Moran, 2011). The next phase focused on the leader's intellectual qualities otherwise known as the 'information-processing era' introduced by (Lord, Foti and De Vader, 1984) where good leadership qualities emerged from the intellectual qualities that the leader possesses, such as problem solving and conflict resolution that affect the leader's behaviour and promotes effective leadership practices (see Lord, 1985; Lord and Maher, 2002).

The following phase proposed a paradigm shift in leadership studies; Day and Antonkis (2012) have referred to it as the 'New Leadership era' and others like Van Steres and Field (1990) referred to it as the 'transformational era'. This paradigm presents effective leadership as an intrinsic motivation that the leader promotes in followers' interactions, which then unifies them towards achieving the 'greater good'. Major theories of this era are transformational leadership and charismatic leadership (see Avolio, et al., 2008; Bass and Riggio, 2006; Conger and Kanungo, 1994; Judge and Piccolo, 2004).

Figure 4 below represents the major paradigms in mostly the English-speaking world (except for the most recent discussed below) in the evolution of leadership research in the previous century highlighting the development of the theories over time.

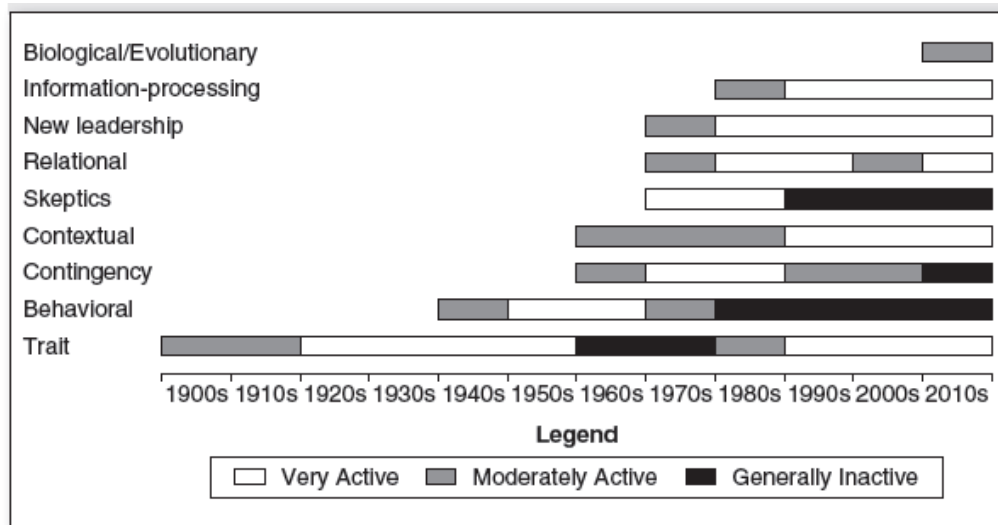


Figure 4. The evolution of leadership (theories and paradigms)

(From Day and Anatonakis, 2012, p. 7)

One of the most recent international leadership movements derives its inspiration from cross-cultural studies, often embedded in cross-cultural organisation studies and is discussed in the next section on Organisation Theory. It includes multicultural and cross-cultural leadership that began mostly with Hofstede (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010), and has been followed by a number of authors including Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). Hofstede argues that cultural values and norms define what is accepted as successful leadership or not. Additionally, he clarifies that ‘leadership theories that do not account for the collective expectations of subordinates is basically dysfunctional’ (p. 389). He further explains that it will be impossible to come up with one ‘formula’ for successful leadership because cultural norms and educational systems are different from one culture to another (Hofstede, 2003). Hofstede proposed a five-dimension model to study effect leadership behaviour in different cultures and these are, power distance (a measure of inter personal power), uncertainty avoidance (lack of tolerance/risk taking), individualism/collectivism (the

measure of relationships between an individual and the group), masculine/feminine (the measure of individual achievement in relation to the organisational goal) and long term orientation (long/short term goals) (Hofstede, 2003).

Hofstede's work inspired a large case study of successful leadership practices that was known as GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness Research Project). The GLOBE project examines 'the leadership interaction with societal culture and organisational culture' (p. 731) in over 60 countries. Tung and Verbeke (2010) argue that Hofstede's contribution to the GLOBE project is undeniable, yet, many other models have emerged that contributed further to the GLOBE study as well as the field of cross-cultural leadership.

Although Hofstede's (1980) model is popular and has been widely used, it has been heavily criticized for bias, over-simplifications, and over-generalizations since Hofstede claimed to have measured entire cultures' norms and values then classified nations based on the results of a questionnaire that represented only the poles of the continuum. This classification has been questioned by many authors (e.g., Al Kailani et al., 2012; Jack and Westwood, 2009; Jones, 2007; McSweeney, 2002; Smelser, 1992).

Other important developments in leadership studies are women in leadership (e.g., Gerber, 2002; Sanders, 2014; Torjesen, 1995), culture and leadership (e.g., Baumgartner, 2009; Schein, 2010), leadership in complex socio-political and economic contexts (e.g., Heifetz, 1994; Maurer, 1992), leadership as an art (e.g., English, 2008; Grint, 1997; Hodgkinson, 1991), the psychology of leadership (e.g., Kets de Vries, 2006; Kets de Vries, Korotov and Florent-Treacy, 2007; Strozier

and Offer, 1985), authentic leadership, moral leadership (e.g., Goffee and Jones, 2006; Sergiovanni, 1992a), charismatic leadership (e.g., Howell and Shamir, 2005; Shamir and Howell, 1999), and toxic and incompetent leadership (e.g., Furnham, 2010; Kellerman, 2008; Lipman-Blumen, 2005). There is also a renewed interest in investigating factors influencing followership particularly by Lipman-Blumen (2006) and Kellerman (2008).

2. Educational Leadership

With the decreasing influence of empiricist theory of knowledge and the growing status of hermeneutical and post-empiricist viewpoints, it is evident that some aspects of social phenomena, such as educational leadership, should not be understood just in the contexts of instrumental or technological rationality and technical knowhow. Philosophical hermeneutics offers one way forward in the rethinking of educational leadership including research purposes and the actual practice of leadership set in educational contexts (Smith and Blase, 1991). From this vantage point, when understood in terms of how individuals view themselves as persons, it leads to conceptualization of leadership as mostly a practical and moral engagement.

As Gay and Airasian (2000) argued, society and its instructional structures including educational institutions are saturated with the principles and traditional language of profit based institutions such as businesses. The business theme has completely pervaded the structures of societies' institutions to the extent that it has become common practice and universally acceptable. In such contexts, leaders in educational contexts must therefore contend with the contradictions of their

responsibilities in the clear knowledge of life's challenges, while appreciating that they are functioning in a world that is predominantly controlled by business traditions. In a business-oriented context, leadership is mostly understood in terms of distinct recognizable attributes espoused by identifiable leaders. However, Matthews and Crow (2003) argued that while these traits and attributes simply enable the development of a variety of models, they only tend to offer shallow representations of elements that mostly define leadership, which are the interconnected networks and groups that opens the institution and its members to novel opportunities.

Giles and Morrison (2010) also take this approach, attempting to innovate and create alternative instruction for educational leadership training programmes. For their part, the researchers explored 'the mainstream pedagogical practices in educational leadership programs and note, in particular, the invasive influence of the predominant neoliberal ideology on education' (p. 64). The current practice is evidently situated in the predominant discourse of economic rationalism, or what Hazelkorn (2015) described as a business metaphor. Under this perspective, education is viewed as a private good and thus individualistic approaches are prioritized and essentially relegate the overall curriculum into rational and measurable outcomes. In the same way, the role of educational leaders is increasingly designated as that of managers of small enterprises. It is no surprise then that the outcome is that educational practices particularly for leaders take managerial characteristics, subscribe to market theory and ultimately fail to consider alternative structures more suitable to the context. Another adverse implication is that schools are increasingly viewed as individual entities compelled to compete for limited resources (Matthews and Crow, 2003).

Based on this ideology, training programs for educational leaders are oriented more towards traditional academic objectives aimed at increasing knowledge, understanding, and developing the specific skills considered important (Thrupp and Willmott, 2003). Inevitably, such an orientation means that strategic planning, leadership development and capacity building among various other leadership skills may skew educational objectives towards ‘linear, albeit conceptual understandings devoid of the problematic, contextual, and experiential nature of leadership’ (Giles and Morrison, 2010, p. 65). Important attributes of educational leadership such as a leader’s attitude, disposition, and character are not adequately prioritized in the business metaphor educational leadership training (Matthews and Crow, 2003). The important relationship between the educational leader or instructor with the student, who in this case is also a future leader, is utilitarian, technical and overly prioritized on efficiency in content delivery, rather than the important professional and personal development of these leaders in the making (Thrupp and Willmott, 2003).

A more suitable approach, which has been highlighted by various published research studies (Mansfield, et al, 2016; Berkovich and Eyal, 2015 and Glatthorn, Jailall, and Jailall, 2016) relates the importance of educational leaders developing contextual awareness and wisdom as much as possessing the skill to operate in a highly technical oriented form of delivery. Failure to do so, as is evident in current practices, results in the replication of the educators’ past and present understandings rather than seizing the opportunity for transformative professional and personal outcomes. It acts as a restraint on more vibrant intellectual inquiry by relying on pedagogical practices aimed at finding answers and sanitizing contextual factors and concerns. It means that educational leaders are more interested in causal and linear relationships and application of theory

in practice, a practice that essentially ignores the problematic nature of human beings and their relational contexts.

Based on Walker and Shuangye's (2007) argument, finding a more effective approach for educational leadership that adequately responds to contextual concerns requires that leadership be viewed as a phenomenon as opposed to as role, a responsibility, power or position. Phenomenology does not approach leadership as definitive or merely descriptive, but rather as experienced, felt and known (Thrupp and Willmott, 2003). It also acknowledges the individual's experiences of education, based on a school of thought that understands the nature of leadership as situational, atypical, relational, and contextual (Dimmock and Walker, 2005). Importantly understanding leadership as a complex phenomenon also opens it up for more non-traditional ways of thinking, evaluation, dialogue and intellectual conversation.

3. Education and School leadership

This subsection will examine leadership as it applies to school settings and educational leadership through social, cultural, and political dimensions, identifying many of the sources and topics that the thesis will develop. It also covers school leadership and the role of personality and character, the ethics of the principalship, and the effects of these factors on educational professionalism, programmes, and practices. School leadership in Arab and Muslim contexts, in the US, the UK, Muslim countries, and the Arabian Gulf region will also be discussed

Educational leadership is a broad term that is challenging to examine; it involves many multilevel interactions between individuals, these interactions take place within and among social and national systems (Day, 2000). Educational leaders, especially at the school level, must make key policy decisions while faced by immense political pressures. In addition, they must respond to the social and economic demands, and be able to influence the faculty, administration, and students to engage willingly towards achieving the overall vision, mission, and goals of the institution. Educational leadership is regarded as one of the general theories and principles of leadership knowledge that is applied to educational settings such as schools and institutions of higher education.

Despite these challenges many research studies have indicated that similar successful leadership practices lead to establishing and sustaining successful schools (Bolivar-Botia and Bolivar- Ruano, 2011; Branch, Hanushek and Rivkin, 2013; Handford and Leithwood, 2013; Kelly and Hess, 2005; Lynch, 2012; Walker, Kutsyuruba and Noonan, 2011). However, there is no universal agreement on what set of practices provides successful leadership in a given context. It is argued by some that what might be considered acceptable and successful in one culture might not look the same or be acceptable in another culture (e.g., Dimmock and Walker, 2000; Jack and Westwood, 2009).

Many researchers have examined leadership concepts and models as they apply to school administrators (e.g., authoritarian, distributive, participative, transforming and transformational, transactional, leaderless groups), as well as the importance of contextual factors (e.g., Burns, 1978; Dimmock and Walker, 2000; English, 2006; English, 2008). Others have examined cultural and multicultural dimensions of educational leadership as a cultural construction that includes values, practices, beliefs, and material culture (e.g. variable role and conception of trust), challenge of the

multicultural environment, and myths and legends of leadership in the schools (e.g., Boswell, 2008; Christensen and Lægheid 2003; Duderija, 2012; Evetts, 1994; Gordon, 2002; Harman, 2002; Nair-Venugopal, 2009; Peña, 1996; Robertson and Webber, 2000). Others have investigated politics and micropolitics and their effects on educational leadership in conceptions of politics, values of equity and equality, leadership networks, political regimes and forms of government (as contextual factors), governance and policy frameworks (e.g. types of democracy, monarchy).

Moreover, they have studied its effects on educational leadership and the micropolitics of the organisation, along with bad and toxic principals (see English, 2008; Gronn, and Lacey, 2006; Kechichian, 2005; Samier, 2008; Woods, 2006). Likewise, researchers have examined sociological dimensions in group theory, identity formation, leadership-fellowship role constructions, resistance, and empowerment, as well as social and organisational change (see Ball, 2008; Bottery, 2003; Briggs, 2007; Garraway, 2006; Huerta, and Zuckerman, 2009; Kalmijn, and Kraaykamp, 2007; Martin and Dowson, 2009; Miriam, 2007; Schriewer, 2009).

There are also a number of studies examining principals' leadership practices that promote trust and positive relationships, and establish group identity in Europe (see Bolivar-Botia, and Bolivar-Ruano, 2011; Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin, 2013; Clements and Washbush, 1999; Goldring, Huff, May and CamBurns, 2008; Goertzen, Nollette, and Nollette, 2011). When reviewing the international literature, one finds that there is an increasing body of literature that examines successful educational leadership practices in school settings, exploring Muslim and Arab minority contexts in the US (e.g., Bulut and Ebaugh, 2014; Bush and Middlewood, 2013; Dimmock, 2013; DuFour and Mattos, 2013; Harris, 2013 and Sebastian and Allensworth, 2012; Hossain, 2013;

Jackson, 2014; Lockheed and Levin, 2012; Norris and Inglehart, 2012) and the UK (e.g., Nagel and Staeheli, 2011; Saeeda. 2014).

Some researchers have investigated charismatic principals and their value systems; they usually argue that charismatic leaders promote a willing response from followers providing them with the sense that they are striving for the greater good and best interests of the organisation (see Day, 2000; Jones, 2012; Kelly and Hess, 2005; Kotter, 2007). Similarly, Hallinger (2004), Hallinger and Kantamara (2000), Hallinger, Taraselina and Miller (1994) and Kanji, Tambl and Wallace (1999) examined transformational leadership in school principals in Thailand and how principals can navigate through school politics to manage their schools.

4. Arab and Islamic Leadership Studies

The study of leadership in the Arab world begins in Mesopotamia in the ancient city-states and kingdoms of Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, and Assyria (e.g., Hinnebusch, 2015; Hourani, 2013; Johns, 2002). These are important to acknowledge since they still influence the cultures of the Middle East through traditions and customs and are part of the collective heritage of the region affecting conceptions and practices. The modern study of Arab leadership in English has grown significantly in the last few years with work by Antoun (2014), Cohen (2013), Choueiri, (2013), El Emary, Bader, and Arif (2012), ElKaleh and Samier (2013), Litz (2011) and Watenpaugh (2014) dealing with complex interactions of values, culture, modernisation and foreign influences.

The field of Islamic leadership studies begins in the Qur'an and Sunnah (Branine, 2011). During the classical Islamic scholarly period, there were many people who studied leadership, particularly Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Rushd, who still influence the Islamic intellectual tradition. In fact, some of these scholars heavily influenced the establishment of European scholarship beginning in the early Renaissance (e.g., Morgan, 2007; Saliba, 2011) and continuing on to the present day. Ibn Rushd, also known by the name *Averroes* to the Western culture, is considered to be one of the most important philosophers of the twelfth century in both Islamic and Western cultures (Ivry, 1998; McGinnis and Reisman, 2007). His contributions to both Islamic and Western civilizations came as a result of a new thinking approach that gave religion and philosophy new identities but common mission, he rejected the notion that religion and philosophy contradicts one another, instead, he dedicated his work to prove that philosophy and religion both, if understood correctly, seek to the pursuit of truth (Leaman, 2013). Ibn Rushd is most famous for his work the 'commentaries' on Aristotle's philosophical work which can be classified into three main categories, the short epitomes (*jawami*), the medium (*talkhis*) and the large or major commentary (*tafsir*) that included the original Aristotle quotations (Ivry, 1998). These commentaries were translated into Latin and Hebrew and continues to enlighten the philosophical tradition in the Western culture up until today (Ali and Weir, 2005; Hitti, 1968). Additionally, Ibn Rushd contributed to different discourses such as logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics, psychology, medicine and astronomy (Leaman, 2013). Ibn Rushd still hold a prestigious place among Western scholars for his philosophical contributions (MacIntyre, 2003; Sonneborn, 2006; Urvoy, 1996 and Watt, 2017).

Likewise, Ibn Khaldun's contribution to both the Islamic and the Western civilizations are well documented and known (Crone, 2014; Lahoud, 2013; Watt, 2017). Ibn Khaldun is considered one

of the founding fathers of cultural history and social science (Dhaoudadi, 2005; Ghazanfar, 2004; Lahoud, 2013). His scholarly work in the thirteenth century provides a corner stone for the modern sociology science (Hannoum, 2003; Hussien, 2003; Rosen, 2005). Ibn Khaldun draws on a number of civilizations and cultural norms to describe in details the social behaviour of group cultures and how each of the civilizations throughout the history undergo the same repeated pattern of beginnings, development, cultural trends and then the fall of the society leading to the rise of a new society (MacIntyre, 2003; Şentürk and Nizamuddin, 2008; Sunar, and Yesilcimen, 2008; Tomar, 2008; Weiss, 1995). Ibn Khaldun scholarly work on social behaviour still informs modern sociology up until today even though it was written over seven centuries ago (Hussien, 2003).

The contemporary field of Islamic leadership studies includes many authors in the Middle East and other Muslim countries, as well as Islamic Studies scholars in many Western countries (e.g., Adam, 2014; Bustamam-Ahmad and Jory, 2011; Johnson and Vriens, 2013).

As with all other aspects of Islamic society, Islamic leadership is firmly rooted in Sharia (Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of Qura'an and Hadith), the Qur'an, and other relevant religious texts. This foundation provides both the exoteric and esoteric aspects of Islamic leadership, the former representing application in the physical context or the outer context, while the latter represents the inner dimension. The exoteric basis means the skills, behaviours and processes of Islamic leadership, while esoteric reflects on the values and beliefs relative to the Sovereign and the spiritual (Ahmad, 2002). In light of this distinction, Ahmad and Ogunsola (2011) noted that the exoteric dimension of Islamic leadership is comparable to conventional leadership where leadership is represented as a skill, process or behaviour, or ability. The exoteric dimension

defines Islamic leadership and distinguishes it from the conventional understanding and practice of leadership. The esoteric dimension reflects the philosophy of Islam and dictates its core values, concepts and practices. A suitable example is the requirement for a Muslim leader to espouse a leadership approach based on conscious deliberation and empowerment of followers with the values and principles derived from the concept, philosophy and key values of Islam. As a religion, Islam holds leadership in high esteem and in almost all life situations, Muslims are required to appoint a leader and follow his leadership (Ahmad and Ogunsola, 2011).

As Ahmad (2002) observed, effective Islamic oriented leadership especially in Islamic schools usually requires the incorporation of the tenets and principles of Islam in to leadership practices and behaviours. Islamic leadership in educational contexts considers the nature and purposes of Islamic education. Islamic educational institutions aim to mould the character and identity with guidance from religious texts towards the betterment of the individual and society. It also aims at safeguarding people from the perceived shortcomings of public non-religious schools such as addressing religious needs, improving academic performance, and addressing socio-cultural assimilation.

Faris and Parry (2011) drew a comparison between the Western type of leadership and Islamic leadership with the research aim to understand the actions taken by Islamic leaders especially in the Middle Eastern region. This comparative study made it possible to understand the varying decisions reached as well as the viewpoints of the differences in leaders from leaders from Western and Islamic societies. The findings from this research are particularly interesting, noting that in the same way that leaders from Muslim and Western societies rely on profoundly different traditions

and texts to guide their leadership, they are often faced by very similar challenges. Moreover, while the decisions reached may appear to be dissimilar, they are both rational and capable of addressing the same problem along different decision practices but with similar positive outcomes. An important point to note is that Islamic leadership has both moral and political power considering that Islam is supposed to permeate throughout all aspects of daily living in Muslim societies.

While many of the practices and responsibilities of Islamic leaders in Islamic oriented schools mirror those of mainstream educational settings, they also face issues and challenges that are unique to their work contexts (Lane, 2011). Similar to other leaders in predominantly religious schools, leaders in Islamic educational contexts encounter various unique challenges including attracting and retaining certified and well-experienced teachers and administrators, with limited financial resources. Islamic educational leaders in a non-Muslim country such as in the US, encounter additional unique challenges such as a lack of suitable textbooks and other key instructional materials, governmental regulations that restrict them and increased scrutiny, and a lack of adequate legal representation (Ahmad, 2002). Moreover, Ahmad (2002) noted that many predominantly Muslim countries or schools are now required to critically examine their administrative knowledge and practices, governance policies and practices, curriculum development, and instructional strategies to ensure that everything that occurs in their schools is aligned to the tenets of moderate Islamic teachings.

From an Arab and Muslim context, in Turkey there are few studies that have investigated successful principal practices that promote trust in school settings (Cerit, 2009; Cerit, 2010; Day and Gurr, 2013; Gokce, 2009; Hausman, 2000; Karakose, 2007; Niyazi, 2009). In Egypt, there have also been

several studies, like those of Emira (2010) and Metcalfe and Mimouni (2011) who studied transformational leadership in school settings. They recommend further research investigating transformational leadership in Islamic culture, as Islamic value and belief systems are similar to the principles of transformational leadership. Specifically, from the perspective of the UAE, some studies have been conducted to examine transformational leadership and successful leadership practices (e.g., Al-Taneiji, 2006; Al-Taneiji and Mcleod, 2008; ElKaleh and Samier, 2013; Gardner, 1995), however, most of this research reported the need to conduct more studies about leadership in education in general, and specifically at schools, as it can contribute to developing and implementing better policies.

Organisation Studies

This section provides an overview of the organisation studies literature that the thesis will discuss, including general organisation studies, followed by organisational culture and cross-cultural studies, and ending with a review of literature on Arab and Islamic organisational studies, focusing mostly on the Arabian Gulf region.

1. General Organisation Studies

Organisation theory, as defined by McAuley, Duberley and Johnson (2007) and Jones (2003), is a study that examines the ‘organisation functions’ and how they affect and are affected by the environment in which they operate. The main aim of organisation studies is to expand knowledge

of organisations, as well as understand the societal significance and application of that knowledge as it affects organisations (Scott, 2015). Additionally, organisation studies also promote pursuit of the relationship between pragmatic investigations and theoretical discourse with the end being a mutually informative ideology (Scott, 2015). Organisational studies are an interdisciplinary area of research with a strong background in sociological methodologies and analytical orientation (Scott, 2015). It is a broader field than this, though, because it includes organisational theory and models that are relevant to behaviour, culture, psychology and micro-politics (Jones, 2003). Studying organisational cultures emerges from the modernist perspective as it analyses the 'beliefs and values' by which individuals in an organisation develop the meaning of how it operates and progresses. Sackney and Walker (2006) explain that everything in an organisation is interconnected, and all elements of the organisation affect each other and that changing one element of the organisation's culture would lead to changing the other elements.

The period around the 1950s featured Maslow, Hawthorne and Herzberg as major influences on theories of organisational leadership (Bass, 2000). Most of organisational oriented research during this period aimed at overcoming the shortcomings of scientific and classical perspectives towards organisational leadership and management. Hawthorne's focus was on the work environment and the manner in which it affected leaders and followers, demonstrating that the reactions of human beings determine their activities at work in addition to the structure and formal design of the organisation (Osland, Kolb and Rubin, 2001). Subsequently, a new theory emerged premised on the notion that individuals' output is maximized when their needs are being adequately addressed. Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs demonstrates this perspective. Maslow's hierarchy asserts that when the physiological, security and social needs of an employee are met, the ability

to maximize his or her productive capacities will be attained when the self-actualizing or intrinsic needs are also met. Essentially the focus and priority of leaders was redirected towards the needs of workers.

Using the Dual Factor Theory, Herzberg (1966) further expanded on Maslow's hierarchy of needs premising that the intrinsic and extrinsic needs of workers could and should be met simultaneously rather than sequentially or hierarchically. Herzberg offered new insights on the incentives and goals that have the potential to meet these needs of employees. He argued that individuals usually have two types of needs: hygiene, which include environmental factors of the working conditions, company policies, extrinsic rewards and so on; and the motivators, which include factors relating to intrinsic needs and particularly the job itself.

Around the same period, scientific management and classical management theories emerged with the latter focusing on the entire organisation and its design while the former focused on the systematic management of each job type (Tesone, 2000). These approaches were interested in how organisations could institute more bureaucratic processes and aimed at identifying methods through which this could be achieved. As a whole, the classical management theorists and scientific management established the foundation upon which most organisational theories of the modern era are based including the management-by-objectives approach.

The subsequent wave of organisational leadership focused on behavioural factors. Here, the focus of the leader shifted to understanding the relationship between the action of the leader and the degree to which the followers were satisfied with the situation and their overall productivity (Bass,

2000). Increasingly behaviourists were interested in accounting for behavioural concepts in their understanding of organisational leadership. As Bass (1990) reported, Chester Barnard played an important role in accounting for behavioural components and highlighted the manner in which executives could expand their organisations into social systems that collaborate with each other. This could be achieved by emphasizing on the incorporation of work efforts facilitated by effective communication of organisation goals and objectives and giving more attention to the motivation of employees (Kim, 2004). In this context, the effective organisational leader was someone who established the objectives, created means to achieve them and inspired action and coordination of efforts.

The central tenet was that leadership essentially involved the accomplishment of organisational goals through people (Bass, 2000). At the time, organisations were increasingly recognizing that in addition to developing the best technological strategies for maximizing outputs, it was paramount that the organisation's leadership addresses the affairs of human beings (Osland, Kolb and Rubin, 2001). Evidently, the core of this perspective is an understanding that individuals will function more effectively when their needs are being addressed. Whenever this occurs, they are more motivated to increase their productivity, which subsequently has a positive impact on the company's bottom line.

McGregor (1960) also contributed to organisational leadership theories, arguing that organisations make certain assumptions about the nature of human beings and human motivation. The theorist characterized these assumptions as Theory X and Theory Y. Under Theory X, the perspective is that most humans demonstrate a preference for being directed and are generally not motivated to

taking positions of responsibility. Such individuals are more interested in their safety and are motivated by the threat of punishment, extreme beliefs and monetary gains (Cummings and Worley, 2014). Leaders who ascribe to this worldview are interested in structuring, controlling, and monitoring the workforce very closely. It is important at this point to highlight that even the originator of this theory had some personal inhibitions with regards to Theory X's ability to reflect an accurate representation of human beings. However, these notions persisted in the discipline of leadership studies because it explained some but not all aspects of human behaviour in workplaces and organisations. Based on the Hierarchy of Needs argument, McGregor admitted that Theory X fell short of explaining the real nature of human behaviour and that organisational leaders who based their management style on its assumptions would ultimately fail to maximize productivity and bottom lines through workforce motivation.

Consequently, McGregor expanded and revised Theory X and Theory Y arguing that the workforce had the capacity to find ways through which they could satisfy their needs within the structure of the workplace. The worker was increasingly not being perceived as a machine as in the classical and scientific approaches to leadership and management, but seen as a complex entity (Kim, 2004). The trait and behavioural theories were also deemed inadequate in their incapacity to accurately represent the nature human beings in the context of organisational leadership. The assumption was that the complexity of human nature and the ability of the organisational leader to effectively respond to this complexity would have an impact on whether the leader and followers could engage collaboratively to achieve the goals and objectives of the organisation (Tesone, 2000).

Thus, theory Y proposed that employees did not particularly dislike their jobs and that under suitable conditions; the work could be a source of individual satisfaction. Under such conditions as posited by Theory Y, an individual has the capabilities to self-control and self-direct in addition to actively seeking positions where they would have greater responsibility. At the core of this theoretical perspective is that organisations are comprised of groups that interact with each other to achieve organisational goals, and that leaders are a part of these groups (Kim, 2004). Theory Y also premises that motivation occurs at the self-actualization level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as well as at the social, esteem, security and self-actualization levels. Work is viewed as natural and as a productive form of play insofar as the conditions are conducive and that with proper motivation, individuals have the capacity to self-direct and self-control, components that are essential to achieving the overall goals of the organisation (Autry, 2004).

Morgan (1986) provided a broad and inclusive overview of the different paradigms in organizational studies to include culture, psychology, politics, systems, organisational needs and management dimensions. Morgan proposed an image for each organisation to illustrate the inner dynamics and sub-cultures that governs the interactions between employees in these organisations. His models consist of eight images: organisation as organism (includes organisational needs, shared future and beliefs), organisation as a brain (holographic system, rational decisions), organisation as a culture (organisation's subculture, reality construction and organisational society), organisation as a political system (sources of power, organisations' networks and systems of rules, conflicting interests), organisations as psychic prison (social constructivism is created through conscious and unconscious decisions, focuses on the unseen processes, presumed agreement, where change is only possible if deepest organisational behaviours are challenged),

organisation as flux and transformation (mutual causality, one connected system which include chaos and order), organisations as domination (forms of social domination, organisations that have a long negative impact on the world, bureaucracy as a power tool, a ruler imposes his/her wishes while being perceived as having the right to do so), organisations as machines (time is money, systems, scientific management).

2. Organisation Cross-Cultural Studies

The field of cross-cultural organisation studies examines the importance of understanding organisational culture, as well as politics, to be able to manage successfully a multi-cultural organisation and working with people from a diversity of international cultures. This field of study first flourished in the late 20th century and is continuing to expand at the present time. It is now known that what is defined as successful leadership in one context, might not necessarily mean success in another culture (Branine, 2011).

The literature on organisational culture covers the following approaches:

1. Organisational behaviour that examines the behaviour of individuals (see Alvesson, 2002; Kets de Vries, 1991; Kets de Vries and Miller, 1984; Kets de Vries and Miller, 1986; Schultz, 1995; Smircich, 1983)
2. Organisational culture that studies the metaphors, symbols and functionalism of the culture (see Ashkanasy et al., 2000; Downs, 1997; Dubinskas, 1992; Denhardt, 2008; Denhardt and Robert, 1981; Hassard, 1995; Kets de Vries and Miller, 1986; Kets de Vries, 1991; Morgan, 2006; Senior and Fleming, 2006)

3. Micro-politics in an organisation that examines the forms of power, using power in an organisation, tactics between leaders and subordinates, as well as how leaders get willing compliance from their followers (see Argyris, 2000; Davidson, Mackenzie and Smith, 2008; Eagle and Newton, 1981; Egan, 1994; Fairholm, 2009; Kets de Vries, 2010; Kets de Vries and Miller, 1986; Reina and Reina, 2006; Schultz, 1995).

In organisational settings, there are individual differences with regard to behaviours attitudes, communication, functioning and other cultural factors. The different background of each culture generates cross-cultural differences, and these cultural varieties are evident in working contexts (Earley, 2006; Hofstede, 2003; Reynolds and Valentine, 2011). In such an environment characterized by cultural differences, everyday organisational activities such as meeting deadlines, reaching sales goals and targets, as well as functioning on limited resources create the potential for conflict. It has been argued that misunderstandings among individuals within the working environment are bound to arise because of cultural differences that have different values, beliefs, backgrounds and so on (Earley, 2006). Successful management requires that individuals have the knowledge and capacity to collaborate effectively with all individuals regardless of any cultural differences or values and beliefs orientation. This is particularly important in a society that is increasingly globalised, with multinational enterprises establishing operations in different parts of the globe, and immigration and transit labour making classrooms more multicultural compared to any time in history. Cross-cultural organisational management and leadership must therefore account for cultural differences of the workforce and ensure that the cultures of all individuals are acknowledged and respected (Chaney and Martin, 2011; Browaeys and Price 2008). Doing so requires that the leadership understands the different cultures.

Currently, there is a wide body of literature that explores cross-cultural management and leadership in a number of countries (e.g., Branine, 2011; Chhokar, Brodbeck and House, 2013; Elashmawi, 2001; Greenfield and Cocking, 2014; Jack and Westwood, 2009; Kidwell and Martin, 2005, Moran, Harris, and Moran, 2011; Saunders, 2012; Thomas and Peterson, 2014; Trompenaars and Woolloams, 2003; Wyer, Chiu and Hong, 2013). This literature is important to this thesis as it pertains to recognising differences of values and practices amongst school principals and teachers, as well as inspecting variance amongst the assortment of secondary documents that could be examined.

3. Acculturation in organisational studies:

Cross-cultural organisation studies also incorporate a field of research that is known as ‘acculturation’. Acculturation is by definition the transitioning of a new group of people from their own life style into the life style of a new country and or workplace (Dallmayr, 1996). This also includes the adaptation of beliefs, values, customs, and habits (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). Banks (1999) explained that in the acculturation of groups with diverse cultures, they can maintain their identity, beliefs, and cultural norms, as well as live in harmonious interaction with the host group. Oerlemans and Peeters (2009) argue that due to globalisation, the majority of workplaces operate in a multicultural and diverse environment where individuals from different cultures or countries or even states in the same country have to interact on a daily basis. The body of literature on acculturation is substantial and multidisciplinary and includes attending to the definition,

conceptualization, measurement and operationalization of acculturation (Zimmermann, 2007). Essentially acculturation represents the process of adaptation among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds into the dominant culture. Initially, it was often assumed that persons from minority cultures would become acculturated into the dominant culture and become fully integrated and assimilated (Browaeys and Price, 2008; Chaney and Martin, 2011). They were expected to fully adopt the values, beliefs and traditions of the dominant culture. However, the current understanding of the process of acculturation is that the group or individual will not only adopt the cultural characteristics of the dominant culture, but that the dominant culture is also likely to assume some cultural characteristics of the less dominant culture. It is important to note and emphasise that successful acculturation requires that the individual or group not only adopts the values and attributes of the dominant culture, but also has meaningful opportunities to participate in the socio-political and economic aspects of the community. In this view, assimilation also requires the less dominant cultural group to conform to the cultural characteristics of the dominant culture.

The study of acculturation may focus on ‘resolving the differences among members of a nation, between organisations with different cultures, between organisations and their members, and/or within individuals’ (Clegg, Hardy and Nord, 2006; p. 346). Bourhis et al (1997, 2009) argue that acculturation is an interactive process between the new group and the host community, which involves verbal and non-verbal communication, interethnic attitudes, and stereotypes between intergroup, intergroup tensions, acculturation stress, and discrimination. Several models have emerged to study the elements of acculturation. For example, Ward (1997) presented a model to investigate acculturation adjustments based on psychological and socio-cultural elements that

focused on individual, situational, and societal predictors of adjustments, however, his model does not provide strategies to address the strains of living and working in a foreign country.

When living with cultural differences, Aycan (1997) suggested, based on his model of studying acculturation, that expatriates working in foreign countries may revert to strategies that will help them cope with the host country like committing to social support and/or temporary withdrawal to a stability zone. Berry (1997) presented a model to study elements of acculturation that has been widely used in acculturation studies in leadership (Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok, 1987; Cabassa, 2003; Schwartz and Zamboanga, 2008; Tip et al., 2015). This model examines four factors in acculturation in cultural adaptation and cultural maintenance in host and immigrant groups: integration, marginalisation, assimilation and separation. Berry (2005) explains that in an organisation where integration of the culture is high, an environment of trust and mutual respect will flourish, increasing the capability of sharing and transferring resources and knowledge, which may lead to organisational success.

As Zimmermann (2007) notes, the process of assimilation takes place on two distinct levels: behavioural, or cultural assimilation; and structural assimilation. For the former, the process takes place when the new minority individual or group adapts to the cultural values, traditions and beliefs of the host culture through the process of acculturation. Later, at the structural level, the minority group or individual enters the social structures and groups, organisations and institutions of the dominant culture. Full assimilation thus requires the successful completion of both. Still, it is often the case that societies are able to retain their cultural pluralism, which occurs when people from different backgrounds fail to become fully integrated into the dominant culture at the political,

economic and even educational levels. Where cultural pluralism is more the norm such as in the US society, cultural minorities have limited power because they are not fully integrated into the social systems and institutions of the main culture (Shondrick, Dinh and Lord, 2010) in contrast with Canada where they are.

Acculturation generates observable changes in lifestyle at both the group and individual levels and occurs in three stages, which are contact, conflict and then adaptation (Trueba, Jacobs and Kirton, 2014). Contact as the first stage is when two or more independent cultures meet and interact for the first time. Conflict occurs when an individual or group resists the dominance of the host culture and is linked to the degree to which the individual or group adapts the cultural characteristics of the dominant culture (Shondrick, Dinh and Lord, 2010). Conflicts during the acculturation process are generated when the two or more dominant cultures that come into contact have opposing values and traditions. These contradictions create a power struggle between the two different cultural groups.

The process of adaptation takes place in the dimensions of adjusting, reacting and withdrawal (Browaeys and Price, 2008). If the individual or group takes on the adjustment dimension, the cultural attributes of the minority culture develop similarities to those of the dominant group in such a way that it minimizes the conflicts between the two distinct cultural systems. Adaptation often includes values, traditions, self-identification and even language aspects of the dominant culture. Some reactions, as described by Browaeys and Price (2008), may include the formation of resistance groups such as political organisations aimed at promoting the values and needs of the minority culture. Under withdrawal as the process of adaptation, individuals from the minority

group may opt to withdraw from the dominant culture. Such a situation may occur in the form of segregation, and community self-isolation from interaction with the dominant culture (Trueba, Jacobs and Kirton, 2014).

In educational settings, the effect of incomplete acculturation could have negative influence on the retention of academics and teachers in schools and universities (Furham, 2012; Ramalu, Rose, Uli and Samy, 2010; Selmer and Luring, 2015 and Trembath, 2016), academics and teachers might choose to remain in their jobs despite feelings of uncertainty and/or lack of adjustment, this might lead to poor job performance from the expatriates which will affect the outcomes of the school and/or the university that employs expatriates (Parnian, Hosseini and Fen, 2013).

Additionally, Austin et al. (2014) explain that acculturation is crucial to the success of an educational organisation. They argue that feelings of separation and distance from the host culture limits the faculty member's ability to take risks and play an active role in discussions in institutional issues which, consequently, limits the ability to innovate and improve. This means that the process of acculturation ultimately affects different areas of functionality within individuals, including the manner in which they behave and feel. Thus, acculturation represents the transformations, or lack of transformation associated with the social and psychological factors experienced as the individual or group is increasingly exposed to different cultures.

Due to the associated change in perceptions, attitudes and values, it is expected that the process of acculturation influence how individuals and groups think and feel about leadership. It influences what is expected of leadership, as well as the values and strengths that a leader should espouse in

order to be effective. For example, Halicioglu (2015) conducted a research to examine the challenges that teachers are facing in their assignments overseas and concluded that leadership and organisational structures are among the challenges that teachers face in their new assignment. This essentially means that individuals coming from different cultures may have very different views and expectations about the types of qualities that a leader must have and how an effective leader should approach leadership

As Pfeffer (2015) observes, organisational structuring and design is one of the most important and recurrent themes in organisational theory. Over the last few decades, research studies in this area have sought to understand and further develop the discipline of organisation studies, as well as ascertain how the understanding of organisational studies can be effectively applied to novel, non-traditional situations including education context (see Chapman et al, 2014 and Guarino and Tanner , 2012).

One of the major concepts of organisation studies is the interdependence of tasks within a system. An organisation as a system comprises of various subsystems that are interdependent on each other and collaborate towards attainment of shared goals. The units may include individual employees, teams, departments and so on. In the educational system, the interdependent units include students, educators, administrators, parents, the community, and so on. Trueba, Jacobs and Kirton (2014) insisted that effective organisations are those that focus and structure their activities in a manner that effectively responds to the interconnectedness and independence of each of the subsystems. In the context of the educational organisation, leadership should focus on responding not only to the needs of individuals and the subsystems to which they belong, but also to the relationships and

interdependences between the subsystems (Giles and Morrison, 2010). For instance, an educational institution as an effective organisation would focus on the relationship between educators, students and parents and how these interrelationships contribute to enabling the organisation to achieve its ultimate goal. The ultimate goal of an educational organisation is to enhance education performance and student outcomes, and research has shown that the relationship between students and their teachers and parents, as well as parental involvement in educational activities are key cornerstones that enhance educational outcomes of learners (Klem and Connell, 2004; Guarino and Tanner, 2012 and Jeynes, 2007).

There are a number of studies that have investigated the effect of acculturation on the organisation and organisational performance (e.g. Berry et al, 1987; Hazuda et al, 1988; Lopez-Class, Castro and Ramirez, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2010; Sam and Berry, 2010). In the Asian context see Chae and Foley, 2010; Jian, 2012; Lin, 2014 and Stuart, Ward, Jose and Narayanan, 2010. Similarly, in the Middle East and Gulf States there have been a number of studies that examined acculturation in a business context (e.g. Forstenlechner, 2010; Forstenlechner and Rutledge, 2011; Harrison and Michailova, 2012; Maghsoudi and Khorshidi, 2011; Ralston et al., 2012). Hills and Atkins (2013) has also examined acculturation in the Arab Gulf States, concluding that groups of people who come from countries with a large gap between their culture and the host culture are likely to endure greater difficulties in adapting their behaviour to comply with local values and attitudes in the Gulf. Moreover, he argued that the nationality of the immigrant group is a significant variable in promoting or hindering acculturation. In education, several studies that have examined the effect of acculturation on poor job performance (e.g. Parnian, Hosseini and Fen, 2013), lack of teachers'

commitment (e.g. Roskell, 2013; Tahir and Ertek, 2018), and low student academic achievement (e.g. Aelenei, Darnon and Martinot, 2016; Phalet and Andriessen, 2017 ;Seker and Sirkeci, 2015).

In the United Arab Emirates, specifically, Forstenlechner (2010) explains that it is very challenging for academic employees to feel connected to the organisational goals and aims since their definition by law will ‘remain expatriates for an indefinite period of time’ (p.237). This adds a level of challenge for the acculturation of academics and teachers and contributes negatively to the overall performance in some schools and universities that employ expatriates in the UAE (Austin, et al., 2014 and Chapman, et al., 2014).

In a school context, there appears to be very little research in the Gulf Countries and Middle East region that investigates school context and acculturation, notable exceptions would include Baydoun (2015), Buckingham (2014), Jonathan, Kim and Salleh (2009), Law (2012), Razzak (2011) and Shah (2015).

4. Organisational studies in school context:

Looking at schools as organisations, Shields (2010) argues that in a new era of open communication and globalization, diversity is inevitable for organisations in general and schools specifically. This poses a new challenge for policy makers and for schools’ dynamics as it requires school principals to consistently adapt their practices to navigate through these changes and successfully lead the school. Shields proposes a new approach defined as a ‘Community of Difference’ for leaders to be

able to lead diverse schools. This approach advocates that ‘people from different backgrounds, belief, values, goals and assumptions must come together to achieve cohesion through understanding, positive relationships and the negotiation of shared purpose and norms and behavior’ (p. 213). Shields further argues that communities of difference negotiate their values and norms through open and shared dialogue which will then lead the specific organisation to thrive. Successful leadership would then be about how an educational leader reacts to a specific community and their norms and values.

Similar to this approach professional learning communities was studied as means to promote successful school culture. Professional learning communities are defined as a group of professionals in an organisation that engage in reflection and learning oriented activities with the aim of problem solving current organisational issues (Batagiannis 2011; Harris, Jamison and Russ 1995; Marques, Loureiro and Marques 2016; Twale, et al 2002). This level of interaction requires building relationships, trust, and a sense of community, shared responsibilities and innovation (Bezzina 2004; Bredeson, Klar and Johansson 2009 and Sackney and Walker 2006). In order to be able to build a professional learning community, school culture needs to change to accommodate the successful elements of building professional learning communities. Kets De Vries (2010) argues that change is as complicated a term for an organisation as it is for individuals because it brings about the same level of ‘discomfort’ into its processes, which would suggest the presence of ‘resistance’ from the organisation as a whole. Principals’ approaches to leadership have a significant effect on driving the change and help to sustaining the formation of professional learning communities (Ching and Cheong, 1997; Batagiannis 2011; James and Shmitz 2011; Marques 2007). Kets De Vries (2010) argues that ‘building and maintaining the right culture can

make or break the organisation' (p. 75). He further explains that the organisational culture defines its ability to respond to change and that if leaders fail to understand this complexity they will then fail to promote and sustain the change. Leadership practices affect the organisation and its main cultural elements 'artifacts, beliefs and values and basic assumptions' to the extent that it has the potential to promote or hinder building professional learning communities.

Sackney and Walker (2006) presented an in-depth study about the effects of leadership style on building professional learning communities. They argued that in order to be able to promote the concept of professional learning communities, principals should understand the culture of the school. They explained that principals must recognize very early on in their practice the school's culture that underpins how things get done and failing to do so would suggest that the principal will fail to introduce the change or navigate through it. Schein (1992: cited in Shultz 1995) explained this level of the culture interface as 'visible organisational structure and processes, artifacts' (p. 26). Moreover, Sackney and Walker (2006) explain that leading is directly connected to the 'wholeness world view' which assumes that everything in the organisation is interconnected together, and all elements of the organisation affect each other and that changing one element of the school's culture would lead to changing the others. Sackney and Walker (2006) suggest that building professional learning communities requires a level of trust in order for teachers to feel safe taking risks and participating in the professional learning activities of reflection and collaboration. They further explain that building that level of trust is not easy for principals to sustain unless they promote a shared-leadership style, which would suggest engaging staff members in various activities of 'building capacity together with conveying adaptive confidence in order to effectively foster professional learning communities' (p. 343). This level of connection

and interrelated aspects of organisational change was discussed by Kets De Vries (2010) where he referred to the structure of the organisation as ‘the layers of the onion in which each layer has its significance’ (p. 77) He further suggested that in order to be able to understand the ‘philosophy of the organisation’ one should seek to understand each layer such as ‘values, rituals, beliefs and attitudes’ (p.80).

Additionally, Shultz (1995) argues that the organisation consists of three different levels ‘artifacts: visible and audible behavior patterns among the members of the organisation, product of the organisation, values and basic assumptions: invisible members’ behaviors’ (pp. 25-30). He further suggests that ‘the culture of the organisation lays in the bottom of the organisational level and can only be discovered by a depth probing analysis which moves layer by layer down through the different cultural levels of the organisation’ (p.26). Similarly, Techannen-Moran et al. (2000) studied the organisational culture that promotes building professional learning communities. They argued that educational reform is advancing rapidly and further explained that in order to sustain such reform initiatives, there is no ‘magic recipe’ that can be administered to all organisations, therefore, teachers from different departments within the school and administrators need to work collaboratively and constantly reflect on their practices. Additionally, they explained that the culture of the school is embedded in its values and beliefs of each department and is passed down through the school on from one year to another. They advocated that in order to build successful professional learning communities, leaders must understand the school’s subculture in order to be able to encourage opportunities for teachers to share best practices and reflect on their own practices. This approach, according to Techannen-Moran et al. (2000), suggests an approach to leadership where decision-making is a collaborative process. Kets De Vries (2010) proposes that

some organisations are likely to have ‘subcultures that shape the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of individuals in specific departments’ (p. 82). He further argues that it is somewhat challenging for leaders to be successful in managing the organisation if they are unaware of these subcultures.

Additionally, Celikten (2001) examined the association between various tasks of coaching leadership in one of the high schools in Turkey and analysed how this approach has promoted collaboration between teachers and helped to create a professional learning community. He explained that a coaching leadership style is defined by the actions that the principal takes with the aim of improving the students’ and teachers’ outcomes. He further explains that these actions slowly change the ‘work environment’ in a way that teachers develop a greater sense of belongingness through their increased commitment to the school’s mission. Moreover, he stresses that a coaching leadership style promotes a sense of tolerance in the organisation where learning is encouraged and mistakes are looked upon as learning episodes. In his study, he concluded that principal’s coaching leadership style transfers to assistant principals and teachers which then leads to creating a culture where all school members, such as teachers, assistant principals, students and parents, work together towards one common goal—the school’s mission. Similarly, Derrington (2011) examined the principal’s role as a coaching leader and how this approach can create a culture of learning in the school. She argued that the shift in the principal’s role in the everyday processes of the school away from a summative towards a formative approach has the potential of promoting a sense of trust between the teacher and principal, which can then lead to fostering the learning environment. However, Derrington (2011) argues that the shift in the principal’s role from a management role into a coaching leader is a ‘complex process’ that requires a shift in beliefs and values of the school’s culture. Kets De Vries (2010) explains, ‘At a macro level, leadership

coaching may help transform the organisation's culture and patterns of decision-making. At a micro level it may result in lower stress levels, less frustration, and increased self-esteem, (p. 200). Furthermore, he argues that a 'coaching culture' promotes a sense of ownership, higher level of commitment, which will, consequently, reflect in creating a more productive organisational culture.

In contrast, Ching and Cheong (1997) examined the effect of a 'dual approach' leadership style on promoting professional learning communities. Based on their review of the literature on organisation studies and management, they argued that the leadership role is absolutely critical in shaping the organisational 'processes and structure, patterns of social interaction, members' beliefs, attitude and job behaviors' (Conger and Kanungo 1988; Shein 1992 and Yukl 1994 cited in Ching and Cheong 1997, p. 165). They suggested that one of the successful models to navigate change in the organisation could be a 'dual approach' where leaders practice a mixed dimension of leadership styles that deals with people and interpersonal relations combined with a coercive approach that focuses on achieving tasks. Moreover, in explaining teachers' attitudes, Ching and Cheong emphasised that teachers 'sense of community' is deeply connected with how teachers relate to collective, social unity. They further explained that teachers who have a high sense of community are more likely to share the values and goals of the organisation. Similarly, Bezzina (2004) proposed that one of the components that distinguish professional learning communities is: 'collaborative work' where all members of the organisation feel that they belong to the same community. This level of commitment can be linked to the functionalist diagnosis of organisational culture presented by Shultz (1995) where he explains that in order to be able to understand the culture of the organisation one would aim to understand and analyse the different levels of culture (values, artifacts and basic assumptions). He further explains that 'values are defined as the

statement made by the members of the organisation where members of the department share significant values' (p. 49). He explains that by 'placing value on having shared attitude,' members of the organisation are more likely to have a strong sense of belongingness and commitment to the organisational goals. Bezzina (2004) acknowledged that organisational change should happen in 'people's thoughts, actions and beliefs' and that it is up to the leader to encourage a culture that aims to develop shared and progressive vision.

Similar to Bezzina (2004), Hayes, Mills and Lingrad (2004) suggested that in order to foster and build successful professional learning communities a leader should adopt a mix of pressure and support to the school's community. They argued that leadership should be 'embedded in the school's culture' because it reflects the intent on the school to be a learning organisation and that all members should be working consistently on constructing 'meaning and knowledge collectively' (p. 521). At the same time, leaders' daily practice requires also putting pressure on the school's community because they are primarily responsible for ensuring that all members of the school's organisation remain focused on achieving targeted student educational outcomes. However, Hayes, Mills and Lingrad argue that in order to achieve this level of interaction at a high level, principals need to understand the overall culture of the school and know the competencies and capabilities of each of its members. Kets De vries (2010) argues that some successful characteristics of an effective organisation is that members of the organisation 'share a strong common goal and have strong shared values and beliefs' (p.56-57). Shultz (1995) further suggests that values have a strong normative character and that members of the organisation share the significant values; however, they might still hold different beliefs about what the current situation of the organisation is in reference to their own values. It could be argued that when the principal uses a combination of

support and pressure strategies towards members of the organisation, they are likely to collaborate with each other in order to achieve the desired results.

Leonard and Leonard (2005) discussed another aspect of leadership and its effects on building professional learning communities and its relation to the values of the organisation. They argued that although numerous research studies have documented the effectiveness of the professional learning community approach and its concentration on reflective processes, trust and democratic leadership, yet there is another dimension that needs to be taken into consideration: the degree to which teachers in the organisation work towards 'commonly-held beliefs and objectives'. They reasoned further that in some organisations the leader might lean towards the bureaucratic leadership style and in such cases it would be impossible to pinpoint whether teachers are participating in the professional learning activities because they share the same beliefs and values as others in the organisation or they are simply conforming to avoid negative feedback. This issue was discussed from a functionalist analysis point of view and was discussed by Shultz (1995) where he claimed that members of the organisation are able and ready to 'passively adapt themselves' to organisational change. Shultz further argued that hierarchical relations encourage organisation members to react by distancing themselves from the change process and eventually stop participating in the organisation's activities because they no longer believe in them, and they would rather keep their role limited to what they have more control over.

Similarly, Law (1999) studied the effects of leadership style on building and sustaining professional learning communities and argued that teachers' development requires the establishment of a supportive climate. She explained that the presence of bureaucratic leadership style would hinder

trust and teachers would feel that they could not take risks and share their experiences with colleagues. Furthermore, the level of communication will eventually fade. Law (1999) concluded that building professional learning communities in the presence of a bureaucratic leadership style is impossible. Likewise, Guskey (2003) studied some characteristics of a successful model of professional learning community. He emphasized that having a shared vision and mission is a key factor in building and sustaining professional learning communities. He further explained that visionary leaders 'reinforce and underpins the values of the organisation and promote people participation in it', (p. 16). Moreover, he explained that this level of interaction and collaboration could not be fostered with the presence of bureaucratic leadership style because it would lead the organisation to resist change and eventually compromises the foundations of the professional learning community.

In his study of human relations, Jackson (2001) argues that differences between one community and another in terms of 'ethos' suggest a level of difference in 'cultural values'. He further claims that the cultural values of the organisation could define the leader's ethical approach to leading in the organisation, thus, building the professional learning community. Hofstede (1980) defines culture as the 'collective mental programming of the people in an environment' (p. 43). Jackson (2001) concludes that organisation leaders who fail to understand substantial cultural differences will fail to navigate and manage their organisations.

Building professional learning communities requires a level of interaction between teachers and the principal at one level and with teachers among themselves on another level. Depending on the leadership style that the principal might practice to lead the school's organisation, various forms

of power tactics could surface while leading the school to build a professional learning community. According to Malen (1994), the study of micropolitics in the schools has long been documented by scholars; he explains that ‘schools are mini political systems’ with the different layers of authority (such as the government and the federal state) and non-authority (such as parents) powers that play a significant part in everyday school life. He argues that one form of politics in a school results from principal-teacher transactions. Kent (2004) studied the concept of professional learning community through a review of the literature finding that it concentrates on professional development as being the ‘catalyst to transforming theory’ that improves teaching practices. He argued that teachers should step up and take an active role towards engaging in professional learning community activities. He suggested that this approach to professional development has the potential to reflect positively on students’ outcomes. However, he stressed that in order to sustain this approach to professional development, principals and head teachers should adopt an instructional leadership approach. He argued that this approach would promote building trust and risk taking by teachers. Fairholm (2009) explains this approach to politics in organisations by defining a model of power he refers to as ‘consent compliance’ to explain why one individual would relate to another individual, or an individual might relate to the group to secure desired outcomes. Fairholm argues that ‘consent compliance’ results from individuals thinking about the situation in hand and ‘conclude[ing] that the suggested course of action is logical for them to adopt’ (p. 15).

Similarly, Harris, Jamieson and Russ (1995) studied the effect of a professional learning community represented in a small department in one of the most successful schools in England. They argued that when new head teachers are assigned to underperforming groups of teachers or a

department, a level of difficulty has been removed since the group or the department will be expected to work harder and improve their results. Therefore, the culture is already primed for change. They further argued that distributed leadership between head teachers and their group or department has positive effects on building and sustaining professional learning communities. Yet, they argue that not all teachers feel comfortable in sharing their experiences and possible setbacks of their classroom practices within the professional learning community. They further explained that these teachers might feel vulnerable and unwilling to open up even to their closer colleagues. Malen (1994) suggests that in terms of principal-teacher transactions in informal arenas, teachers might feel vulnerable to criticism from their peers. Therefore, teachers might practice a protective strategy to help them secure their feelings of vulnerabilities that can then lead them to adopt a form of 'passive resistance'. This type of political influence hinders the idea of trust that the professional learning community is based upon.

Additionally, Niazi (2012) concluded from a study on schools' leadership and professional learning communities, that leadership is a key aspect for building successful professional learning communities. Furthermore, she examined that the leader's personality has a remarkable effect on sustaining professional learning communities. Moreover, she argued that a successful leader plays a dynamic role in creating team spirit and promoting collaboration in the team, which is a key factor in sustaining professional learning communities as has previously been discussed. Fairholm (2009) explains that one of the power impact models that leaders might practice is through 'personality'. He further suggests that some people might have exceptional personal qualities that attract followers into following his/her instructions. Moreover, Fairholm clarifies this line of argument by generalizing that those leaders who possess such qualities as recognizing follower's

work and allocating time and attention to their followers can get their goals achieved through this style of interaction and leadership.

Techannen-Moran et al. (2000) argued that professional learning communities as a concept might hold some negative political elements and potential to hinder the overall development of an organisation. They explained this by recognizing that allocating resources and budget for a specific approach to professional development would set high expectations on the organisation, which can then lead to a form of political interference. Moreover, Hayes, Mills and Lingrad (2004) argue that with some expert coercive leaders, the approach of professional learning communities can become a domain where the leaders of the organisation ‘get their projects done’ through crafting coalitions. Balse (1990) discussed this form of politics in depth in his study of the possible negative effects of principals where he suggested that principals ‘manipulate’ the concept of professionalism in order to ensure teachers’ compliance with their own personal agendas. Barnard (1948) and Etzioni (1961, 1975) cited in Blase (1990) present a theoretical definition of ‘superordinate’ in reference to the organisations’ leader the principal and ‘subordinate’ in reference to teachers in the school settings where they argue that the perception of the subordinate of the level of the authority of the superordinate defines the amount of compliance these teachers practice when following principals’ agendas. Blase argue that the effects of the misuse of these powers by principals has a significant negative impact on the workplace as it cultivates a level of disconnection and disengagement that hinders the stability of the learning community.

Techannen-Moran et al. (2000) argued that an important aspect of professional learning communities is devoting an adequate amount of time to team discussions and sharing knowledge,

this involves a process that could consume other valuable resource 'time'. Malen (1994) discussed this level of interaction between the teachers and the principal describing it as 'transaction in formal arenas'. He argues that principals perceive that they have some legitimate roles in specific domains that they look to as administrative territory, while teachers consider the classrooms to be their own territory of influence, therefore, teachers and principals 'negotiate' each of these domains until they reach a form of consent on who should decide what. In the case of allocating time for community discussion though it is the principals who have the final say.

Brosky (2011) argues that teachers can also practice some form of micropolitical influence in the organisation. He explains that teachers are 'not passive actors in the politics of schools' (p.6); furthermore, he suggests that teachers use some 'tactic strategies' to negotiate their power through 'teacher leaders' who get their authority from their peers in the form of collaboration. However, Brosky acknowledges that even teacher leaders might at some point fall prey to the principal's personal agenda as they hold the capability to persuade their colleagues into doing things they might not otherwise be willing to do (Wasley 1991 cited in Brosky 2011). Brosky found in his study that negative feelings of frustration with hidden agendas can reflect adversely on a school's culture where teachers no longer take active roles in the development of the school as they see that their efforts and hard work are no longer appreciated and that more politically skilled teachers might 'win the best game'.

5. Arab and Islamic Organisation Literature

Ahmad and Donnan (1994) argues that Islam is the main cornerstone of managerial life in the Middle East region as most of its residents embrace Islam as their religion. He further explains that the Islamic religion embodies complex systems that govern the behaviours and beliefs of the Islamic community. Moreover, Weir (2004) argues that Islamic principles are based on the Qur'an (word of God), Hadith (prophet's sayings) and Ijtihad (reasoning within traditions). All of these concepts, Weir contends, revolve around reconciling differences and conflict management as opposed to being amenable to the implementation of straightforward textbook solutions.

Ahmad and Ogunsola (2011) explain that Islamic concepts of organisations can be translated and closely linked to the modern concept of 'learning organizations'. Islamic organisations practice Islamic principles such as *Muhasabah* (evaluating one's previous actions and performance to be able to perform better in the future which suggests a culture of honest evaluation and reflection 2011, p. 75), *Tawhid*, (for ever mindful of God throughout your actions as it affects the overall performance of the organization and its unity), and *Ihsan* (the highest form of faith in doing your work to a perfectionist level). Analogies of these concepts can be made with learning organization theory as it implies a cycle of self-reflection to better enhance the performance of the organization.

Islam work ethics and values are deeply rooted in Muslim's social lives. It regulates a Muslim's life through his work. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said:

'Your employees are your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority, so if a Muslim has another person under his control, he/she should not overburden them with what they cannot bear and if you do so, help them in their jobs.' [Al Bukhari, 2009, p. 580].

Ali (1996) argues that Islam work ethics possess an imperative influence on both people and the organisations they work for. Therefore, any organisational change or work procedures must take into account these essential influences to ensure the success of the organisation. For example, Ali explains that to guarantee meeting deadlines and objectives, the link to the organisation's welfare must be made explicit. Moreover, Ali (1996) emphasises that work in organisations in an Islamic context is viewed as personal fulfillment for the employee as it promotes the general good of society. To that end, work is considered as a virtue for employees. Ali further explains that one of the main pillars of Islam is (*Adel*) Justice and the work place in an Islamic organisation must, therefore, foster human needs, develop and maintain social skills and link directly to the overall welfare of the community for it to be accepted by employees.

Likewise, Branine (2011) has examined Arab culture closely, and argues forcefully that to be successful in managing in an Arab setting, a leader must understand Islamic values and principles that form the basis of human interaction in Arab countries. Branine argues that Islamic values of patience (*Saber*), trust (*Amana*), consultation (*Shura*), justice (*Adel*), truthfulness (*Sidiq*), sincerity and keeping promises (*Ekhlās*), kindness and care (*Ihsan*), forever mindful of the Almighty God (*Taqwa*), and intentions (*Niya*) (p. 459) should reflect strong leadership practices since these values are embedded in Muslims' everyday life. However, he explains that the current Arab and Islamic leadership styles are not especially successful because they are primarily a combination of tribal and Western administration practices that are predominant in Arab cultures, quite often in negative ways (Ali, 1995).

Over the last few decades, the structures of formal organisations have changed significantly in order to adjust to the changing problems they currently experience in an increasingly global society. There has also been an expanding collection of ideas supported by different theoretical and practical justifications with the aim of recommending more effective alternatives and offering greater insights for organisational leaders. According to Ali and Al-Owaihian (2008), within the Muslim world, and by extension the Arab world, problems within organisations are not particularly different from those in other nations and have been due to the decline of sales and profitability, performance, employee turnover and job satisfaction, growing competition, organisational politics and so on. To address these challenges, Muslim organisations have opted to restructure their organisations and leadership in addition to implementing more adaptive, contextualised alternatives.

There have been a number of research studies conducted on the effect of organisational culture and behaviour in school settings and how it affects leadership. These include studies in the US (e.g., Javidan, et al., 2006; Moran, Harris and Moran, 2011; Usunier, 1998), the UK (e.g., Dorfman, 1996; Luna and Forquer- Gupta, 2001), and Europe (e.g., Batagiannis, 2011; Bezzina, 2004; Derrington, 2011; Glatter, 2006; Guskey, 2003; Hansson, 2002; Jackson, 2001). Similarly, in the Middle East there are some studies that examine the effects of organisational culture on leadership such as in Turkey (Sabanci, 2008; Sahin, 2004; Usdiken, 1997; Yilmaz and Tasdan, 2009) and Malaysia (Dimmock, 1998; Hallinger and Leithwood, 1998). Fewer studies have been conducted in Arab countries, including the Gulf, to assess and evaluate the effect of leadership and organisational behaviour (e.g., Ali, 1990; Ali and Weir, 2005). This lack of research in Arab contexts gives more significance to the current research study as it will contribute to the

organisational culture literature on how a leader can lead successfully in Arab countries as represented by the UAE.

Policy Studies

Public policy has been the focus of many research studies (e.g., Birkland, 2014; Rose, 2004; Sabatier and Weible, 2014). Howlett and Ramesh (2003, p. 3) provide one of the well-known, basic definitions of public policy as ‘a choice made by a government to undertake some course of action’ (see also Parsons, 1996). Kay (2009) argues that any policy implementation involves change in the targeted population, and that policies ‘depend on human decisions that are made in a historical context and influenced by the legacy of the past and uncertainty of future’ (p. 2).

Policy theories are central to understanding policymaking and policy implementation. Among the studies discussed below, literature on policymaking and psychology and studies on the systems and environments in which they operate are included. In Chaudhuri’s (2016) paper, ‘Policy studies, policymaking, and knowledge-driven governance,’ he presents a compelling argument that the policy and academic worlds have gradually drifted further apart since the early 1950s. He reports the case of the evolution of policy, specifically Public Policy in the United States and concludes that academia should be an aid to the development of policy as it defines the process of cross-institutional coordination up to the level of significant impact (Chaudhuri, 2016). This is a point that resonates with the earlier work of Sabatier (2014) in the book, *Theories of the policy process*, who argue that scholars are always driven by the need to contrast theories with the primary aim to

accept some and reject others, which in practice is often not the best way to handle policy issues. This then leads to a need to investigate the primary theories of policy studies and policymaking.

Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) claim that it is very challenging for a country to have its own policy framework and documents without benefiting from the influence of other countries. They argue that due to globalization and widespread communication systems it is very challenging for a country to isolate its economy from others. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) explain that policy makers rely heavily on consultants to form policy regulations and procedures for those who generally ignore the principle that what might be known as best practice in one culture might not necessarily be suitable for another situation and culture (Blustein, 2013; John, 2013; Prince, 2012).

Among the theories that are well-known in the twenty first century is Kingdon's agenda setting theory, which emphasizes that agenda setting is the initial stage of any policy process. The agenda is the rundown of issues to which government authorities or the individuals who settle on approach choices consider (Coffman, 2007). Thereafter, the idea can be advanced through the three processes of politics, problems, and proposals (Coffman, 2007). Looking further back, Sabatier (2014) presents seven theories of the policy process. The first is the heuristic stages theory, which subdivides the process into multiple stages of setting the agenda, formulation of the policy, legalization process, actualization and enforcement, and assessment. As Sabatier (2014) claims, this theory was very famous in the 70s and 80s, however, others have challenged its simplicity and the lack of causal factors. The second theory that he presents is the institutional rational choice theory whereby institutions skew self-interests of individual actors by implementing rational decisions. It is most widely used in the United States and much of the Western world, according to

Sabatier (2014). Among other frameworks, include the multiple streams theory, which considers policy development consisting of a policy stream, a problem stream, and a politics stream. This includes a process of punctuated equilibrium that features gradual prolonged slight changes that are then filled with intermittent key policy changes. Sabatier (2014) also considers coalition theory, diffusion theory, and funnel theory. Lowi (1968) is also known for the arenas of power theory, which focuses on the types of policies such as distributive, regulatory, and redistributive policies. Overall, the theories of general policy studies have been studied for years and the field has been elaborated in great depth since the establishment of its foundations.

Similarly, Haddad and Desmky (1995) proposed a framework to analyse policy formation. A diagram is presented below that summarizes the overall procedure of what Haddad and Demsky presented as an effective cycle of policy analysis.

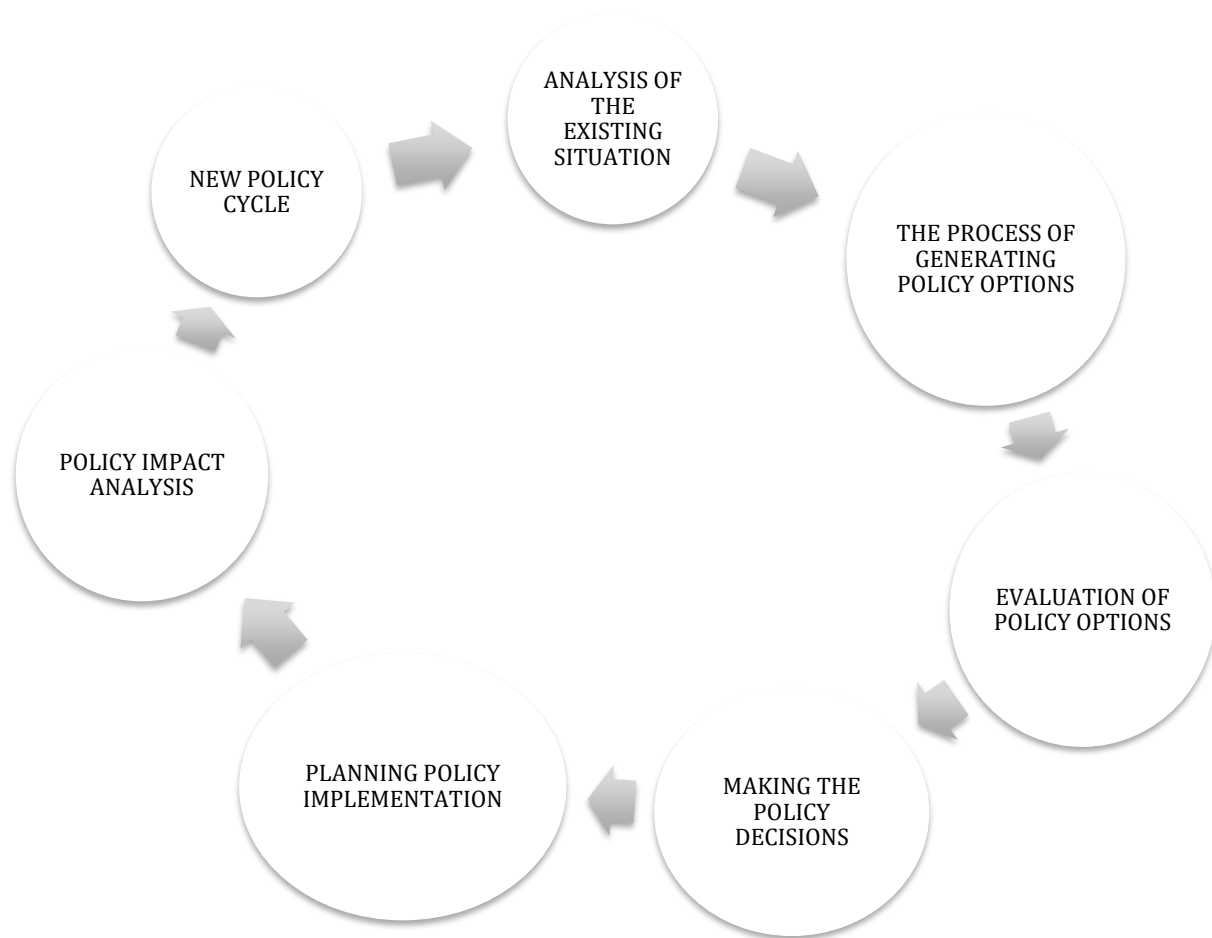


Figure 5. Conceptual framework of policy analysis

(Adapted from Haddad and Demsky, 1995).

In this framework, Haddad and Demsky (1995) argue that effective policy development starts with an in-depth *analysis of the existing situation*. This analysis should take into account the cultural background of the country, its culture and social stratification patterns. They further explain that the political context should be considered as it will help in understanding the decision-making process, the capacity of the country to do planning and the institutional structure of the political sector as they suggest that this will have ‘implications for educational development’ (pp. 24-25). Furthermore, the economic context of the country should be examined as Haddad and Demsky

argue that it will be challenging to implement a policy at schools without having the ‘necessary economic infra-structure’. Also, the educational sector of the country should be studied to access the educational opportunities, equity of distributing services, structure of the educational system and the internal and external efficiency. Additionally, Haddad and Demsky argue that the dynamics of the change should be carefully considered as this factor plays a crucial role in the change process. These dynamics define the forces that are against or support the change and they help promote or hinder the change process. Haddad and Demsky further argue that in developing countries it is impossible to highlight all of these dynamics, however, some of these dynamics that are associated with educational change are teachers, students and parents. The literature review presented previously highlights teachers’ attitude as a significant factor that affects policy implementation of inclusion policies as teachers are important agents in driving educational change.

Haddad and Demsky presented the *process of generating policy option* as the next step in creating the policy in which they identified four modes of generating the policy: systematic, incremental, ad hoc and importation modes. They argue that systematic mode starts with three steps: data generating, devising and prioritizing of options. They suggest that data comes from two resources: experienced people and research based. However, Haddad and Demsky argue that this mode is complicated as it seeks to understand all policy outcomes and is usually affected by political, social and professional factors that act like possible constraints in policy generation. On the other hand, the incremental mode starts with an identification of a problem then an enforcement of a solution will be presented gradually. They argue that the need for change will result in a quick response for urgent problems in which policy makers might seek to alter the existing situation without foreseeing future complications. Additionally, Haddad and Demsky identified the unplanned mode

or ad hoc mode that comes as an answer to the rise of a new elite in which the policy has no rational reason behind its emergence. Moreover, Haddad and Demsky presented the importation mode where policies arise as a result of adopting a certain model or idea from another country, however, they argue that this mode may not be successful unless it takes into consideration the society where it is being imported.

The next step in policy development according to Haddad and Demsky is the *evaluation of policy options* in which the following factors should be taken into consideration: affordability, feasibility and desirability. The feasibility factor includes: human resources and their need for training to make the policy implementation possible whereas the desirability factor should consider the compatibility of the policy option, the impact on different groups that are directly affected by the policy and the degree of the impact that this policy option will have on current political situations. Following this, the policy development proceeds to *making the policy decision*. Haddad and Demsky recognise that although this decision may not be ideal for all interested groups, it is needed to gain political support and avoid time pressure. During this stage the researchers argue that policy makers should ask some critical questions, such as: did the policy development process undergo all necessary developmental stages? How far will the decision of the policy take us from the current policy situation? Is the policy written in a manner that it could be measurable?

The next step in developing the policy is *planning policy implementation*; Haddad and Demsky argue that: ‘what was abstract in the evaluation process begins to become concrete during planning’. This planning involves many important steps such as a schedule for relocating personal, physical objects and funds. They further suggest that each of these steps should be planned with

clarity and careful consideration in a manner that leaves no doubt. Moreover, financial resources including personal training to implement that policy must be considered. Furthermore, Haddad and Demsky stated that the technical knowledge to drive the change of policy implementation must be at a 'mastery level' and that administrative systems should be in place and ready to operate to eliminate any implementation delays. What is more, Haddad and Demsky highlighted an important element in planning the implementation process that is usually neglected by most policy makers and that is political support that will inspire all involved parties to embrace the policy change with 'enthusiasm'. Some of the mobilization strategies include the participation of the opposing parties or their representatives, in which case this could lead to minimizing the resistance towards the change and most likely as Haddad and Demsky suggested to policy design modification. The researchers suggested that sometimes the conversion of abstract policy into real implementation may result in re-evaluation and re-design of the policy. These aspects according to the researchers are highly underestimated and are in many cases the most frequent mistake that policy makers commit during the implementation process. Haddad and Demsky explained that it is during this process (planning for implementation) that policy makers notice that the suggested schedules are 'unrealistic' and that initiated programs are 'highly ambitious' (p. 36). Furthermore, the researchers stressed that no matter how carefully prepared the implementation design is, it is more likely to result in unexpected surprises that could result in changing the policy design and that the most effective way to limit the damage caused by these surprises is to implement the policy change in stages such as to conduct a pilot study before the implementation of any policy change. The next step in planning for the policy is to plan for *policy impact assessment* in which policy makers plan for assessing the value and the results of implementing the policy change. This step as Haddad and

Demsky argue should not be rushed as premature assessment could lead to a false assessment of the reality.

For a policy change to be effective and respond to the environment it should have been instigated for a sufficient amount of time. However, Haddad and Demsky argue that waiting for the policy change to result in of the desired impact may lead to wastage of funds should the design or the processes established prove not to be effective due to lack of sufficient funding or human capacity. Therefore, they suggested a cycle of ongoing assessment and continuous reflection to be able to modify the implementation or the policy design. During this phase some of the questions that may be asked are: the actual impact of the policy, affordability of the change, acceptance from the stakeholders and possibly most importantly, does it need exceptional efforts to be replicated (Haddad and Demsky 1995, p. 38).

The final stage in planning for policy change is what comes as a natural result of the policy impact assessment and this is a *new policy cycle*. Haddad and Demsky argue that this stage is often neglected in many planning for policy cycles as ‘long-term policy analysis and planning is not often carried out in this manner’ (p. 38). In most cases, the researchers argue, this action is seen as a necessary step to close the cycle altogether and begin a new policy instead of refining what already exists.

In the UAE, the federal government launched the 2021 Vision statement, which was presented by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum. The vision aims ‘to make the UAE among the best countries in the world by the next Golden Jubilee of the union’ (UAE government,

2015). To specify which aspects are to be reformed, six pillars are itemised in this vision statement, one of which is a ‘first rate education system’. Currently, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Abu Dhabi Educational Council (ADEC) are working hand-in-hand to translate this vision statement into policies and procedures that can be implemented in schools, higher education and vocational education levels (UAE, Vision 2021, 2015). However, like most developing countries, many of these policies have been drawn from international sources heavily influenced by Western consultants who do not necessarily modify the policies (policy transfer principles) to make them appropriate to a different context (see ElKaleh and Samier, 2013). Moreover, there is very little evidence-based research that informs policy and policy implementation (Litz, 2011). Brown, Lake and Matters (2011) argue that in education, the evidence-based policies and research initiatives are still in their primary stages of development. This problem adds to the significance of this study, as one of the research objectives is to examine policy implementation at the school level that corresponds to the vision statement of the UAE, its social institutions, and its culture. There have been a number of studies that have examined the policy background in Arabic and Islamic contexts, most of which argue that policies in the Arab world are heavily influenced by globalisation (Litz, 2011) and that many Arab countries are transferring policies from Western countries often using consultants who heavily influence the policy formation and development of regulations (An-Na’am, 2008; Hassi, 2012; Litz, 2011; Özbilgin, Syed, Ali, and Torunoglu, 2012; Rohde, Dhouib and Alayan 2012; Souli, 2015; Tlaiss, 2014).

1. Educational Policy Studies

Educational policy studies focus on investigating the theoretical background of education in relation to practice with the aim of guiding policy development. Among the primary matters to understand in the educational policy realm is how policies on education are formulated and implemented, what constitute the driving factors and what are the resultant implications on institutes of learning. Major themes that dominate educational policy studies internationally are: globalization, neoliberalism/market model critiques, public/private partnerships, internationalization and social justice. Globalization studies on educational policy examine the degree to which social change and economic change shapes and determine educational policies in a specific country and to what degree educational change responds to the global demands and at the same time represents the needs of regional and national demands (see: Carnoy and Rhoten, 2002; Sperandio, Hobson, Douglas and Pruitt, 2009; Tarc, 2012). Similarly, there are studies that examine the relationship between educational policy and the neoliberalist market model, which argues that educational policy, is highly affected and regulated by market demands of a country that is controlled by the government (Cohen and Centeno, 2006 and Varman, Saha and Skålen, 2011). Other studies examine the effect of internationalization on educational policy which often leads to a change process in the educational policy of an institution to include an international perspective/curricular to their educational system to enhance student outcomes to reach desired skills (Altbach and Knight, 2007; Knight, 2004; Qiang, 2003).

Additionally, there are studies that examine the public/private partnership model and its effect on shaping and regulating educational policies. Some of these studies have argued against the effectiveness and value-for-money benefits to the educational system (Hodge and Greve, 2007 and Robertson and Verger, 2012). Other studies have examined educational policy and social justice

and how these policies ensure that all learners have equal learning opportunities to reach their potential regardless of colour, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds (Marshall, 2004 and Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson and Koschoreck, 2001). Likewise, Gewirtz and Cribb (2002) investigated social justice and post-welfarism, one of his major observations is that countries such as the United Kingdom are rebuilding from a considerate welfarism system to an inconsiderate post-welfarism system, which places market forces first. Inside a welfarist administration, state education policy was created to shield people from the vagaries and the disparities of strong market forces and education was a key pillar toward ensuring that adequate welfare occurs (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2002). However, modern education is leaning more toward the market side regardless of the social and economic situation of the disadvantaged sections of the population.

Indeed, educational policy has become a major agenda item in twenty first century politics and it is a high priority motivation for governments all over the world. However, it is important to note that those formulating the policy must consider the fact that those receiving the policy may not embrace it as well, therefore the process, even for educational policy, must be considerate, as Grace (1995) puts it.

United Arab Emirates Education

1. Overview of its Development and Current Status (A Historical Background)

Gonzalez et al. (2008) argue that the history of formal education in the UAE is relatively new. Previously, education was practiced with young children reciting the Qur'an in what was then called 'Madrasas' with an elderly 'sheikh' who had memorized the Qur'an. Then, during the British colonisation period when the Emirates was known as the 'Trucial States,' there were about 20 schools with around 4,000, mostly male, students (NQA, 2013). The rapid improvement of the nation since the increased exploitation of the UAE's oil resources during the 60s has depended on the recruitment of expatriates from abroad. In fact, as Dickson and Le Roux (2012) note, Kuwait used to provide aid to the United Arab Emirates in the form of teacher salaries and equipment during the mid-twentieth century, and much of the UAE's curriculum was imported from countries such as Egypt. Even though the reforms started in the late 1990s, there was slow change until a political paradigm shift in the period 2005-2006 took place when the Sheikhs decided to pursue educational reforms (Dickson and Le Roux, 2012). The Ministry of Education (MOE) was formed shortly after the federation of the UAE was established in 1971, expanding schools and providing education tax free to all Emirati students (Godwin, 2006). In Abu Dhabi, the Ministry of Education managed schools until 2005, when the Abu Dhabi Educational Council was established (ADEC, 2013).

Figure 6 below summarises the development of the school models in Abu Dhabi.

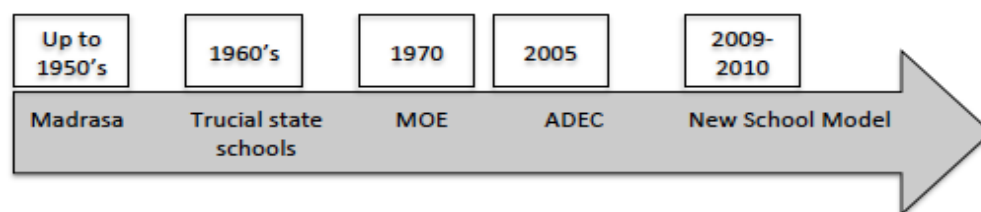


Figure 6. The Development of School Models in Abu Dhabi

(Adapted from Gonzalez et al., 2008, p. 99-100).

According to the United Arab Emirates, Ministry of Education (1990) educational report, access to learning institutions was to a great degree constrained during the country's foundation in 1971. However, from that point forward, a huge revolution has occurred and impressive strides have been made to provide education to the constantly growing populace (Dickson and Le Roux, 2012; Zahran et al., 2016). Today, the United Arab Emirates offers an extensive education system to both sexes from kindergarten to college, free to all citizens. There is additionally a broad private schooling segment, while other students hold government sponsorships for studying in other countries to gain their higher education qualifications (The Prospect Group, 2012).

Fulfilment of education and training levels have made huge progress since the nation's beginning. In 1975, adult and youth education rates were roughly 54% and 63% respectively (The Prospect Group, 2012). These rates developed to 71% and 82% separately in 1985, involving increases of 33% and 30%. By 2005, education rates had risen to more than 90% of the adult population and more than 95% of the adolescent population (The Prospect Group, 2012). In 2010, there were 1,190 schools in the UAE. Albeit 61% of the schools in the nation are open, 58% of the funds in the nation go to tuition-based schools (The Prospect Group, 2012). The United Arab Emirate's government funded educational system offers one of the best teacher student ratios worldwide at 15:1 (The Prospect Group, 2012).

In 2010, the UAE's government spending plan remained at \$11.9bn, of which \$2.67bn was assigned to training, accounting for 22.5% of the aggregate spending plan. In the 2011 spending plan, the designation for instruction and social advancement was multiplied and represents 46% of the 2011 spending plan, revealing that training is one of the UAE's fundamental key needs. A key segment

of the administration's methodology has been the decentralization of instructional authority from the government-run Ministry of Education to the nearby training bodies in every emirate (Zahran, Pettaway, Waller, and Waller, 2016). There are three noteworthy bodies: the Ministry of Education, which has full authority over the northern emirates; Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), and the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) and its ten-year strategic plan. Various attempts are being made to further segment the administrative domains of authority for education and training (Dickson, 2012). Developments in training in the UAE concentrate on better arrangements, more responsibility that is prominent, higher targets, and enhanced skill accomplishment. Furthermore, repetitive instructional computer learning materials are being replaced with more flexible and intelligent types of learning. Furthermore, the English-language instruction is being incorporated into different subjects, such as the arts and sciences.

The reform of the educational system, in particular the curriculum and instruction that have been introduced to raise the quality of teaching and learning, is currently a 'hybrid' of Western curricula and models (Godwin, 2006) that come mainly from the US, Canada, and Australia (Bradshaw, Tennant and Lydiatt, 2004). The demographics of the UAE is a mixture of expatriates from many countries such as: the Philippines, India, the US, Canada, Australia, and many Arab expatriates from a number of nearby countries, as well as numerous other nationalities (Lewis, 2006). The NQA (2013) reported that 88% of the total population in the UAE are expatriates and only 12% are locals, the disparity in these figures has continued to increase since 2013. This diversity of nationalities brings about the diversity in cultures, values, and belief systems from many countries that characterise many workplaces in the UAE (Moran, Harris and Moran, 2011). Education

leaders, then, have to lead their organisations by navigating through these differences in order to be successful (Lewis, 2006).

2. Key Challenges to United Arab Emirates Education

According to Zahran et al's (2016) study on the 'Educational leadership: Challenges in United Arab Emirates,' UAE policy makers have been facing real difficulties in formulating and implementing the required reforms, despite its primary focus on enhancing its educational system. Zahran, Pettaway, Waller, and Waller's paper delves into the various factors that are influencing the country's reforms. Among the identifiable challenges including global economic challenges is that the system is not able to prepare students for functioning productively in the macro-and micro economic realms in which they live (Zahran et al., 2016). This indicates that the economy has become a significant determinant of education and educational reforms, and they are occurring in most countries around the world. So, the authors propose that the best way to handle such challenges is to expose Emirati students to more global and cross-cultural settings.

An interesting investigative study by Dickson (2012), established that teacher trainers were concerned about the level and amount of research being carried out in the country. Even though the government had availed enough funding, by allocating a third of its budget, there was a diminished dependence on contracting external research (Dickson, 2012). By investigating 138 students who were training to be teachers, Dickson establishes that one of key segments for excellence in tertiary training is research, which has verifiably been inadequate in the country. The

UAE is endeavouring to build up its research and development activities, which are vital to the UAE instructional plan (Tabari, 2014). Nevertheless, there are difficulties connected with building up research and development capacity in the nation. Furthermore, as discussed above in the literature review the UAE educational system faces another challenge with the policy transfer as consultants are developing most of the educational policy agendas with little if any research-based evidence (Litz, 2011).

Another study by Ruba Tabari (2014) on the ‘Education reform in the UAE: An investigation of Teachers’ views of change and factors impeding reforms in Ras Al Khaimah schools,’ established that some of the challenges on United Arab Emirates education and reform were a divisive gap on the need for reforms. According to Tabari (2014), teachers were not in agreement regarding the reforms. Some of the concerns that the teachers had was the importation of too much knowledge into their society that was once very conservative and weary of outside knowledge (Tabari, 2014). So, the negative attitudes toward the reforms indicated a challenge in that the advancement of the system may not be fully embraced. Tabari (2014) further notes that some teachers preferred to use their old methods regardless of the enacted reforms. A few reasons as to why this was the case included the lack of the country’s leadership to consult them, and the rapid implementation of the reforms. This also indicated a challenge of culture, in that the citizens preferred the old way of life to the modernised of the globalized way of doing things.

Moreover, one of the key challenges that the educational leadership is faced with in the UAE is the level of demographic representation of the diversity of the population of the country in employment of teachers and administrators at the school level (Gonzalez, 2008). This fact adds further value to

the current thesis as it aims to provide a model of effective leadership practices in the UAE. There have been a number of research studies that have documented the distinctiveness of educational leadership in the Arab context. For example, Kabasakal and Dastmalchian (2001), examined the value systems of expatriate managers and how they lead successfully in a multicultural Arab context. More specifically, Shaw, Badri and Hukul (1995), appraised the concerns of managers in a sample of UAE schools concluding that there needs to be further studies conducted to document successful leadership practices in the multicultural environment of the UAE. There have also been several recent studies that examined educational leadership in an Arab and Islamic context (e.g., Ellili-Cherif, Romanowski and Nasser, 2012; Findlow, 2013; Hallinger and Bryant, 2013; Hamdan, 2013; Kemp, Madsen and El-Saidi, 2013; Mohamad, 2012; Morton and Montgomery, 2012) that are relevant to the research purpose of this thesis. In general, the multicultural nature of the UAE adds a level of challenge to managers who work in the UAE, particularly in the educational sectors (Gaad, Arif and Scott, 2006). Educational leaders must understand the distinctiveness of the UAE to be able to successfully lead their schools and meet the vision, and the mission, of the UAE.

Conclusion:

The above literature provides a comprehensive background for this research study. The general leadership, schools' leadership models, organisational and cross-cultural components provide the background information that will assist in exploring leadership practices as stated by the second and third research objectives. Policy and Arab organisational leadership studies will assist in examining the Abu Dhabi School Model and assessing how appropriate it is for leading Abu Dhabi

schools. Arab Islamic leadership studies combined with the information from the policy studies will help to determine any cross-cultural issues and policy limitation that might affect the leadership practices in Abu Dhabi schools.

Additionally, Arab and Islamic leadership literature will provide information on how Islamic values and traditions may influence leadership practices in Abu Dhabi. This is also important since the change in the UAE places importance on preserving the heritage and culture and gives increasing emphasis on simultaneously sustaining the culture while modernising the UAE. Moreover, the review of relevant literature on acculturation assists with exploring leadership practices since the UAE schools' culture are highly multicultural. It is assumed in this research study that there will exist a number of diverse approaches and implicit models of principal leadership some of which correspond more closely with the country's mission and vision than others, particularly where some western influence was imposed on school leadership. The constitution and laws of this country assert that this is a multicultural society where people's cultural heritage will be respected and maintained (Godwin, 2006). People may acculturate to varying extents, which is likely to emerge from the empirical research for this thesis, if this is occurring.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter will discuss the research methodology and explain the research approach drawing on the exploratory nature of the research study. Next, it will explain the site and subject selection for the research drawing on van Manen (2016) and the hermeneutic approach for the study. Then, the chapter will describe and justify the methods of data collection including interviews, document analysis and material culture observation. It will address the trustworthiness, reliability and triangulation of the empirical research to validate the qualitative nature of this research work. Finally, it will conclude with an explanation of the ethical considerations of this study.

Research Approach

This research is a case study that uses an interpretive qualitative method in the hermeneutic tradition of Gadamer (1992), and it also uses social constructivist grounded theory practices for data analysis (e.g., Charmaz, 2008). This means that the methodology for data collection is a combination of a number of qualitative methods that allow for triangulation that increases its reliability and trustworthiness to help the researcher understand the leadership experiences of the participants, and how they understand their practices in improving their schools. Hermeneutics is designed to capture and understand other people's meanings and meaning construction, therefore involving a detailed knowledge of the context as well as personal experiences and the organisation context, plus other factors external to the school system that shape their knowledge and

understanding. For example, what do they mean by leadership, quality, professionalism, and leadership ethics, coming as they do from a number of different cultures, including the UAE?

Hermeneutics as a study of interpretation and meaning, began in the modern historical period with Von Humboldt, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Droysen, Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Schlegel and Wilhelm Dilthey (1996). In its earliest modern form in the 19th century and before, hermeneutics was developed for the purpose of biblical interpretation, literary studies, and interpreting social experience. In the work of Humboldt, the development of hermeneutics as a philosophy stems from the possibility of ‘human self-recognition’, which can be achieved, according to him, in the flow of speech. This was translated into reflection that is rooted in man’s inner ability and competence to speak (Bleicher, 2017). Hermeneutics for Schleiermacher (1998) involves distinguishing between grammatical and psychological interpretations where interpretation of texts is based on intuition and feelings (Schleiermacher, 1998). Droysen interpreted hermeneutics as the art of ‘historical inquiry’ and understanding the connections while participating in ethical communities (Maclean, 1982). Dilthey built on Droysen’s analysis of hermeneutics and proposed that understanding stems from ‘a lived experience that cannot be repeated’ which provides the corner stone for human understanding while the overall understanding results from connecting lived experiences to form the bigger picture (Grondin, 1997).

In the 20th century the field of hermeneutics broadened to include a general philosophical hermeneutics as a research method for interpreting phenomena. The main authors who developed this approach are Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, and it continued to evolve through work by Paul Ricoeur and in critical theory by Jürgen Habermas (see Grondin, 1997; Ormiston, 1989; Thiselton,

2009; Thompson, 1984). The development of hermeneutics as a research method began with Husserl, and is sometimes referred to as 'objective hermeneutics' (Dowling, 2004, p.32). Husserl proposed 'bracketing' as a method of interpreting where the interpreter 'suspends his bias' before gathering data on the researched phenomena (Koch, 1995). Martin Heidegger followed Husserl and developed hermeneutics as a method to 'clarify under which conditions understanding occurs for the purpose of ontology' (Dowling, 2004, p. 32). Heidegger rejected the 'suspension of presuppositions' proposed by Husserl and argued that the focus of a hermeneutic philosophy is on the 'nature of existence' (p.33). Hans-Georg Gadamer built on Heidegger's explanation of hermeneutics and proposed a new method for using hermeneutics in research. In his book *Truth and Method* (1994) Gadamer proposed that the main purpose of hermeneutics is to understand a subject's text or meaning within the context of the reader's or researcher's own perspectives. This process is referred to as the hermeneutic circle (see Figure 7 below), and focusing on language, seeks to achieve as close to a correct interpretation as possible through the fusion of horizons (see also Grondin, 2003). The fusion of horizons is applied to research through the hermeneutic spiral (see Figure 7 below) where acts of interpretation occur in a continuous cycle of understanding, explanation and appropriation.

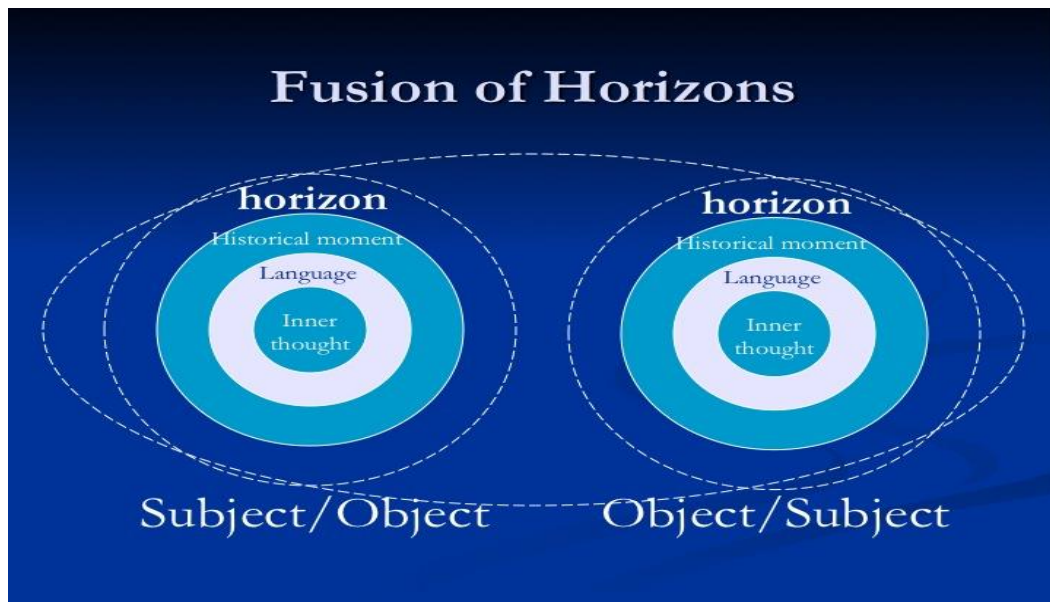


Figure 7. The hermeneutic circle
(Adapted from Gadamer, 2008, p. 18-43).

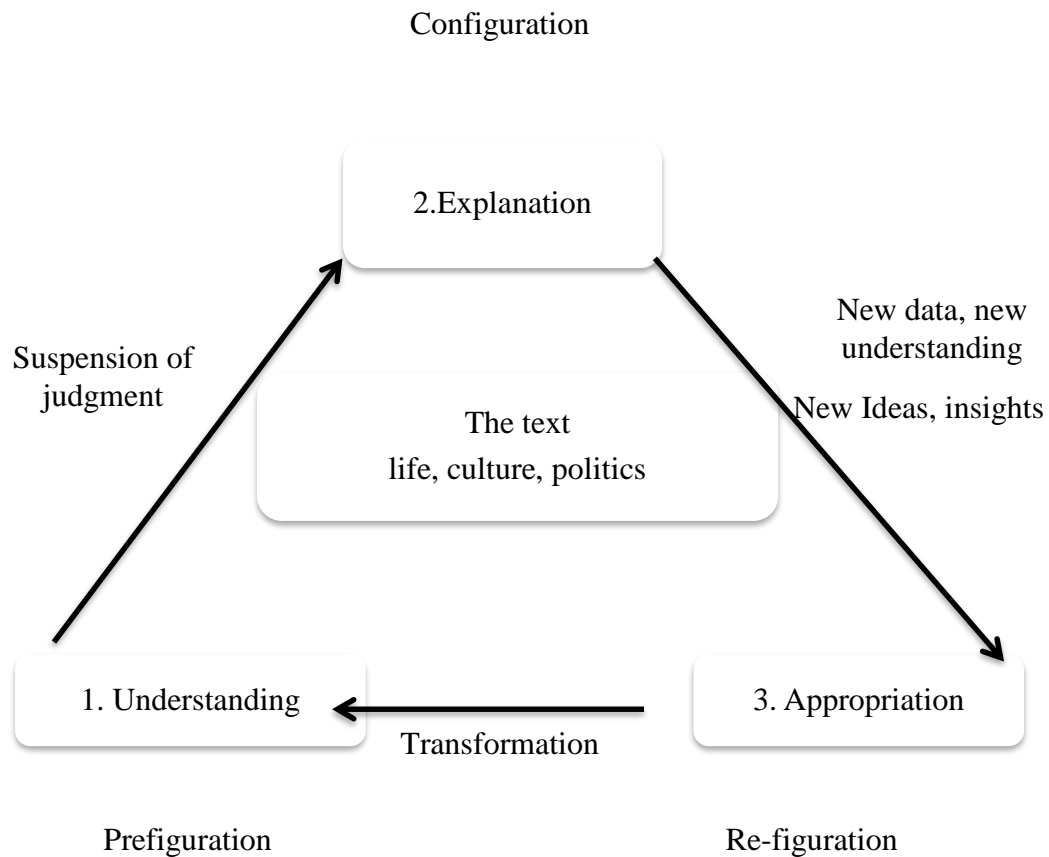


Figure 8. The hermeneutic spiral (based on Gadamer, 1994)

(Adapted from Gadamer, 1994, p. 358).

Essentially, hermeneutics is an interpretive methodology that is fundamentally focused on situations arising from human actions, as well as the outcomes of such actions mostly related to texts (Prasad, 2002). Hermeneutics derives most of its traditions from philosophical elements including the realism of Descartes as well as critiques of the subject-object split in Cartesian dualism. However, Hans-Georg Gadamer is often identified as the primary figure in modern hermeneutics, which can be attributed to his extensive work on philosophical hermeneutics directed towards human perception and comprehension (Gadamer, 2008). It also has been related to Habermasian critical theory and Foucault's (2013) *Archaeology of Knowledge*. Hermeneutics as a

methodological approach is interrelated in numerous ways with these theories, ideas and conventions. By considering all of the above aspects one can establish a detailed definition of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics challenges and contests positivist scientific traditions rather than being a science that complements the approach. In addition, as Radford (1991) observed, hermeneutics cannot be understood as an option to the various methodologies and approaches that researchers can select from, but as a unique approach whose main aim is to provide the conditions or contextual frameworks that enable other methods to exist. Essentially, it strives to account for the philosophical and cultural assumptions that are not adequately concentrated on in the natural sciences. The hermeneutics that is discussed throughout Gadamer's work reflects on the understanding of the essence of comprehension, which is completely different from the typical definitions or representations of what understanding really is according to the epistemology of Cartesian theory (Kim, 1988). This distinction has major significance for researchers since the assumptions a researcher espouses often will shape and determine educational practices and research conceptualization.

The value and use of hermeneutics in education, arises from Gadamer's (1992) writings on education, as well as authors like Gallagher (1992), who argues that there was always a strong relationship between hermeneutics and education beginning in Classical Greece where its technique was valued in educational development. Fairfield (2012), who focuses on the dialogue for pedagogy, Blumenfeld-Jones' (2012) examination of hermeneutics in arts education, the relationship between Gadamer's hermeneutics and *Bildung* (the German term for becoming educated and cultivated) (Davey, 2006), and, most relevant to this study, Al-Daraweesh and Snauwaert's (2015) use of hermeneutics for human rights education towards global justice.

One of the most common texts used in education to guide hermeneutic research is *Hans-Georg Gadamer on Education, Poetry and History: Applied Hermeneutics* (1992). In it, Gadamer explains that in using hermeneutics as an orientation towards learning, is based on the idea that presuppositions are embedded in human nature and constitute the medium in which understanding takes place. He further argues that one can learn to subject one's presuppositions to criticism. Gadamer contribution is of great importance to education and educational research as it rejects the notion that education does not have value unless it is 'demonstrable and has quantifiable outcomes' (Hogan and Smith, 2003, p. 175)

Even though Gadamer focused extensively on education as a subject, the theorist played a central role in the development of a hermeneutics that was not essentially a way of setting down a method or a variety of approaches for human understanding. Rather, he attempted to discover commonalities in all of the methods and ways of thinking and understanding to demonstrate that our understanding is not a subjective connection to a certain object but rather, to the history of its effect (Giddens, 2013). With respect to education, hermeneutics remains profoundly relevant across an array of disciplines including law, literature, political theory, science as well as ethics. In various publications written between 1947 and 1988, Gadamer addressed a wide range of educational issues grounded in the hermeneutic approach. These included the role of the humanities in an increasingly multicultural global context, the training and development of teachers, as well as the implications of the growing costs of higher education research.

Hermeneutics in education is increasingly being applied in different contexts and countries, including the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Turkey, Egypt (Mason, Bray and Adamson, 2007; Flick, 2013; Tesch, 2013; Van Manen, 2016). Hermeneutics has also been introduced to the field of educational administration and leadership, providing a more in-depth approach to how people understand and interpret others (e.g., Mackler, 2011; Mackler and Mulryan, 2010). It has also been adopted as a major research approach for education in exploring lived experience (e.g., Van Manen, 2016) by authors like Friesen, Hendriksson and Saevi (2012) who explore its value through hermeneutic phenomenology in examining experiential aspects of education.

This thesis will follow the hermeneutic tradition developed by Gadamer (1994), who proposed a new method for using hermeneutics in research. In his book *Truth and Method* (1994), Gadamer argues that the main purpose of hermeneutics is to understand a subject's text or meaning within the context of the reader's or researcher's own perspectives. This process is referred to as the hermeneutic circle, and it focuses on language, seeks to achieve as close to a correct interpretation as possible through the fusion of horizons (see also Grondin, 2003). The fusion of horizon is applied in research through the hermeneutics spiral where interpreting is a continuous cycle of understanding, explanation and appropriation.

Additionally, Van Manen (2016) argues that in research based on phenomenology there is no clear systematic plan to follow to investigate the human condition. Even so, there is a methodical process that a researcher might follow while conducting human science research. Van Manen stresses that it is not a step-by-step procedure for a researcher to follow, rather, they are a set of activities that naturally appear during the process of human science research. Van Manen explains that these

activities can be summarized into six activities: ‘turning the nature of the lived experience into a phenomenon, investigating experiences as we live it, reflecting on essential theme, writing and re-writing, maintaining a strong orientation and balancing parts and wholes’ (pp. 30-31). However, he argues that all of these activities may take place simultaneously since the aim is to understand the lived experience of the participants in the research.

This research study will follow a qualitative case study design which; according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), is an activity in which the researcher is involved in ‘an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world’ (p. 44). They also explain that this qualitative research approach allows the researcher to interpret, understand, and make sense of the meanings people bring to their lived experience. The current study examines the social experiences that the participants practice when leading their schools. Collins (1994) explains that one of the approaches to understanding the social phenomena of the participants is through a case study qualitative research approach as it provides a more in-depth analysis to the comprehension of human behaviour and allows the researcher to gain a better understanding of the participant’s experience. This approach to research study facilitates interaction with the participants in their social contexts to understand their social experiences. Additionally, Stake (1995) argues that case study design has a ‘distinctive emphasis on interpretation’ (p.8) where the researcher immerse him/herself in the studied case to provide a detailed in-depth understanding of it; which is consistent with the interpretive hermeneutic nature of this research study. Furthermore, Yin (2009) emphasises that a case study design is suitable in exploratory research studies. Likewise, Conger (1998), Lantis (1987) and Phillips (1973) argue that qualitative research in leadership studies is crucial particularly for exploratory studies since the aim of the researcher is to gain a better understanding of the phenomena that he/she is researching.

Moreover, they explain that in order to better understand leadership, a researcher must take into consideration the multicultural elements that could be very challenging, if not sometimes impossible, to capture through quantitative research methods. In the case of this study this means to understand how principals reconcile differences within the school and remains focus on the schools' objectives and aims.

Parry et al. (2014) reviewed 25 years of leadership studies that were reported in the *Leadership Quarterly* journal, concluding that there is a trend towards qualitative research when examining leadership as it provides the researcher with more of an in-depth understanding of leadership practices. Since my study will explore transformational leadership in a multicultural context, a qualitative approach will be more appropriate since the researcher's intention is to understand and explore the principal's experiences in leadership. There have been a number of recent studies that employed qualitative methods to explore transformational leadership practices that have influenced the design of this study (see Bryman, 1984; Bryman, Stephen and Campo, 1996; Frisch and Huppenbauer, 2014; Giles and Yates, 2014; Hallinger, 2013; Sabanci, Şahin, and Kasalak, 2014). What might also be relevant here are ethnographic studies on culture and the principal's role and also studies on expatriate experience cross-culturally.

A number of academic publications in general leadership studies (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003) and educational leadership draw on hermeneutic philosophy (e.g., Birky, Shelton and Headley, 2006; Maxcy, 1991), or use hermeneutics as a research approach in their empirical studies on organisational storytelling (Boyce, 1996), or on the importance of meaning and meaning construction in leadership stories (e.g., Shamir and Eilam, 2005; Sveningsson and Larsson, 2006; Woodward and Funk, 2010), in ethnographic studies (Myers and Young, 1997), interpretive studies

in organisational communication (e.g., Mumby, 1996; Phillips and Brown, 1993), and leader perceptions (e.g., Van der Mescht, 2004). In addition, as Slattery, Krasny and O'Malley (2007) argue, hermeneutics is an important approach in other educational areas, such as curriculum studies.

Given the nature of the topic and the importance of cultural elements and the multicultural dimensions of the people working in the educational system in the UAE, the research for this thesis seeks to adopt a paradigm that assists the researcher with understanding leadership practices in a complex setting. The research paradigm that supports this research is interpretive by nature. According to Collins (1994), researchers who adopt this paradigm take the role of an interpreter in relation to the studied social phenomena where the researcher aims to understand and explain the participants' actions, intentions and understandings of the phenomena (Glesne, 2011). The research design employs methods that require the researcher to interact with the participants in their everyday social contexts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Creswell (2012) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that researchers should adopt a qualitative approach when there is a need to understand the complexity of meaning developed by participants and their social context. The questions in this approach will therefore be semi-structured, broad, and open-ended. The researcher will then focus on the 'historical and cultural' settings of the participants to be able to interpret the participants' own personal experience. Gadamer (1992) explains that in using hermeneutic method as an orientation towards learning, presuppositions are embedded in human nature and it constitutes the medium in which understanding takes place.

Gadamer (2008) explains that in the hermeneutic approach the researcher must immerse him/herself in the context to be able to fully understand both the participants' experience and their social experience. This is particularly important for this thesis research since it will assist the researcher in answering the research question by reporting more authentically the participants' understanding of the best leadership characteristics, and identifying the challenges, as they understand them, in the UAE context. Since this is an exploratory study, the researcher seeks to explore and understand the participant's meanings and understandings of good leadership practices, and the degree of difference between them. Davey (2006) explains that adopting an interpretive hermeneutics approach allows the researcher to slowly unfold the truth in which 'not everything said may be meant and not everything meant need be said' (p. 3). Therefore, an open-ended question approach will assist in further exploring the lived experience of the participants since it will allow them to share their stories. Davey further argues that in hermeneutics and through continuous reflection and evaluation over time, a telling conversation reveals more of itself and the investigated phenomena become clearer to the researcher. Additionally, Butler (1998) argues that 'human existence is hermeneutic at its essence and that interpretation is central to all social actors including researchers' (p. 298).

Recently, many researchers have advised using hermeneutics to explore leadership (e.g., Klenke, 2008) especially in a multicultural context (e.g., Mäkilouko, 2004). There is currently a trend in empirical research to use a constructivist approach in contrast to rationalist and positivist research (Smith and Blase, 1991). There are further cross-cultural arguments for using hermeneutics. In pursuit of the aim to understand others and the meanings of their language in an authentic way, hermeneutics is also a culturally appropriate approach as there is also a hermeneutic tradition in

Islamic scholarship (e.g., Fudge, 2014; von Denffer, 1994) that provides a shared Western and Muslim tradition to encompass the cultural diversity of the research participants. By using this type of qualitative approach, the purpose of the exploratory study of leadership practices in a multicultural context will be better served, as the wealth of information that can be generated will provide insights into the experiences of the principals in shaping the culture in a multicultural context and on how they understand them. This research study will then provide a background level of understanding that can then be expanded in further studies in Abu Dhabi Schools.

It is important to explain here that a ‘participant’s perception’ is investigated in phenomenology while the understanding and meaning is hermeneutic. The thesis is not intended to be an examination of people’s perceptions (which would involve, according to Lester, 1999, and Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, a phenomenological approach or some form of psychology), but people’s understanding about what is meaningful and of value to them, and what kind of leadership characteristics they think are most appropriate. Moreover, this thesis is not attempting to manage or resolve the differences in cultural groups, because in hermeneutics and grounded theory, one is trying to authentically identify and represent what differences might be there.

Research Methodology

This subsection presents the site and subject selection, the design of the data collection methods, ethical considerations, trustworthiness, reliability, and triangulation, as well as the researcher’s perspective, and the importance of bracketing in hermeneutic studies.

Site and Subject Selection

The sites of this study were three Abu Dhabi government schools; these schools will be primary schools (age group six to eleven) since the reform project started in 2009 in these schools. Each school has one principal who provides educational leadership and a multi-national staff that includes Emirati national teachers, as well as expatriates, such as Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians, Americans, Canadians, and Irish, each of whom come with different backgrounds consisting of personal history and cultural, educational and career experience.

Since hermeneutic studies focus on meaning and meaning making, researchers who adopt this approach need to immerse themselves in the background and the settings of the participants to be able to understand their meaning making. Therefore, qualitative studies that use an interpretive hermeneutic approach have to limit the number of sites and subjects selected to focus on deep meaning and understanding by using multilevel methods (Creswell, 2012; Klenke, 2008; Marshall and Rossman, 2010; Noy, 2008; Stake, 1995).

Since the goal is to gain a better understanding of a participant's experience while leading in a multicultural context, three principals have been chosen through purposeful sampling. This approach fits qualitative research since the aim is not to generalise from the findings of this study; rather, it aims to obtain an in-depth meaning of the phenomena studied (Glesne, 2011, Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2000). It was planned that for every principal, a vice principal, two heads of faculties, four teachers and one cluster manager will participate in the study. The non-principal participants

are not being interviewed to evaluate the quality of school leadership, but to provide triangulation for analyzing trustworthiness and reliability of the principal conceptions of leadership. In addition, consistent with Burns (1978, p. 87), leadership does not take place only in the most senior staff member of an organisation, but occurs within a ‘leadership structure’ where a number of people with junior and senior management positions will often participate. Therefore, others in the schools, like heads of faculty and cluster managers who have an impact on school activities, will be interviewed. The sampling criteria are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Criteria for Purposeful Sampling

Sample	Number of participants	Selection
Schools (sites)	Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Elementary schools (age group 6-11) ➤ Abu Dhabi region ➤ On Abu Dhabi Island
Principals	Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have had two years’ experience in their current post. ➤ Have had more than four years’ experience working with ADEC. ➤ Have completed postgraduate education/training in leadership. ➤ Emirati or Expatriate
Vice principals	Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Emirati/Expatriate ➤ Have had at least two years’ experience working with the current principal. ➤ Have been working with ADEC for at least five years.
Heads of faculty/ English	Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expatriate ➤ Working with the current principal for at least two years. ➤ Working with ADEC for five years. ➤ Worked as a teacher before with ADEC for at least one year.
Heads of faculty/ Arabic	Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Emirati ➤ Working with the current principal for at least two years. ➤ Working with ADEC for five years. ➤ Worked as a teacher before with ADEC for at least one year.
Cluster managers	Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expatriates ➤ Have worked with the principal for at least two years. ➤ Have worked with ADEC for at least five years. ➤ Has previous experience working as a principal in a western country.

Data Collection Methods

Methods that will be used in the study are interviews (narrative interview, in-depth interview and focus groups), document analysis and site material culture observations. These will be used as the main tools to collect data, as recommended by many in the research methods literature (e.g., Bryman et al., 1988; Conger, 1998; Fineman and Mangham, 1983; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009; Judge et al, 2002; Podsakoff, 1994; Tierney, 1996). Researchers who adopt a qualitative approach to the study of educational leadership most frequently employ at least one or two of these three approaches.

Document Analysis

Documents that will be analysed for this study include two levels. National documents which includes the UAE national vision (UAE, 2015), Abu Dhabi 2030 economic plan (The Abu Dhabi Government, 2008), Abu Dhabi Economic plan 2007-2008, the UAE Ministry of Education educational development plan (2012), the Abu Dhabi Education Council policy manual (ADEC, 2012) and school documents, which include Abu Dhabi external inspection reports 'Irtiqa'a inspection reports' for government schools (2013, 2014 and 2015-2016) and school improvement plans (SIP) (2015-2016). According to ADEC's policy, each school's principal is required to develop a school development plan that aligns with ADEC's policies (ADEC, 2012). Moreover, all Abu Dhabi Schools undergo an inspection from an external agency every two years to judge their overall performance against national standards (see ADEC, 2015) in six main elements, one of which is the quality of leadership. After the inspection a report is generated that has a strand

dedicated to reporting on the principal's leadership practices. These documents will be analysed for emerging themes, which can provide valuable data that might not otherwise be reported by the principals, and/or new emerging data that could be further researched in the third phase of the research (Merriam, 2009). These documents will be analysed with the focus on leadership, the vision and mission, and professional development, in addition to UAE heritage and culture components. Table 4 lists these documents and possible links to cross cultural elements, as well as transforming leadership elements.

Table 4. Document analysis and the link to theoretical framework

Theories and models	UAE's national vision	Abu Dhabi Policy Agenda	Abu Dhabi Economic vision	UAE's Ministry of Education Strategies	ADEC's policy	School's SIP	Irtiqa'a reports
Burn's (1978) Transforming/transactional model with Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999)							
Elevating effect							
Raising self-esteem							
Focus on end value							
Modelling high expectations							
Culture Building							
Vision/shared goals							
Individual support							
Branine (2011) Management in Islamic Culture							
Kindness (<i>Ihsan</i>)							
Sincerity (<i>Ekhlas</i>)							
Justice (<i>Adel</i>)							
Consultation (<i>Shura</i>)							
Patience (<i>Saber</i>)							
Truthfulness (<i>Sidq</i>)							
Intentions (Neya)							
Forever mindful of God (Taqwa)							
Klann (2007) Good Leadership Model							
Positive							
Caring about people							
Communicative							
Visionary							
Team oriented							
Dependable							
Competent							

Trompenaars and Hampdon-Turner (2012) Cross-cultural model							
Universalism/ Particularism							
Specific/diffuse							
Internal/External							
Past/Future							
Achievement/Ascription							
Individualism / collectivism							
Emotional/Neutral							

The analysis will use data coding, where the researcher reads and keeps note of the emerging themes that will then form the core of the research data. The thematic analysis will, therefore, link experiences and circumstances together and aim to provide an interpretation and explanation for these themes (Glesne, 2011). Charmaz (2008), Danto (1985), Huberman and Miles (1994), Miles and Huberman (1994) and Rossman and Rallis (2012) explain that thematic analysis may generate themes that the researcher might have expected to find based on the literature review of the study, and surprising information that the researcher did not expect and/or interesting information that the researcher may want to expand on and research further. There have been a number of recent studies that have employed thematic approaches to analysing data, emerging from qualitative inquiry tools to identify and explore themes to gain an in-depth understanding (see Auvinen, Aaltio, and Blomqvist, 2013; Birchall, 2014; Petrides, Jimes and Karaglani, 2014).

The document analysis will assist in gathering data to answer the first research question by analysing the Abu Dhabi School Model document in relation to the National documents to explore leadership practices and any policy implications that influence the implantation of the reform initiative.

Interviews

Narrative conversational interviews:

Principals and vice principals will participate in narrative conversational interviews designed to be as unstructured as possible to be able to capture their understanding of their leadership experience, as is common practice in hermeneutic research. According to Burgess-Limerick (1998), the narrative conversational interview is a ‘powerful tool to gain access to a participant’s understanding of their lived experience’ (p. 64). The questions are designed to capture the elements of the theoretical framework of the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, Branine, Burns, and Klann models described in the literature review.

The first set of questions is designed to elicit information from principals on how they understand good leadership, what is their perspective of a good leader and what model of leadership, if any, do they follow when leading their schools. The second set of questions is designed to understand the processes and any leadership characteristics that these principals use while leading their schools with attention to cultural and cross-cultural elements on relationships building, focus on vision and mission and reconciling differences among different groups of teachers with different nationalities. The third set of questions is designed to elicit information about the cultural factors that influenced the leadership experience that these principals have had. The fourth set of questions is geared towards understanding what policy implications and/or challenges that these principals face in their day-to-day leadership experience. The fifth set of questions explores in-depth examples and

practices of the moral dimension that these principals may or may not have embedded in their practices by sharing their personal journey so far and any success/challenge stories they have faced during their time in leadership roles (see Appendix 1 for principals' interview guide). Each of these questions is then extended with follow-up questions based on the participants' responses to clarify the meaning and provide rich explanations of their social experience (see Appendix 2). For example, one of the questions that is asked in the interview is *how do good leaders balance achieving goals with coherence? How do you balance that? Examples?* This question allows the principal to reflect on her own knowledge about good leadership then about her practice of leadership. The follow-up question will demonstrate the depth of understanding and knowledge of the concept that the principal has about leadership. Bernard (2011), Glesne (2011) and Rubin and Rubin (2011) explain that in narrative conversational interviews the researcher should enter the interviewee's world and gather stories, descriptions, and personally formed experiences to identify patterns that can re-create the culture that the participants lived in and where their experience is constructed.

In depth interviews

Heads of faculty will participate in a semi-structured interview that seeks to motivate participants to talk about their experiences through stories and situations that elaborate on the principal's leadership practices, and where the researcher's role is to stimulate and guide the interview. Chirban (1995) explains that to seek a maximum level of understanding, the in-depth interview develops through four stages: stage one, where the research 'initiates' the contact explaining his/her

goal for the interview and sets the scene for the interview; the second is ‘the first encounter’ where the researcher develops a rapport with the participant creating opportunities for engagement; the third is ‘the engagement stage’ where the researcher starts to create opportunities by sharing their own stories, at which point resonance increases and the researcher sets the scene for the final and fourth stage where ‘the new space and new relationship’ starts to develop and risk-taking and authenticity is revealed.

The first set of questions in the interview guide is designed to elicit information on principals’ leadership characteristics, what influences their leadership and what drives them to lead. The second set of questions is geared towards understanding how did the principal’s practices influence the school and the staff positively or negatively and any policy implications that participants report that have affected the school. The third set of questions explores cultural and cross-cultural factors that define the relationships within the school. The fourth set of questions gauges the level of support and/or inspiration that the principal provides to the staff. The fifth set of questions explores policy implications from followers’ perspectives, how does it influence their daily school routine, and how does the principal follow policy changes? (see Appendix 3 for the interview guide).

The in-depth interviews are designed to last for 60 minutes and be recorded. Then, they will be transcribed for the purpose of analyzing and interpreting the data (Foucault, 1980; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Sherman, 2002; Verniere and Fuchs, 1993). It is anticipated that the findings from these interviews would allow for triangulation of evidence, as heads of faculty work very closely with principals on a daily basis. Therefore, they would be able to elaborate on their

leadership practices by sharing stories that can be compared to those of the principal and vice principal.

Cluster managers will also participate in semi-structured interviews lasting for 90 minutes. According to Creswell (2013), Glesne (2011) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), semi-structured interviews are designed to capture a participant's experience about the investigated phenomena, however, it is usually designed in a flexible manner to allow participants to report on their understanding through stories and examples that can provide rich information to inform the study. Cluster managers work with principals to follow through on policy implementation and school leadership. It is planned that their inputs will also provide a source of triangulation of the evidence of principal leadership practices in cross-cultural settings. It is expected that they will also provide in-depth information on the Abu Dhabi School Model policy implementation. The interview questions are classified into five categories. The first set explores principals' leadership practices in the schools, what models do these principals practice and their drive to leadership; the second set examines how principals keep the school focused on the mission and the vision and ask how do they motivate their followers; the third set of questions explores cultural and cross-cultural factors that influence principals' practices, the fourth set of questions examines participants' view of good leadership for UAE schools and how do they think that the subject school principals relate to these models; the last set of questions explores policy implications for school principals, how does policy relate to the day-to-day school aspects and any possible challenges that these principals face and how do they overcome it through their leadership approach (see Appendix 4 for complete cluster manager interview guide).

Focus groups:

It is important for this study to elicit the input of the ‘followers’ - the teachers - about the principal’s practices. Thomas (2008) argues that focus groups can provide a wealth of information in an exploratory study. A 45-minute long focus group session will be conducted with four teachers from each school. According to Creswell (2013), Glesne (2011), and Liamputtong (2011), focus groups allow for an in-depth and broad-based understanding of a group of participants’ experiences and ideas. For the purposes of this study four teachers from each school will be asked to take part in a focus group discussion. The information that teachers provide will allow for the triangulation of evidence on the principal’s leadership practices for trustworthiness and reliability purposes.

Bloor et al. (2001), Bryman (2012), Stewart and Shamdasani (2014), Thomas (2008) and Wutich et al. (2010) argue that focus groups tend to be a culturally sensitive method for data collection in educational leadership and management. They explain that to be able to gather authentic data, the researcher must be aware of cultural norms that govern the interaction and the dynamics of the groups. Thomas (2008) argues that in the Gulf Arab cultures the researcher needs to be aware of Insider-Outsider effects, consultation and consensus, harmony and criticism, and communication style. He explains that harmony and criticism is the tendency to conceal facts to remain socially acceptable and discusses how it might affect the dynamics of the group and keep participants from opening up to the researcher. To reduce this unwanted effect on gathering data through focus groups, teachers with different nationalities from the principal will be selected for focus group interview. Table 5 lists the criteria for the focus groups. It is anticipated that teachers from different

nationalities will tend to reveal more to the researcher and share a wealth of information about their principals' leadership practices.

Table 5. Criteria for Focus groups

Number of teachers	Criteria	Location
Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two years at least at the school. - 3-5 years teaching experience with ADEC. - Emirati teachers. 	School C
Four each	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least two years of experience in the current school. - 3-5 years teaching experience with ADEC. - Western teachers 	Schools A and B

The focus group guiding questions provides triangulation of evidence with the principals' interview data. The agenda that guided this meeting has been designed to elicit input from the followers on principals' leadership characteristics by sharing stories and examples from followers' daily encounter with these principals, how do principals motivate them, inspire them, balance workload, support them on an individual level, consult with them, what good practices that motivated them, what kind of relationships dominates the school's culture and how does that influence their daily practices and what kind of policy implications they have experienced so far working with ADEC schools? (see Appendix 5 for the full focus group guide).

The interview process will allow the researcher to gather data from participants to help answer the second, fourth and fifth research questions by eliciting information from different participants on

leadership elements in the Abu Dhabi School Model to help identify common successful leadership practices.

It is important to note that interview and focus group questions are guidelines for the researcher only, and the interview process was not designed by the author to follow these questions word-for-word. Rather, the researcher in this study seeks to engage participants in a conversational manner to elicit information about their understanding of good leadership practices, cross cultural differences and challenges principals face during their daily routine. The participants in this research are asked to share examples from their own experience to explain their thoughts which will allow for more in-depth understanding of their lived experience as suggested by the interpretive hermeneutic approach.

Additionally, non-principal participants are interviewed to provide a level of triangulation with the principal interview. It was anticipated that when these participants share their experiences about the principals' leadership practices, it would provide more reliability to the principals' interview data by identifying similar stories, similar patterns and experiences. This approach was adopted to optimise the quality of data gathered from the principals' interviews.

Observations

Since this study will examine leadership in a cross-cultural framework in the UAE, it is crucial to observe how principals understand the culture and how it is reflected in the school. Material culture

observation adds an in-depth dimension to the research study as it will provide context about the cultural elements (Hodder, 2013; Hurcombe, 2014).

The focus of observation for this empirical research is on the heritage and culture of the UAE, the symbols that reflect this outside of the school's premises, and at the administration, in the hallways, and library, as well as inside the classroom. Additionally, specific leadership elements will be examined during this observation. Table 6 provides the criteria for material culture observation. The italicized words in the framework represents links to the focus question of the observation.

Table 6. Criteria for material culture observation

Material culture observation	Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012	Branine (2011)	Burns, 1978 and Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999	Good leadership Klann (2007)
Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universalism/ Particularism • <i>Individualism/ Collectivism</i> • <i>Neutral/ Emotional</i> • Specific/Diffuse • <i>Achievement/ Ascription</i> • Internal/External • Sequential/ Synchronic time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intention (neyah) • <i>Forever mindful about God (taqwa)</i> • Patience (Saber) • <i>Consultation (shora)</i> • <i>Kindness (Ihsan)</i> • <i>Sincerity (ekhlas)</i> • <i>Truthfulness (sidq)</i> • <i>Justice (adel)</i> 	Transforming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Elevating effect.</i> • Raises self-esteem. • <i>Focus on end value.</i> • Modelling high expectations • <i>Culture building</i> • <i>Vision-shared goals</i> • Individualized support 	Competent Trustworthy <i>Positive</i> Dependable <i>Care about people</i> <i>Communicative</i> <i>Team-oriented</i> <i>Visionary</i>
Focus question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school celebrate teacher's achievements? • Does it celebrate success of children and teachers? • Are parents visible in the school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do hallways reflect calm nature? • Are most of teachers recognized for their efforts? • Are all staffrooms equal in space and resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the UAE culture visible in the building? • Is the vision communicated in hallways, reception area and staff rooms? • Are there pictures of the Sheikhs visible? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are teams celebrated for their work? • Is there a clear and visible way to communicate information?

Material culture observation is a well-documented qualitative method to gather data in the literature (see Armitage, 2005; Bennett, 2001; Denzin, 2008 and O'toole and Were, 2008). Prosser (2007) explains that observation in a school setting involves the school's building, non-teaching space (no formal teaching happens, but is used by teachers and students), cultural artifacts and symbols and teacher space (including notice boards and communication boards). Additionally, Prosser (2007) and McGregor (2004) argue that these artifacts and symbols in the school's environment reflect the head teacher's beliefs and values of equity, equality, shared vision, communication and leadership practices. Observation is a valuable research method in qualitative research as it sheds light on the organisation's culture and sub-cultures.

Material culture observation will assist in gathering data to answer the sixth research question of this thesis by exploring the styles of leadership activity and school culture, focusing on cross-cultural content, and the degree to which it is consistent with the Abu Dhabi School Model

Data Analysis

The emerging data from interviews, document analysis, focus groups, and material culture observation will be interpreted using a thematic analysis process where the focus will be on emerging themes and patterns. The data analysis process will follow an abductive reasoning method where the researcher synthesises results from multiple sources of data using thematic analysis. Abductive reasoning comes from Charmaz's (2008) work in grounded theory and Glaser

and Strauss (1967) where ‘the method ... includes checking emergent categories that emerge from successive levels of analysis’ and includes the following steps: ‘(1) minimizing preconceived ideas about the research problem and the data, (2) using simultaneous data collection and analysis to inform each other, (3) remaining open to varied explanations and/or understandings of the data, and (4) focusing data analysis to construct middle-range theories,’ (p. 155).

This method is used when there is a need to understand emergent findings that draw on ‘imaginative interpretations’ involving intuitive interpretation and creative ideas (Charmaz, 2006: 157; Reichertz, 2007). In this approach the researcher starts with data and stays close to data throughout the analysing process. Charmaz (1996) explains that this process starts with participants’ experiences and develops progressively to ‘conceptual categories’ (p.28). She further explains ‘interpretative tradition relies on the knowledge form inside’ (p.30). Similarly, Creswell (2013) explains that data analysis is better demonstrated in a ‘spiral image’ where the researcher engages in analysing data in ‘circles’ rather than ‘linear approach’ (p.182). The data analysis spiral is presented in Figure 9.

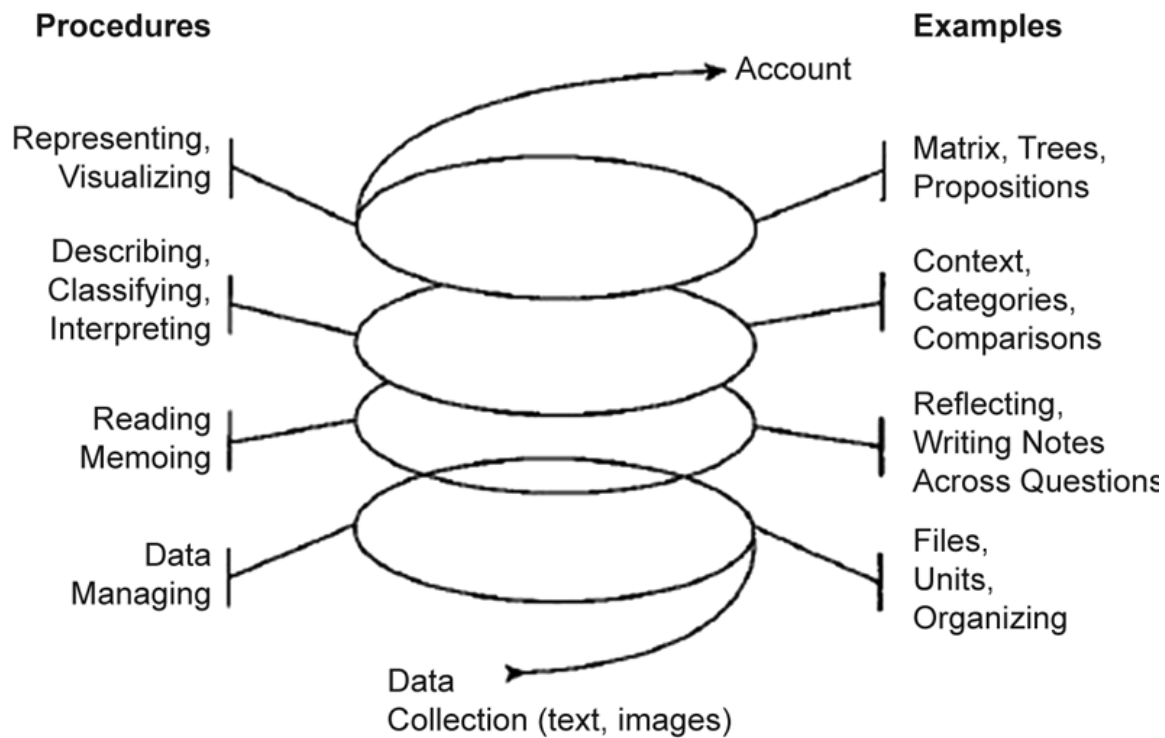


Figure 9. The hermeneutic spiral (based on Creswell, 2013)

(Adapted from Creswell, 2013, p. 183).

Creswell (2013) suggests that data analysis spiral begins with organizing the data; then the researcher will read ‘immersing him/herself in the details’ (p.183). This activity will generate some ideas or key concepts that occurs to the reader that will lead to initial categories (codes). These codes will then be organised into themes that further explain the data.

This approach to data analysis aligns with the hermeneutic approach of this study as the researcher will compare data, check hunches that arise in the process, refine emerging ideas by cross-checking data, and construct categories that emerge (Charmaz, 2008). Abductive reasoning method of data analysis match the hermeneutic nature of this research study as the process of understanding

research questions requires continuous reflection and interpretation of the researched phenomena within the researcher background focusing on language, seeking to achieve as close to a correct interpretation as possible through the hermeneutics spiral (see also Grondin, 2003), where interpreting is a continuous cycle of understanding, explanation and appropriation (see Rennie, 2012; Lukka and Modell, 2010; Van Maanen, Sørensen and Mitchell, 2007). This process will enable the researcher to identify thematic categories through a continuous reflection process of going back and forth between collecting data and analysing it as common themes emerge.

Ethical Considerations

Since this study explores participants' experiences about their leadership practices, it also reports on their feelings, and thoughts, as well as their social experiences. The researcher is required to explore all ethical issues that might arise in the study and plan accordingly to eliminate potential risks (Van Manen, 1979). The researcher obtained necessary approvals from Abu Dhabi Education Council to approach the participants. Each participant will then be approached separately to explain the purpose of the study and their role in it. Participants will be informed that their participation is optional and that they can withdraw from the study at any point should they feel the need to do so (De Lanie, 2008 and Shank, 2002). The researcher will explain to each participant that their confidentiality will be protected and that none of the participant's names and/or identities will be revealed in any part of the study.

All participants' identities will be kept anonymous. In order to avoid any similarities of names, participants will be referred to with fictional names. Also, schools that are chosen as the site of this study will be code-named School A, School B and school C. All files, interview tapes, transcripts from interviews, and consent forms will be kept in a locked safe at the researcher's home to guarantee confidentiality. Participants will be informed about the research study purpose, including the voluntary nature of it, and will be assured that their identities will be kept confidential during the conduct of the study, as well as the process of thesis writing, and it is their right to withdraw from the study at any point (Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009).

Trustworthiness and Reliability

One of the most important cultural considerations I am aware of as a researcher is, since some of the participants are Emirati, the interviews will be conducted with them in Arabic since they are more comfortable with it. As a researcher I have an obligation, particularly in a hermeneutic study, to make sure that their answers and experiences are translated and transmitted authentically to reflect what they truly reported. Hatem and Mason (1997) argue that the researcher acts as a communicator of the information, therefore, it is important for him/her to be cautious that the meaning is 'at the heart of what the professionals pursue to transmit' (p. 12). Therefore, I will aim to transcribe the interview from Emirati participants first in classic Arabic. I will then ask the participants to read and confirm that this is what they meant to say in answering my questions. After confirming the accuracy of the transcripts with participants, I will then translate the interview into English. Later, I will seek a professional translator to do back to back translation to validate

the translation (Farghaly and Shaalan, 2009; Fawcett, 2014; Gile, 2009; Hervey, Dickins and Higgins, 2016; Munday, 2013; Temple and Young, 2004 and Van Nes, et al., 2010).

Triangulation

Triangulation in qualitative research is a technique used in social sciences to establish the value of the research in a social context by ensuring that information and interpretations can be verified independently through other sources and then data is gathered through multiple methods (Creswell, 2013; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005 and Glesne, 2011). This study will use two levels of triangulation. Firstly, triangulation of the interviews by interviewing five groups of participants: principals, vice principals, heads of faculty, teachers, and cluster managers. Secondly, interviews, document analysis for policy documents and material culture observations will further ensure that data are triangulated to increase the trustworthiness and reliability of this research study.

Limitation of study

As the study focuses on three schools in Abu Dhabi Emirate, and it is an interpretive qualitative study, the data gathered cannot be generalised to other schools in the Emirates (Cresswell, 2011, Denzin and Lincoln, 2005 and Glesne, 2011), however, it is anticipated that general cultural norms will emerge as a result of this study.

Moreover, the hermeneutic nature of this study depends on my interpretation of data gathered (Creswell, 2011; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005 and Merriam, 2009), however, this will be minimized by the triangulation of evidence and bracketing myself as a researcher. Due to the interpretative hermeneutic nature of this study, general themes might emerge that will have the potential to contribute to other leadership studies in the UAE.

Researcher's perspectives

It is important at this stage to bracket myself as a researcher, a practice common in hermeneutic research (Glesne, 2011), in order to identify my bias. I am an Arab Muslim researcher who has been living in the UAE for 27 years. I work with Abu Dhabi Education Council as an English head of faculty and have been in my post for six years. I have witnessed the Abu Dhabi school model reform since its start. I work on a daily basis with principals, teachers and heads of faculties to implement and advise on beliefs and values of the Abu Dhabi Educational council. I work closely with the principal and vice principal in my school to apply Abu Dhabi Educational Council's policies and procedures. My current work provides me with the ability to immerse myself in the research context. My Muslim and Arab background provides me with a deep understanding of the Islamic core principles and values that govern most Muslim interactions in this country. Moreover, the years that I have lived in the UAE equip me with appreciation of the unique UAE culture and value systems. These elements add to the value of the research value, as it will be a form of backyard research. Glesne (2011) argues that this familiarity can be advantageous as well as the reverse. My position at ADEC will give me an advantage during this research study, as I am

familiar with Islamic and Arab culture and values, as well as details of the Abu Dhabi School Model implementation. This familiarity will provide more opportunities for me as a researcher to immerse myself in the curricular practices and organisational structures, in addition to the culture, which will provide a wealth of information in conducting and implementing this study (Glesne, 2011).

It is important, however, to ensure that this background will not interfere with the data collection and interpretation. The triangulation of data will decrease my bias, as I will seek different resources to gather data. Moreover, during the research study I will keep a reflective journal where I record my thoughts and beliefs about the topic to mitigate the bias that I have about the topic (Ahren, 1999).

Chapter Four: Case study findings

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the case studies of three schools as well as national and Abu Dhabi Emirate documents. This chapter will begin with the document analysis where the UAE national vision (UAE, 2015), Abu Dhabi 2030 strategic plan (Abu Dhabi Government, 2008), Abu Dhabi Economic Plan 2007-2008 (Executive Council, 2007), the UAE Ministry of Education educational development plan (2012), and the Abu Dhabi Education Council policy manual (ADEC, 2012) will be discussed. This will then be followed by school-by-school case study presentation structured as follows:

1. A profile of each school that will provide background information about demographics, history of the school, staffing and student population.
2. Contextual introduction for each school which will include the school document analysis including and observational data. School documents include two reports of the Irtiqa'a inspection and the school's improvement plans, that will provide insights on how the principal leads the school in reference to the schools' missions and vision statements. It will also report on the development of the schools from the first inspection report to the second inspection report. The observational data will provide information about the cultural symbols and artifacts that represent UAE heritage and culture, school visions and UAE vision representations in classrooms and staffrooms as well as hallways and corridors.
3. Narrative data from principal semi-structured interviews, heads of faculty interview (English and Arabic staff members who work very closely with the principal), vice principal interviews, teachers' focus group data and the cluster manager's interview (who provides

advise the principal) that reports on the principal leadership practices and her role in leading the school.

Finally, the chapter will include a comparative synthesis of the cases to summarize findings and identify emergent themes and as they relate to the research questions that will set the foundation for Chapter Five analysis and interpretation.

1. National and Emirate Document Analysis

This section analyses national documents in relation to the elements of the framework that are used in this study. This includes aspects reflected in the documents from the good leadership model (Klann, 2007), transforming leadership model (Burns, 1978), leadership in an Islamic context model (Branine, 2011) and one of the cross-cultural models (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2000, 2012), presented in Figure 10 below. The information derived from the document analysis will enrich this research study with data on what is considered to be good leadership in the UAE as well as the cultural elements that are unique to the UAE as a country. This framework will guide the analysis of the national documents that are presented in the following sections.

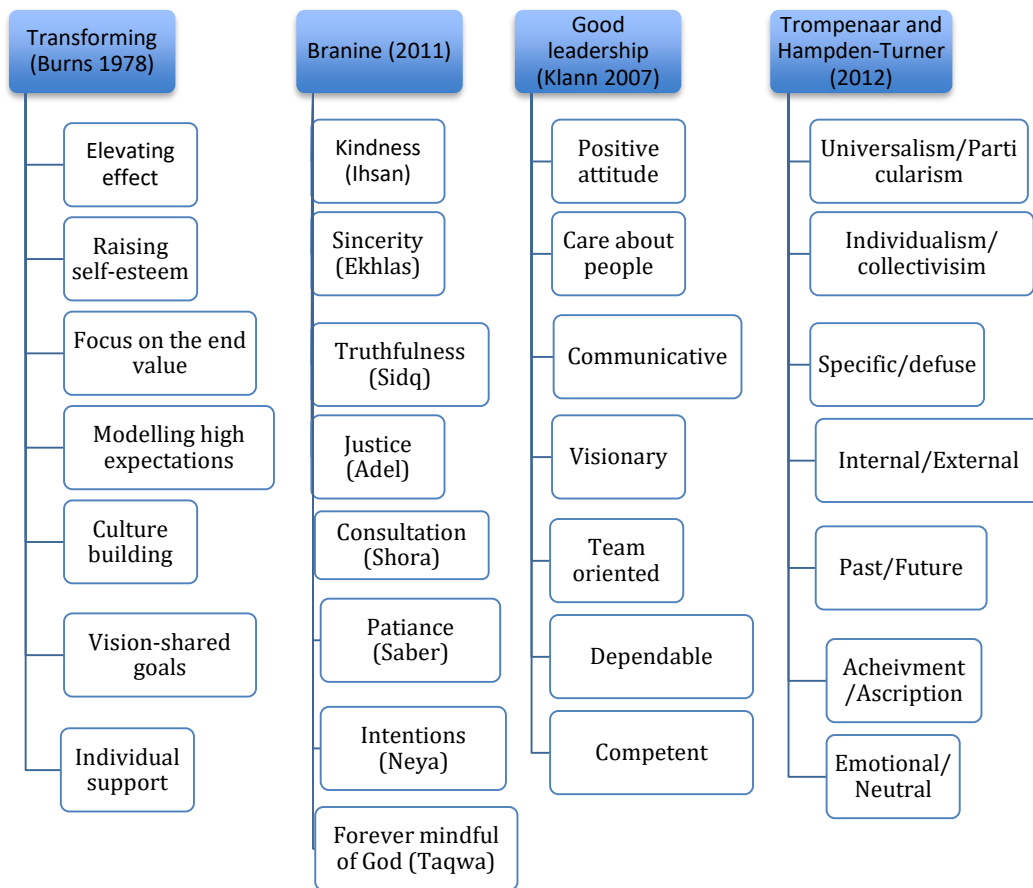


Figure 10. Managing Across-Cultures Arab and Islamic elements

(Adapted from Branine, 2011; Burns, 1978; Klann, 2007 and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012).

1.1 UAE National Vision 2021

In the opening statement of the UAE national vision document, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid states that the word ‘impossible’ is not within the vocabulary of a successful leader regardless of how many challenges he faces. He further explains that having faith in one’s vision and persistence will assist the leader in fulfilling his vision. This opening statement is similar to characteristics in Burns’ (1978) model for transforming leadership (elevating effect, raising self-esteem, focusing on

the end value, modelling high expectation and vision-shared goals). It sets the scene for the presentation of the vision's pillars and emphasises that each and every leader in the UAE can see his/her vision materialise with determination and hard work. It is intended to motivate employers and workers to achieve goals in national development including the educational system.

The national vision document contains four main pillars, each of which consists of three or four elements that feature the focus of this element. These elements are presented in the following table:

Table 7. The UAE National Vision 2021

National vision main element	National vision sub element
1- United in responsibility	1.1 Confident and socially responsible Emiratis. 1.2 Cohesive and prosperous families. 1.3 Strong and active communities. 1.4 A vibrant culture.
2- United in Destiny	2.1 Upholding the legacy of the nation's founding fathers. 2.2 Ensuring a safe and secure nation. 2.3 Enhanced in international standing.
3- United in Knowledge	3.1 Harness the full potential of the human capacities. 3.2 Sustainable and diversified economy 3.3 Knowledge-based and highly productive economy
4- United in prosperity	4.1 Long and healthy lives. 4.2 First-rate education. 4.3 Well-rounded lifestyles. 4.4 Well-preserved natural environment

(Adapted from United Arab Emirates Government, 2015, pp. 1-25).

The first main element stresses the importance of the nation's family, moderate Islamic values and one's heritage to build a strong socio-economic environment. It also emphasises serving the greater good by doing one's duty towards his/her country. These elements also relate to Burn's

transforming theory through the elevating effect as well as culture building. It also reflects Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's model through universalism/particularism as it empowers the individual with an emphasis on the greater good by fulfilling one's duty towards the nation. Moreover, it stresses the importance of family bonds to foster a sustainable family cornerstone so that young Emiratis will reach their full potential. Furthermore, the UAE national vision emphasises the importance of harnessing Emiratis' full potential, which also corresponds to Klann's (2007) good leadership model through 'caring about people', Burn's model of shared vision and Branine's (2011) model through sincerity of the Islamic management model. Additionally, the national document reflects elements of the good leadership model as it emphasizes the importance of believing in the overall vision of the UAE while maintaining a transparent communication mode with all nationals and expatriates living in the UAE.

Throughout the documents, most of the elements reflect Branine's concepts of Islamic leadership (Kindness (*Ihsan*), sincerity (*Ekhlās*), truthfulness (*Sidq*), justice (*Adel*) and consultation (*Shura*)). For example, the document refers to a safe and secure nation while upholding fairness and justice to all nationals and expatriates. The national document starts every element's explanation using the word 'we' to manifest that the national vision will only be fulfilled with the support and help of every national and expatriate. Additionally, in several places the national vision encourages open dialogue. For example, in fostering cohesive and prosperous families, the national vision aims to continue to foster dialogue between family members as a means of strengthening family ties. The dialogue and consultation is also emphasised in keeping open channels with diverse culture within the UAE as well as neighbouring countries to strengthen the UAE's structure. These statements reflect Branine's consultation (*Shura*) elements in management in Islamic culture. A significant

link to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cross-cultural model is presented in the past/future model as the national vision attempts to address many elements at the same time as opposed to achieving these goals, sequentially. It appears that the national vision contains many elements of good leadership, transforming leadership; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cross-cultural model and Branine's Islamic management pillars.

1.2 Abu Dhabi Economic plan 2007-2008

In the opening statement of the Abu Dhabi Economic plan document Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan explains that the accomplishment of the policy agenda will not be fulfilled without the support of the national and local talents, energy and dedication. This statement also connects to Burn's (1978) model characteristics of elevating effect, raising self-esteem, focusing on the end value, modelling high expectation and vision-shared goals. The policy agenda consists of nine main pillars: premium education, healthcare and infrastructure assets, a large empowered private sector, the creation of a sustainable knowledge based economy, an optimal transparent regulatory environment, complete international and domestic security, a continuation of strong diverse international relationships, Emirate resource optimization, the maintenance of Abu Dhabi values, culture and heritage and a significant and ongoing contribution to the federation of the United Arab Emirates. To fulfill this policy, the Executive Council identified four priority areas and sub policies that are affected by these priorities; they are presented in the following table:

Table 8. Abu Dhabi Policy Agenda 2008

Abu Dhabi Policy Agenda 2007-2008 priority areas	Individual policies outlined
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Planning and Economy- Energy- Tourism
Social and Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Health services- Education- Labour- Civil services- Culture and heritage- Food control
Infrastructure and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Urban Planning in Abu Dhabi- Transport- Environment and health and safety- Municipal affairs- Police and emergency services
Whole-of-Government Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Restructuring government- The-e-Gov initiative- Women in Abu Dhabi- Legislative reform

(Adapted from Executive Council, 2007, pp. 9-88).

Each of these policies consist of objectives, an explanation of how the policy supports the Abu Dhabi vision, policy drivers, how the implementation of the policy contributes to the overall vision, policy drivers and who will oversee the implementation of the policy. Most of the policy elements and sub elements reflects Burn's leadership model of elevating effect, caring about people and raising self-esteem. For example, the policy explains that in order to achieve the end goal there should be a focus on the individual's security and welfare. Additionally, the policy asserts the importance of building human capital through continuous development. Moreover, the policy states

that leadership is essential for the success of the policy implementation. The policy agenda connects to Burn's model as it stresses the importance of transparency and openness through ensuring that the legal system is fair and consistent at all times. Similar to the UAE's vision, the policy agenda has a significant link to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cross-cultural model past/future element as the policy addresses several government portfolios at the same time. Additionally, the policy links to the cross-cultural model as in the cultural dimension of individualism/collectivism since it allows government bodies to empower their staff members to take initiatives and be creative. In fact, there is an emphasis on the human element and how each and every individual should contribute to the greater good of the community. For example, the policy notes Sheikh Zayed's assertion that 'working towards the country is not and must not be seen as a matter of only the government officials. It is something that concerns us all' (Executive Council, 2007, p. 55). The elements of Branine (2011) managing in Islamic culture are also reflected in the policy agenda through justice (*Adel*) and consultation (*Shura*). For example, the policy states that the realization of the policy agenda will only be fulfilled if the individual departments and authorities of the government work together in a highly coordinated manner. This reflects the consultation (*Shura*) element in Branine framework. The policy agenda also declares the importance of fairness (*Adel*) for all citizens and expatriates by ensuring that the justice system is effective and transparent for all.

1.3 Abu Dhabi 2030 Strategic Plan

The Abu Dhabi Economic vision 2030 was published in 2008. It represents a detailed long-term plan that ensures the full growth of Abu Dhabi Economy by the year 2030 through the implementation of the policy agenda's main elements. It is based on thoroughly detailed economic studies and provides a comprehensive measure to the growth of the Emirate in relation to the specified milestone (Government of Abu Dhabi, 2008). Identical to the policy agenda, the Abu Dhabi Economy vision is based on nine pillars that link to the same four priorities that the government is seeking to address. However, the economy vision contains thirty objectives that are supported by scientific data to measure the final desired outcome. For example, the Abu Dhabi Economic vision states 'The government will create a highly skilled, highly productive workforce by transforming the characteristics of the current labor market' (Government of Abu Dhabi, p. 8). To meet this end, there are three objectives that the government will address at the same time: increased national workforce participation, optimized use of the workforce and enhanced workforce productivity.

Similar to the Abu Dhabi Policy agenda, the Economy vision represents most of the elements of Burn's (1978) model characteristics of elevating effect, raising self-esteem, focusing on the end value, modelling high expectation and vision-shared goals. For example, the document states that the end goal is for the young generation to be prevalent in key sectors such as energy, finance, trade, and manufacturing. Additionally, it states that the most important resource in any country's economy is the people that drive it. Throughout the document there is a clear link to Burn's model of taking care of people and focusing on the welfare of nationals and expatriates, alike. For example, the document states that human capital will be enhanced through the improvement of education and training to boost productivity.

Parallel to the Abu Dhabi policy agenda, there is a significant link to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cross-cultural model past/future element as the Abu Dhabi Economic vision seeks to tackle several elements at the same time. Also, the document contains a noteworthy link to Branine's (2011) model of management in Islamic culture through justice (*Adel*). For example, the document highlights the importance of providing equal educational opportunities for nationals and expatriates living in less developed parts of the Emirates such as the western region by providing similar schooling systems to those who live on the Abu Dhabi Island. Additionally, providing a transparent judicial system that ensures that all residents of the Emirates stands equal when facing the law. Also, the Economic vision elicits the support and help of national departments and organizations both public and private. This also reflects the consultation (*Shura*) in Branine's Model.

1.4 The UAE Ministry of Education development plan

The UAE Ministry of Education plan is a short document that is published on the government website. It contains five elements with ten strategic objectives that are listed in the table below:

Table 9. The UAE Ministry of Education strategic plan

Element	Strategic objective
Student outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- High quality curriculum- Excellent teaching
Student school life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Minimize drop out in primary and secondary schools- Excellent teaching environment
Student equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Harmonized assessment with special needs getting extra support- Access to high quality teaching for all.
Student citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Promote national identity- Foster society's contribution
Administrative effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ensure that all educational districts are equally effective.- Ensure that support services in the ministry is effective and timely

(Adapted from UAE Ministry of education, 2017, pp. 1-2).

The UAE Ministry of education aims to ensure that all schools across the UAE score ten out of ten of these objectives by the year 2020. To fulfill this aim, the Ministry of Education launched twenty ambitious initiatives through national workshops. This includes developing curricula and aligning it with higher education and job market needs, developing specialized education programs, supporting educational research, restructuring educational research, supporting teachers' professional development, training education staff, introducing formal student counseling structure, aligning compulsory school age with international standards, developing infrastructure and education facilitates, supporting the technical development of school infrastructure, supporting school activities to help students to develop life skills, improving national assessment and participating in international examination, providing necessary opportunities for students with

special needs, improving the governance of Education in the UAE, licensing the educational staff, implementing quality control measures on schools, improving channels of communication with parents and social organizations, implementing partnership programs with higher education institutes, enriching curriculum with UAE history and developing national competitions that promote citizenship (UAE Ministry of education, 2017, pp.3-4). Moreover, the Ministry states that the desired outcomes of these strategies reflect on students that are a proud model of citizens, who are knowledgeable, proficient in needed skills, fit and active individuals. As for teachers the end value reflects on teachers that are role models that instill the value of education in students, knowledgeable instructors, creative educators, trained professionals and attentive counselors for students (UAE Ministry of Education, 2017, p.5).

The Ministry of Education's strategies align with the UAE national agenda and with characteristics in Burns' (1978) model for transforming leadership (elevating effect, raising self-esteem, focusing on the end value, modelling high expectation and vision-shared goals). For example, the strategies focus on the end value for both teachers and students. It also stresses on providing individualized support for both students and teachers to achieve the end value. Additionally, Branine's model (2011) is highlighted in this document through fairness (*Adel*) as the Ministry's goal is to provide equal opportunities for all students throughout the United Arab Emirates in both government and private schools regardless of their nationality. Moreover, consultation (*Shura*) is reflected in the Ministry's strategies as it documents the need to engage the local community with the Ministry to accomplish the desired outcome in enhancing students' achievements. In this document, Klann's model (2007) of good leadership is also reflected in caring about people, communicative and visionary elements as the Ministry's strategies advocate achieving the national vision by focusing

on the support provided for both teachers and students. A noteworthy link to Burn's model (1978) of culture building is also evident in this document as the Ministry's strategies address the importance of partnership with the community and eliciting their support in the educational process. However, it is important to highlight that there is no reference in the Ministry of Education document of teachers' unions and or organisations. This point might have implications for leadership practices in the UAE since teachers might be reluctant to voice their disagreement and will be more inclined to obey and confirm to protect their jobs, which could drive principals' to be more transactional than transforming leaders.

Similar to the UAE's vision, Abu Dhabi's policy agenda and the Abu Dhabi Economy vision a significant link to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cross-cultural model is presented in the past/future model as the Ministry addresses ten objectives through twenty strategies presented concurrently as opposed to achieving them sequentially.

1.5 The Abu Dhabi Education Council policy manual

The Abu Dhabi Education Council's (ADEC's) policy manual is a highly organised and comprehensive document that governs all the aspects of P-12 educational long and short-term plans. It aims to reform the education in the Abu Dhabi region (including Al Ain and Al Dhafra regions) and provide high quality educational standards for all government schools' students. On the first page of the policy manual the General Director of ADEC states 'together we embrace the exciting challenge and the journey to prepare students to become learners today, leaders tomorrow'

(ADEC, 2017, p.1). This statement reflects the philosophy of ADEC in embracing the educational reform towards the end value of fulfilling the Abu Dhabi Economy vision 2030. It also resembles Burn's model (1978) for transforming leadership (elevating effect, raising self-esteem, focusing on the end value, modelling high expectation and vision-shared goals).

ADEC's policy manual states the vision and the mission early on in the document. The vision is 'Education First' and the mission is 'to produce world class learners who embody a strong sense of culture and heritage and are prepared to meet the global challenge' (p. 2). It also introduces the core values for all staff members and professionals working at ADEC concentrating on teamwork, integrity, transparency, respect, accountability and compassion. In explaining these core values, ADEC introduced thirteen standards to set the foundation of professional practice between staff members which includes, attendance and punctuality, relationships with students, relationships with community, relationships with colleagues, communications, legal obligations, the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco, use of resources, conflicts of interest, local culture, standards of dress, tolerance of diversity and dealing with sensitive issues.

Throughout explaining these standards there are many similarities with Burn's model for transforming leadership (elevating effect, raising self-esteem, focusing on the end value, modelling high expectation and vision-shared goals). For example, the policy states that in working with ADEC all professionals accept the public trust and the magnitude of responsibility of their work in sharing the special duty of caring for students in Abu Dhabi. This statement reflects modelling high expectations, elevating effect and raising self-esteem in Burn's model. Additionally, according to the policy, all professionals working with ADEC are responsible to promote the welfare of students in their care, which also reflect Burn's model of caring about people. Culture building is also

reflected in the policy in promoting positive relationships with the parents/guardians of children and keeping honest and open relationships with the community. Moreover, the policy manual reflects many elements of Branine (2011) model of managing in Islamic culture that represent kindness (*Ihsan*), sincerity (*Ekhlās*), truthfulness (*Sidq*), justice (*Adel*) and consultation (*Shura*). For example, in explaining the importance of attendance and punctuality, communications and relationships with colleagues the element of sincerity (*Ekhlās*) is emphasised. Likewise, in relationships with students, professionals are encouraged to meet the needs of all students, which is also reflected in kindness (*Ihsan*). Truthfulness (*Sidq*) and kindness (*Ehsan*) is also highlighted frequently in many standards such as communication, legal obligations and conflicts of interest. Consultation (*Shura*) is also included as ADEC's policy encourages the principal to engage all staff members, parents and local community in developing the school improvement plan to raise the school's performance.

Additionally, throughout the policy manual Kalnn's model (2007) of good leadership is evident in caring about people (students, staff and community), communication and visionary as it sets high expectations of all staff members. Similar to the UAE's vision, Abu Dhabi's policy agenda, Abu Dhabi's Economy vision 2030 and the UAE's Ministry of Education manuals, a significant link to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cross-cultural model is presented in the past/future model as the policy manual addresses nine portfolios, in parallel, foundational commitment, general school administration, financial management, facilities and school services, personnel, instructional programs, students and school-community relationships.

1.5.1 Summary of National Document analysis:

All five documents demonstrate evidence of strong connections with this thesis framework: Burn's Model (1978) transforming-transactional model, Klann's good leadership model (2007), Branine (2011) managing in Islamic culture and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cross-cultural model (2012). The following table summarizes the finding of each of these documents in relation to the framework for this thesis.

Table 10. Aspects of the Theoretical Framework that were revealed in National Documents analysis

Theories and models	UAE's national vision	Abu Dhabi Policy Agenda	Abu Dhabi Economic vision	UAE's Ministry of Education Strategies	ADEC's policy
Burn's (1978) Transforming/transactional model					
Elevating effect	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Raising self-esteem	✓	✓			✓
Focus on end value	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Modelling high expectations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Culture Building	✓	✓		✓	✓
Vision/shared goals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual support					✓
Branine (2011) Management in Islamic Culture					
Kindness (<i>Ihsan</i>)	✓				✓
Sincerity (<i>Ekhlās</i>)	✓				✓
Justice (<i>Adel</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consultation (<i>Shura</i>)	✓				✓
Patience (<i>Saber</i>)					
Truthfulness (<i>Sidq</i>)					✓
Intentions (Neya)					
Forever mindful of God (Taqwa)					
Klann (2007) Good Leadership Model					
Positive	✓	✓			✓
Caring about people	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Communicative	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Visionary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Team oriented	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dependable					
Competent					
Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) Cross-cultural model					

Universalism/ Particularism	✓				✓
Specific/diffuse	✓				
Internal/External					
Past/Future	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Achievement/Ascription					
Individualism / collectivism					
Emotional/Neutral					

2. Case Studies

The following section will discuss the findings from three schools in the Abu Dhabi region that are involved in this study. Each case will begin with a school profile followed by contextual introduction that will present observational data and school document analysis (inspection reports and school improvement plans) and interview data. The interview process targeted the principal, vice principal, English and Arabic heads of department (who work very closely with the principal), four teachers and the cluster manager who provides support and guidance for the principal. Each section will start with a brief account of the research subjects' background and then will present the data. Some of the profile information has been kept to preserve the anonymity of the research subjects

The following themes were identified during data analysis: leadership style, culture building and cross-cultural elements. The first two themes emerged from the overlapping elements of Burns' (1978) transforming/transactional leadership theory, Branine's (2011) managing in Islamic culture and Klann's (2007) good leadership model. The third theme represents Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) cross-cultural dimensions. The following diagram summaries the link between the themes and this thesis theoretical framework.

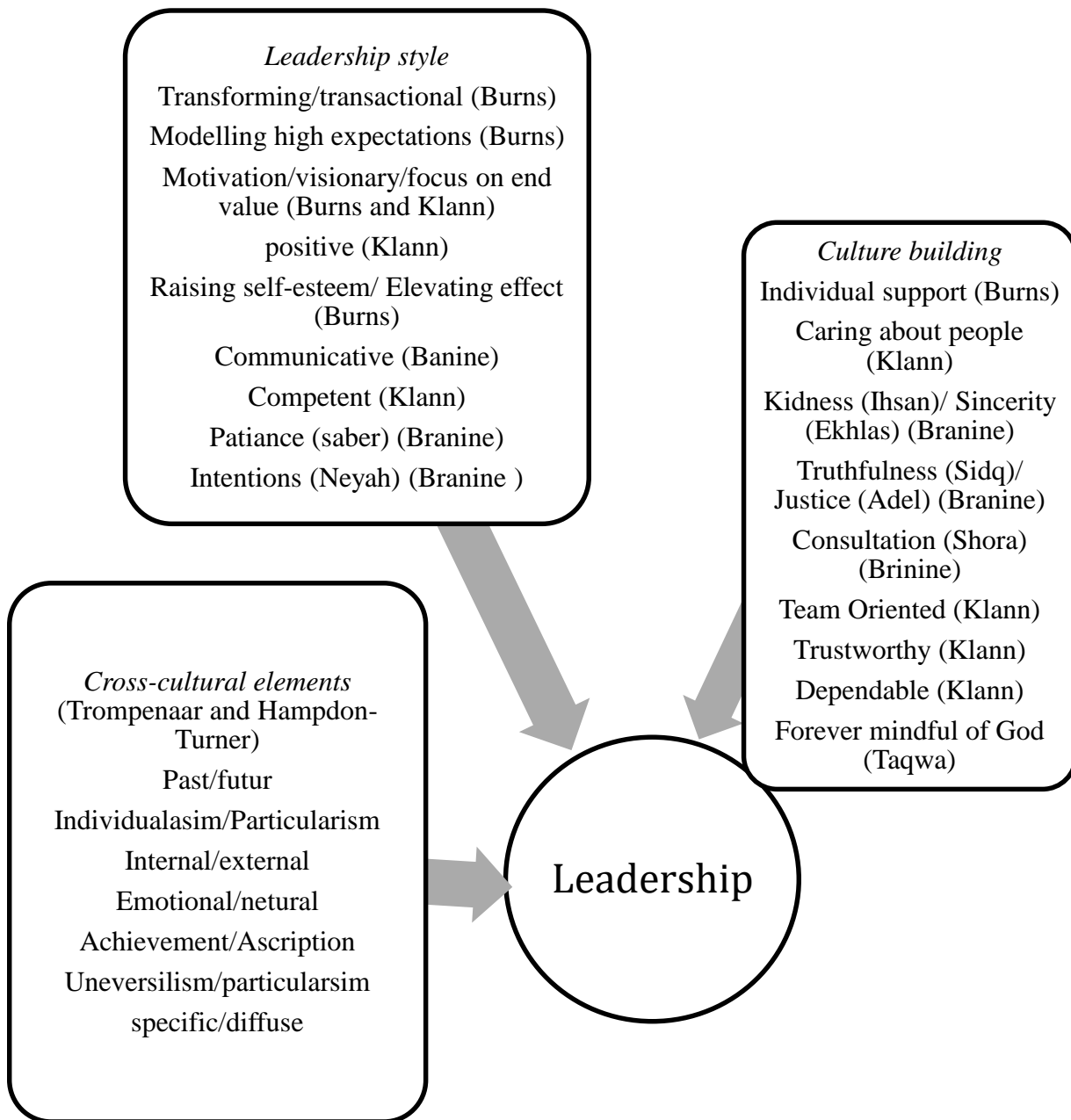


Figure 11. Interview data themes

2.1 School A:

2.1.1 School's profile

Located in Abu Dhabi, school 'A' accommodates around 700 students all of whom are Muslim with a majority of Emirati children. The school is over 18 years old. The principal leads around 70 staff members that serve the school each year as core subject teachers for English medium subjects, core subject teachers for Arabic medium subjects, Arabic teachers, Islamic studies teachers, special needs teachers, physical education teachers, a librarian, music teachers, information technology teachers and social studies teachers. The staff is a mix of nationalities: Emirati, American, Australian, Syrian, British and Egyptian staff. The staff turnover is minimal and most teachers and administrative staff have been in their post for at least the past three years. The senior leadership team has been in its post for five years, consisting of two vice principals, two heads of faculty and the principal. The school follows the Abu Dhabi School Model for teaching and implements ADEC's policy for day-to-day procedures and operational systems.

2.1.2 Contextual account of school A:

School A has a very clean and spacious building. As you walk up to the outside main entrance, the mission and the vision of the school is posted on the outside doors alongside with pictures for Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed, Mohammad Bin Zayed, Mohammad Bin Rashid and the late Sheikh

Zayed with quotations about the importance of investing in education to harness the full energy of the Emirati. For example, there is plaque posted next to the photographs with one quote from Sheikh Zayed in English and Arabic:

The real asset of any advanced nation is its people, especially the educated ones, and the prosperity and success of the people are measured by the standard of their education.

The outside entrance also displays photographs of girls in different school areas that are engaged in learning activities that reflect the vision of the school, 'Achievement and excellence for all'. As you enter the lobby of the main entrance, there are more pictures displayed of the Abu Dhabi and Dubai Sheikhs. The general atmosphere of the school is very calm and welcoming. There is a spacious waiting and sitting area for guests. This area is a place to display all the trophies that the school has won in appreciation for their contribution to community events, services and competitions. This reflects the pride of the school and the celebration of achievements whether it is a school wide, grade specific and/or subject specific.

As you walk towards the principal's office, the walls of the corridors present further success stories for children with different prominent staff members of Abu Dhabi Educational Council and with Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed during one of his visits to the school. For example, there is one picture that shows girls explaining a science project to Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. There are also several newspaper clippings celebrating the success of the school in community services.

It is important to note that as you walk through the administration, all staff members welcome you with warm smiles. The principal's office is just on the opposite side to the corridor, and she greets people with a smile if she is in her office. The staff members in administration appear to be working in harmony. You can hear a lot of laughter and a light sense of humour as you wait to be invited to the principal's office. In several occasions when I was in the school, the principal was taking learning walk-about in the premises and was always seen in the corridors.

The principal's office is a working chamber. Her desk is filled with children's work and teacher's planning folders as she frequently assesses both of their performance. There is a round table that the principal uses to meet with the staff and visitors to discuss work. There is also a couch and a small seating area that she uses to sit with visitors that further reflect her openness to dialogue. To further reflect the hospitable atmosphere in the school, all waiting areas have tea and coffee containers that guests are invited to use while waiting. Staff members and children frequently enter the principal's office in a manner that is cheerful and smiling.

The inside learning pods are very vibrant. Children and adults are all engaged in their work and are accustomed to visitors from outside of the school. The walls feature designated display boards outside of the classroom for children to demonstrate their work. The main hall where children take their break is decorated with quotes from late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan about the importance of education to human life. There are also some quotes from the Abu Dhabi Sheiks that proclaim the role of an Emirati to build the nation and the culture. The school's building has no closed doors and children move with their teachers in harmony. There are no children moving with no purpose or left unattended. The general sense of the school is inviting and warm and the Emirati

culture is reflected throughout the school. For example, the main playground has the flag of the UAE mounted at all times. The walls leading to learning pods are decorated with cultural artifacts such as the small old Lantern (locally known as *Fannar*). Additionally, there are two rooms dedicated for social studies with the traditional *Majlis* seating area.

The staff rooms are located in different learning pods by grade level where teachers sit together during break time talking and working. Rooms are equally furnished with computers and printers to allow staff members to use their time effectively. There is also a small kitchenette in every room to allow for a quick cup of coffee or tea. There is another large seating area upstairs in the administration that is near to the main kitchen on the opposite side from the social worker's office. It is equipped with a tradition seating area (*Majlis*) that members of the parents' council use for their meetings. To this researcher observing in the field, the school reflects a family-like atmosphere.

The document analysis from the first Irtiqa'a inspection report in 2013 reveals that principal A joined the school one year before the inspection. It places the school on an 'acceptable' performance level. It also reflects that that 'the principal understands the needs of the school and has a clear vision on where she wants the school to be'. Additionally, it is reported that 'the principal is aware of the school's challenges and is now working on addressing them'. As reported by the inspection report, 'the relationships between staff members and students are very respectful and decent'. and that 'students at the school show a clear understanding and respect to the UAE values and traditions'. Additionally, it is reported, 'all staff members share the planning for development'.

On the other hand, the second Irtiqa'a report issued in 2016 places the school at a 'very good' performance level. The opening statement in the report states, 'There is a clear vision and direction from the principal that has generated a strong team spirit'. Additionally, there is a direct indication that staff members are committed to the school's improvement as a result of the clear vision and direction from the principal. On multiple occasions the report documents the principal's practices that contributed positively to the school's culture. A clear example of this is also mentioned in the third page of the report as one of the school's strengths 'relationships, which exist between all members of the school, particularly the teachers and students', and 'the positive relationships which exist generated a very positive school ethos and sense of belonging to a community that cares'.

Additionally, the report documents consistently that the principal is a good role model as she is committed to the school's improvement and her transparent self-reflection that is recognised by the school's community

There is a clear vision and direction from the principal that is shared by the whole community. This has been achieved through clear communication of her priorities to staff and parents and the wider community.

There is evidence in the report that signifies the support systems that are placed in the school for both students and teachers. For instance, the report states 'There is regular and very effective collaboration between Arabic and English teachers' and 'The English head of faculty has the responsibility to monitor achievement across core subjects and is influential in the planning and delivery of professional development for teachers'.

Moreover, harmony appears to be reflected in the school's ethos as the report states, 'the school is a pleasant learning community'. Additionally, it is reported that students are involved in environmental, community and social activities.

Based on the report's findings, it appears that the principal takes the time to know all students and their families and has invested in building close relationships with them. This is also reflected in the respect that the community has for the school and its principal as it was reported that the school holds 'a very positive reputation in the community' that is reported in parent's surveys and regular meetings with the school. The consultation model is mentioned consistently in the report and it is manifested in the school's structure of including staff members in the school's self-evaluation process and regular meetings to reflect on the school's progress towards its goals. Teachers and middle teacher conduct this through committee meetings that are co-lead by them and the senior leadership team. The report highlights that 'relationships and communication between staff are very good and the morale is high' and 'school improvement planning is managed through committee structure that is led by teachers'. Clear vision and communication is also referred to throughout the report as it indicates, 'staff and leaders at all levels have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and work together effectively'. Additionally, the high morale, commitment of staff to improve, the pleasant learning community and positive work ethics that is revealed in the school's culture are all linked to the principal's practices as the report states that 'the principal generates a strong team spirit amongst all staff'.

The report also documents that the school addresses several projects at the same time besides teaching, such as community work, involvement of UAE wide celebration and activities, innovation projects and nation-wide athletic competitions. Additionally, the report records that ‘all staff members are recognized for their efforts in improving the school’. Moreover, is sufficient evidence in the report about the principal’s practices such as empowering staff members, flexibility and having good relationships with the school’s community. The good relationships and the positive school’s ethos implies that the school’s culture warm and positive, as the principal takes time to know staff, students and the families of these students to maintain a positive school culture and reflect her positive attitude. Furthermore, it is important to note that the UAE Vision 2021 is highlighted as one of the school’s strengths. For example, the report mentions, ‘there are many opportunities provided for students to implant their sense of UAE culture and identity’. This is implemented through the different community services that the students are involved with such as cleaning the beach from litter and on-site gardening projects that further contributes to their respect for their school and their country.

Likewise, the school improvement plan (SIP) for school ‘A’ appears to be very detailed and comprehensive. It includes specific strategies to raise the quality of teaching and learning in the school. For example, the document identifies a clear vision ‘Achievement and excellence for all’ that has the potential to exert an elevating effect on all staff members as it reflects the school’s ethos and values to ensure that all thrive within the school, including teachers and students. Additionally, the document has a clear link to SIP communities, SIP leaders and middle leaders. This suggests a clear communication channel to all staff members, as they are all included in the formation of the SIP objectives. Culture building is also included as the SIP document references

collaboration in planning between teachers as well as networking with local universities to enhance professional development. It is important to highlight that the SIP document indicates several strategies individualized support for teachers through professional development, a buddy teacher system to support all teachers, on-campus information technology training and financial support in allocating needed resources to ensure that teachers are able to perform at high standards. There is also a reference to conserving resources and raising awareness among the girls about the ecological system in the UAE. Also, collaboration between the teachers, the SIP committee meetings, reliance on middle teachers and the inclusion of students and parent's councils in school's plans is highlighted in the SIP document.

The SIP document provides a clear path and detailed strategies to ensure that all the school's community achieve high standards and that all strategies are communicated to students, staff members and parents consistently through weekly staff meetings, weekly newsletters and during class instructions. Additionally, the SIP documents that the school run different projects such as collaboration with the local University for professional development, raising the ecological awareness among the students and systematic promotion of innovation skills. The document also indicates some flexibility in implementing the strategies and actions and does not bind it to specific monthly targets.

2.1.3 Interview data:

The following paragraphs present narrative data derived from interviews conducted with different school staff members to report on the principal's leadership practices. It is important to note that

the Arabic head of faculty was excluded from interview data since she did not fit the criteria of having worked with the principal for at least two years.

Principal's interview:

Principal A is a local principal in her late thirties, and has a bachelor's degree in Education from a local university with a concentration in science. She worked as a teacher in her early career and a subject coordinator, and then was promoted to a vice-principal for three years before she was promoted and appointed to her current position as a principal. She comes from a well-known family in Abu Dhabi. She was married young before completing high school diploma and she continued her higher education during her first years of marriage. Over the past five years she completed her Masters of Educational Leadership and many other training courses provided by ADEC, such as Irtiqa'a inspection course. She now has seven children some of whom are at a college level, while others are still at school age. She is well-known and respected at ADEC, and, therefore, most often involved in central ADEC activities and conferences.

Leadership style:

When I asked principal A to talk about her leadership experience so far at the school, she reported that when she first came to the school it had no direction and that it was moving with daily procedures with no aim.

My school was like a ship with no captain in the middle of the ocean; it was heading to the unknown steadily. It appears that the previous principal did not care towards the end and choose to abandon the ship early.

She further explained that she accepted the challenge of leading this school because of her personal attachment to the leadership position and the importance of her job to her country and how essential she felt it was for her to succeed in her leadership role:

Firstly, as a local principal I feel that with serving my country in this capacity I am returning the favour for what my country provided for me. Secondly, I feel like all of the children at the school are like my own children So, I want what is best for them. Thirdly, it is a dream that I had since I was a child, to hold a prestigious place in the community, to be able to leave a print in the work place. Lastly, Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid is a huge influence for me. He is very inspirational, if you take on board his words and actions, it provides a roadmap that that will lead to success.

When specifically asked about her leadership style, the principal explained that she adopts a mixed approach to leadership. For example, when implementing a whole school strategy, she said that she has to be *firm*. However, she *consults* with her staff members and subject coordinators. On other occasions, the principal *empowers* staff members by *delegating* tasks.

While developing the school improvement plan, I do not put action plans. The committee's leaders in consultation with their committee devise these plans. This will ensure that I get the buy-in from most of my staff members to follow these action plans.

This statement shows that the principal draw on both transactional and transforming leadership styles and that she uses them situationally and intentionally; however, it suggests that she leans more towards transforming characteristics. It is evident that she is not an autocratic leader; instead, she includes her staff members in the decision-making process through communication and consultations.

I asked the principal to share a story of success that illustrates her strength and manifests her style of leadership. She said:

When Irtiqa's inspectors came to my school, they were able to observe and reflect on my school. They told me you are a leader, not a manager because of the way that I inspire my staff and how my vision has transformed my teacher's practices from the previous round of inspection two years ago.

I asked the principal how the school copes with the changes of policy, she said that it all links back to the school:

A good leader knows how to connect all elements together to find similarities and build on them to keep the school focused on the main direction. A leader must think out of the box and be flexible to achieve better. A good leader is always involved and up-to-date and responds positively to the country's changes. He/she must be ahead of the game and do not react negatively to change.

As we concluded the interview, I asked the principal to share her last thoughts of successful leadership practices, she said that:

A leader must show his/her followers the ambition and the passion in what they do. They must never give up on what they do. Giving up is a wrecker. Even if I leave the school now, I am confident that my personal print will remain as an impact as a result of the time and work that I have devoted in the school.

Culture building:

In the document analysis, the Irtiqa's report indicated that the school environment is positive and the school's culture is constructive for learning. When I asked the principal about the relationships at her school she said that the staff members collaborate with each other and that the *buddy system* that she encourages at the school provides a level of support to her teachers in a respectful manner

I know that not all my team members are at the same ability level. Therefore, I deal with staff members according to their abilities by providing scaffolding and mentoring until they can achieve more.

The positive school culture as reported by the principal is also attributed to the good relationships that the principal has with her staff. She said that she has an ‘open door policy’ and that any teacher can come and talk to her about anything. She also explained that most of the time when taking decisions in the school she makes sure that those who are affected are well informed and understand her reasons behind the decision-making. Additionally, the principal explained that the positive culture in her school comes from the high level of commitment that all her staff members show and because of the measures she takes to ensure that the workload is balanced – as much as possible - between her staff members:

I always try to balance work load between my English Medium teachers (EMT’s) and Arabic Medium teachers (AMT’s), when meeting deadlines and working on lesson plans, long term plans, I might give my EMT’s more time to complete the task as appose to my AMT’s because I understand that their teaching load (as per ADEC’s policy) is more than the AMT’s.

I asked the principal what motivates her to lead; she said that her motives are to leave a ‘personal print’ in the community and to maintain a good reputation for her school and to the educational system in Abu Dhabi ‘I owe it to the children and to my community’.

When I asked the principal to tell me about her daily routine she explained that it has to involve a walkthrough to make sure that all of her ‘children’ are progressing well and that they are being taken care of. While this behaviour might be considered scrutinizing behaviour in a western culture, Arab cultures tends to view relationships between leaders and followers from a tribal, ‘family-like’ perspective (Branine, 2011). From this point of view, this statement implies that the principal cares about her staff and students.

Cross-cultural elements

School A has a range of different nationalities working in the school. It has Emirati, American, British, Irish, Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians and Palestinians teachers. I asked the principal how she manages cultural differences between her staff members while keeping the organisation focused on its aims and goals, she reported that as in many leadership changes, at first, she faced a lot of challenges but was able to overcome them by keeping communication channels open at all times. With any initiative that she wanted to introduce to the school, she held a staff meeting to explain what she is going to do and how. While this approach might be the principal's perspective of consultation (Shura), it suggests a level of transactional characteristics where transactional leaders share expectations consistently with their followers (Bass, 1985 and Burns, 1978).

The principal explained that little-by-little all of her staff members started to see what she was doing and why and those who were able to join the challenge stayed while the remaining (very few staff members as she reported) chose to leave the school. She explained:

I often tell my teachers that the school is like a train and it is moving fast between stations. Those of you who will catch the ride will remain with us. Those of you to choose to stay at a specific station will end up with a totally new environment as things change and eventually feel isolated and lonely.

The principal takes time to build good relationships with staff members and knows their strengths before assigning tasks to each individual. In terms of emotions, there are positive emotions in the school's culture that promotes trust and rapport as the principal continues to be open to her staff while developing trust and rapport, maintaining a positive attitude throughout the year, which was reported in the document analysis. In terms of how staff members relate to the organization, it

appears that the school allows staff members to develop their skills and take control of their learning while being open towards disagreements (an example of the staff meetings and the train analogy).

Vice-principal's interview:

The vice-principal in School A is an Emirati woman in her early fifties. She has a diploma in teaching from a local university. She had around fourteen years of experience as a teacher before she was promoted to a vice-principal position. She is a modest woman and is attached to Emirati culture, values and traditions. She was hesitant to sit in the interview and was reluctant to have her voice recorded. But, because of my previous relationship with her as a teacher, she accepted the voice recorder after I assured her that her anonymity would be protected and that the voice recording is only for transcribing purposes. She has had no formal leadership education prior to her vice-principal role, however; she has been involved in ADEC training in her current role.

Leadership style:

When I asked the vice principal (VP) about the principal's leadership, her answer was consistent with the principal when as she reported that she she likes to involve the staff members in the decision-making process

She prefers distributing tasks on the teachers. She gets them involved. I know from a teacher's perspective that if one was forced to do a task, then the task will not be completed at a professional level. Whilst when teachers are involved, then they are more likely to get motivated and will accomplish.

Moreover, when I asked the VP about the principal's leadership style, she said 'she consults with the staff, so they will have ownership over what they will do to achieve the task.

I asked her next about the school's vision and how the principal communicates this vision, to which she responded:

The school's vision is excellence for all. We want the school to continue to have its prestigious place in the community. We want to rise a generation that will serve the country. Be patriots and are able to problem solve and build the country. The principal is very specific about this. She always says that children are number one for her.

As we concluded the interview, I asked the VP about her view of good leadership, she simply said, 'knowing what you have to do in your job and to have an effective communication, 'our principal is very good at communication and she has a clear vision that we all know'.

Cultural building:

When I asked the VP about relationships at the school, her answer was consistent with the principal's interview. She said

Relationships are very important in our culture. At this school we are all one community. Together we make the school and how it is. Teachers, students, administrators and even parents, we are all one family. It is better to have relationships with the teachers, after all; we are all human beings.

The VP also explained that the principal is very committed to the country's mission and vision and that she strives towards establishing it in the school, 'We know if we follow our country's vision and direction, we will all succeed'.

Cross-cultural elements:

When I asked the VP how does the principal manage cultural differences in the school, she said that the principal takes time to build good relationships at the school and this is why, when there is a difference of opinion, she is able to communicate with the staff and get them to agree on one perspective:

We might have difference of opinion based on the background differences; however, we come back to our norms and regulation inside the school, inside the UAE community.

She further added, 'I feel relationships are very important to our local culture. In our culture, we honour the guest; it is embedded in our practice'. This was also reported in the Irtia'a report findings.

Consistent with the principal's interview, the VP reported that the introduces change in a very fast pace to meet the needs of the UAE vision. For example, the VP said,

When we first introduced project-based learning, we asked the students to do some Internet research. Parents were very reluctant at first to allow their children to surf the Internet. I understand their fear, because I have the same mentality. So, we had to meet with parents and explain ways in which they can monitor the use of the Internet. We are required to move fast to meet the vision of our country.

I asked the VP to share a success story from her experience that reflects good leadership experience; she said, ‘winning Hamdan award was a recognition of our team-work and it was a huge benefit for our children’.

English Head of Faculty’s interview:

The English Head of faculty is a western teacher in her late forties. She has been assigned in the school by ADEC to resume her duties as a head of department for English medium subjects. She has over thirty years of experience in education from her home country. She has a Bachelor’s degree in Education from her home country. She has also completed a Master’s degree in Business Administration with a focus on leadership. She has been working at School A for five years along with the same principal and vice principal. Some of the demographic data has been omitted to protect the confidentiality of the research subject.

Leadership style:

I asked the English Head of Faculty (HOF) to tell me about the principal’s leadership style; her response was that the principal uses the ‘transformational style’ in leadership. Then she elaborated that she uses a combination of transformational style and autocratic style to implement her

strategies. According to the HOF, the ‘transformational leadership style’ reveals a very good sense of positive ethos in the school. When asked about her understanding of the word ‘transformational’ the HOF explained it by two additional terms ‘empowerment style and distributive leadership style’. This suggests that the English HOF has some background knowledge of leadership theories; however, it suggests that she was taught Bass and Avolio’s model and not Burns’ model as her understanding is only limited to the ‘elevating effect’. The HOF also explained that the principal has very clear targets and a vision statement that is manifested throughout the school and is clear to all staff members ‘... *the principal always says whatever we do here is supposed to be in the best interest of the students, we want excellence for all, staff members, students and parents*’. Reporting on the HOF’s interview, there is an ample evidence that the HOF strongly believes that the positive ethos and the positive school culture is attributed to the principal as she empowers her staff members and gives them autonomy to make decisions ‘example: the development of the school improvement plan’. Additionally, there is a frequent reference to involving the staff members in the decision-making process through middle leaders, SIP party leaders and an open door policy.

I asked the HOF what she thinks the principal’s motive is to lead, she said she is very ‘passionate about her job’. When I asked her how she sees that she said

The level of commitment she has. I have worked with more than one principal. Our principal is very committed. She comes to school early and she is not at haste to go home because her heart is here. So, for me that tells you that she is interested. It is about investing time and effort. She is committed to the final vision. She wants the best for the students.

When I asked the HOF if she feels that the school allows for professional growth she said ‘definitely’. She said

For example, if you have to make suggestions it is never shut down. This is of great support that allows you to go forward with something. It is giving you the opportunity to implement new strategies to improve the outcomes of the students. She empowers her staff members to make decisions.

Concluding our interview, I asked the HOF to tell me specific skills that she believes are unique to principal A, she said ‘*being flexible, competent and positive*’.

Culture building:

I asked the English head of faculty to talk to me about the school’s culture and how staff members interact with one another. She said that staff members at the school collaborate with one another and they support each other. She explained that there is a buddy system in the school that allows teachers to learn from each other. She further said that the principal and the senior teachers do a lot of role modelling to support and transfer their vision to the teachers:

If you want teachers to do something, you need to show them how to do it. Provide them with a blue print on how you want them to do it and support them while they are doing it by providing feedback on how to make it better.

The HOF also clarified that as a school they celebrate achievements and success to motivate teachers to be involved during professional development activities, which ensures that teachers perform well in their classroom practices. Furthermore, the school has set aside a day where teachers can get together to do their weekly planning in collaboration. Moreover, the HOF explained that the principal cares about her staff members as she motivates to reach their full potential while providing them with clear strategies on how to improve their practices during feedback sessions.

The HOF interview data also provide sufficient evidence to conclude that the principal's practices influences the school's culture positively. For example, the HOF believes that the principal is very 'passionate' about her role and that her passion reflects in her good leadership practices. Additionally, the HOF explains that the principal is 'very committed' to the school and that she 'invests' in the school by dedicating all the time required to complete her tasks successfully. She also reported that the principal has high morals and values when she deals with her staff members. For example, she is very careful about 'taking away teacher's planning time or teacher's break time to hold meetings.'

Cross-cultural elements

I asked the English Head of Faculty to talk about the distance that the principal keeps between her and the staff and she said that the 'There is no distance'. When I asked her how that balances with workload and the job demands as a leader she said:

When I said there is no distance I meant that the principal is approachable, and that she maintains good relationships with staff members. However, she has a good balance between social friendships and professional attitude. I think the way she approaches things is very important. She takes the time to speak calmly to teachers while providing needed support for them to do their job properly. We take time to build relationships at the school, through social events and professional development week.

I also asked the HOF about staff motivation she said that the principal has a nice approach in dealing with the teachers.

During feedback after lesson observation, the principal always highlights the positive points in the lesson and gives very specific feedback on how to improve teacher's practice. She celebrates their achievements. She rewards them for their hard work and effort. We also celebrate our success as a school after every certificate we achieve for participating in community event.

Focus group School A:

Four English medium teachers, all from Western cultures, participated in the focus group process from School A. They have different teaching experiences from their home countries but share one common factor, which is working in School A for four years or more.

Leadership style:

I asked the teachers how the principal leads in the school. Their answers were consistent with the principal's interview.

T1: She involves us in the decision-making process. She is not a micromanager.

T3: She has a clear vision of what she wants for her school. Makes it very clear at the beginning of the year. She wants students to achieve and everybody knows exactly what she wants.

The teachers reported that they feel that the principal has a good understanding of classroom practice and that she is able to model her expectations to them

T1: The fact that she leads professional development sessions in the school tells you that she understands what she wants us to achieve. Her vision is very clear to us.

T2: When she visits our classrooms, she is able to give us specific strategies that we need to work on to become develop our practice.

Additionally, the teachers explained that they are motivated to come to school because they love their students and because they feel they have a sense of direction and belonging. For example, the teachers shared

T4: The kids are very well behaved and motivated. They understand the school's expectations. It is probably because of the leadership direction.

T2: We feel like we are in a team as opposed to be left alone, we feel respected.

Culture building:

I asked the teachers what their reason was for staying in the school so long; they said that the school's culture is very positive and caring

T2: I think the principal is very nice, she sees how much workload we have and she understands the pressure.

T3: The staff here is great. We have this really nice space upstairs. The principal provided us with a space to rest during our break. During this time, we share what worked well with us and probably some new strategies. Small things like that. You can go and ask her about anything you want.

There is evidence in the focus group interview to suggest that the principal provides individual support to her teachers. For example, the teachers reported

T1: During lesson observation, she always gives us specific feedback and how we can improve our practice.

T2: Even if we need more time to complete a task. She understands that and she allows us extensions on deadlines.

Consistent with the principal's interview, teachers reported that they feel they can approach the principal at any time.

T4: The principal is available all the time. We see her in the morning when she greets everyone. She always communicates with us and is always checking on the children and the teachers to ensure that we have everything we need to do our jobs at a proficient level.

Furthermore, the teachers reported that the principal is fair in dealing with them.

T1: She is quite fair; she will always start with what you did well when providing us with feedback then she moves towards what we can do well.

T3: She understands that for us, our teaching load is high, so she allows us some extra time to complete our work. I feel she is fair to us in that.

Cross-cultural elements:

Consistent with the principal's interview, Irtiq'a report and the Head of Faculty interviews, there is ample evidence in the teacher's focus group interview to suggest that the school's culture is

warm, welcoming and encouraging. The teachers reported that they all enjoy coming to school and they feel like they are part of a family culture

T1: The atmosphere of the school is so receptive for us than in other schools. They are all very open and took the effort to help us understand the school's culture and the UAE's culture. I never felt like it was they and I.

T3: It is the atmosphere and the relationships that we share, beyond the classroom. We have this family here. Everyone is very supportive.

T4: The morals of the school are very warm and high; the principal is very organized and welcoming.

Moreover, the teachers reported that they are valued for their individual achievements and hard work

T1: Acknowledgment of work well done is very important to me; it is the small gestures that make me feel appreciated and valued.

T2: The principal takes the time to appreciate us with certificates and small gifts. This makes me feel that I am doing well in my job, which motivates me to work harder.

T3: We share the workload, when everyone gets their part done, we all achieve and we feel valued.

Cluster manager's interview:

The cluster manager of School A is a Western principal who has been living in the UAE for over eighteen years and therefore, has a lot of understanding about the local culture of the UAE. She has a bachelor's degree from her home country and she completed a Masters degree in Educational Leadership. She worked in private schools, then moved to work in the government system as an educational advisor. Later, she was promoted to a cluster manager working with ADEC. She is

highly respected by ADEC for her sound knowledge of the local culture as well as her competence. Some of the demographic information has been retained to preserve the anonymity of the research participant.

Leadership style:

I asked the cluster manager (CM) what good leadership looks like in the school. She said that good leaders are ‘instructional leaders, someone who is able to lead strategically towards a set vision’. When I asked the CM about her principal’s leadership style she said:

She is very passionate about her job. She loves to learn new things. It is all about the students and she is 100% behind the UAE vision making sure that those children are equipped for the future. Nothing is ever enough for her; she wants to know what is beyond the horizon all the time. That is what makes her a good leader. She is continually hungry. She has not lost her passion. She is still looking for something better.

I asked the CM how the principal motivates her staff, she said that a principal must be motivated for his/her followers to be motivated. She further explained

If you do not have a passion to what you do, you will not be successful. If you are a principal, then you are modeling. If your heart is not into it you will not be able to model it correctly. Principal A is very passionate, 95% of her staff will come along with her because they want to be with her. She enthuses them and supports them.

Cultural building:

According to the Irtiq'a report, School A has a 'positive ethos' and 'warm relationships'; I asked the CM about her perspective on the school's relationships she said

She has an open door policy; you can come and ask her about anything. She gives support when it is needed. She uses 'gradual release approach' with her staff members. She will never just dump tasks on them and leave them without support. She will guide them through and ensure their success. She takes time to build relationships, because she says it is the time when she gets to know her teachers' personalities.

These statements indicate that the principal provides individual support for her teachers. It further implies that the principal cares about her staff, communicates with them and that she is team-oriented. Moreover, the CM also stated that the principal does not 'separate between her English medium teachers and Arabic medium teachers' and that she 'balances workload' between her staff members.

I asked the CM if the principal uses a strict approach with her staff, she said

I do not think it is in her personality to be harsh. She is not soft; she is direct and on task. But she does not hurt someone. She is very diplomatic when she speaks with her staff. She is very careful how she words her instructions and feedback in lesson observation and will always back it with support.

Cross-cultural elements:

I asked the cluster manager how could the principal manage cultural differences while keeping her team members focused on the school's vision, she said:

She has a lot of emotional intelligence. She focuses on building relationships and trust with her staff. She can be very positive, very rarely she brings in the negative. This is why her staff members follow her.

This statement suggests that the school's culture is built on trust and rapport, which is consistent with the findings from the Irtiqa'a report, as well as the teachers' interviews. Additionally, the positive relationships and the effort that the principal makes to build them (as reported by the CM previously) implies that she places a lot of emphasis on the importance of the positive school's culture.

I asked the CM about policy implementation, she said that at School A policy is followed as a general direction. However, she explained that principals are rarely given the autonomy to make necessary changes in their schools to meet its needs. For example, principals do not get to choose their staff members, which is a concern for most of them.

Concluding the interview, the cluster manager added that the development that has occurred in the educational system in the UAE is huge:

Look at what they done in ten years, what other educational systems in the world that have done this? There is none, it does not exist. School A has done a wonderful job in such a short amount of time. They will get there, eventually.

2.2 School B:

2.2.1 School's profile

Located in Abu Dhabi, School B accommodates around 700 students aged six to twelve. The school's campus is relatively new as it was built around 10 years ago. The principal leads a staff around 72 members including English medium teachers, Arabic medium teachers, physical education teachers, music teachers, information technology teachers a librarian and social studies teachers. The staff is a mix of nationalities including Emirati, Americans, Canadian, British, Egyptians and Syrians. The staff turnover is minimal by the standards of UAE government schools. The senior leadership team has been in their posts for the past five years. It consists from two vice principals, two heads of faculty and one principal. The school follows the Abu Dhabi School model in teaching and learning and implements ADEC's policy for day-to-day procedures.

2.2.2 Contextual account of School B:

School B is a very well-maintained campus. The first thing that you notice about it is how clean, colorful and classy the school is. Instead of regular framed photos, the wall on the left as you walk in is separated into three sections. The middle section is decorated with large drawings of late Sheikh Zayed, Sheikh Khalifa, Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed and Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid. The left section is decorated by a drawing that represents an Emirati traditional desert, as an illustration of the past, and to the right side is a drawing of main landmarks of Abu Dhabi and Dubai to represent the future. There is a huge seating area for parents and visitors. The right wall is what the school calls a 'wall of fame' that is fully decorated with framed certificates that were

awarded to the school in recognition of different contributions to the local community. The entrance to the administration area is through a long corridor that has many offices to the left and right that leads eventually to the principal's office. The 'energy levels' from the administration area during my visits was always alive and positive with lots of jokes and laughter echoing in the corridor.

Leading to the school common area, there is a glass door that has the school's vision and mission imprinted where it states, 'Our school is a symbol of distinction, creativity and national belonging.' The common play area is in the middle of the school and you can see the UAE flag raised at all times. Behind the flag, there is another set of huge drawings of the four Sheikhs and these are visible to the students when they salute the flag every morning. The school's common area walls are decorated with positive remarks about the importance of being positive and creative.

The corridors leading to the learning pods are very clean and organized. The decorations are a mixture of drawings and student's work. These drawings are coherent and linked consistently to UAE culture. For example, the area where students place their bags is decorated with a picture of a *Majlis* (traditional seating area). What was interesting about the school is the learning resource center, as it has a traditional small built-in corner where students can sit comfortably while they are reading. It has walls that represent the traditional *Hosen* (the fort). It also has a huge camel made of paper maché on the side of it.

Teacher's working areas are all in between classes where grade level teachers share. They are all equally furnished with desks and printers and each two rooms share one small kitchen that teachers

use during their prep time. The general sense that you get, judged by the laughter in the teacher's rooms and the administration, is a sense of a happy-family like atmosphere.

The first Irtiq'a report completed in 2013-2014 places the school at an acceptable performance level. It provides some information about successful leadership practices in the school. For example, the report states, 'the school improvement plan focuses on student's learning and personal development.' It also reports 'the principal has a clear vision and direction that is shared and understood by all staff'. Additionally, it states that 'the school promotes respectful relationships'. It also refers to consultation as it states 'All staff take an active role in identifying key priorities to include in the SIP'. Moreover, it states 'the Arabic and English medium teachers work together effectively with a clear sense of common purpose'. It also indicates 'the school has a positive culture that is evident in many areas of the school.'

However, the second Irtiq'a report completed in 2015-2016 places the school at a 'very good' performance level. It documents consistently leadership practices that contributed positively to the school's development. For instance, it states 'the school is performing at a good level as a result of the good leadership and direction of the principal'. It also specifies 'the school has made good progress from previous inspection because of the shared vision and the high expectations from both students and staff members.' The report also highlights the elevating effect that the principal has on the staff members as it states, 'teachers are highly committed towards the school's vision and their overall morals and ethos are high.' Additionally, the report states 'the senior leadership ensures the high quality of teaching and learning across the school'. It also highlights the

‘welcoming and the positive environment in the school’ and ‘the positive and caring relationships between all staff members and the students’. Additionally, it states ‘the principal meets regularly with parent’s council to discuss the school’s progress towards its vision and mission’. The report also explains that ‘the principal is highly effective and therefore, she is supported by a very dedicated team that supports the school’s vision and mission’. Moreover, it states ‘the school provides a nurturing and calm environment where students feel safe and cared for’ it also documents ‘there is evidence in the school to suggest that Arabic and English teachers work collaboratively.’

Likewise, the school improvement plan documents ‘the principal will distribute leadership roles to enhance teachers’ leadership skill’ and ‘the principal will allot roles to the senior leadership team members to distribute leadership’. Additionally, the SIP confirms that ‘the principal will meet with head of committees to discuss their plans’. Moreover, there is a strong link in the SIP to suggest that the principal, teachers and senior leaders are communicating constantly with parents and within the school.

Additionally, the SIP states ‘that children with special abilities will achieve their individual educational plan objectives’ which suggest caring about people. There is also a strong indication of team-oriented direction as the SIP consistently explains how different teachers and senior leaders will collaborate in order to achieve the school’s aims.

2.2.3 Interview data

This section presents the narrative data from interviews conducted in school B. It is important to note that both the principal and the vice principal from school B did not take part in this research study despite the continuous efforts to sit with them on an interview. I tried reaching out for both of them offering different venues and/or different times with promises to get back to me while they never did. However, the interviews from colleagues, cluster manager, focus group and heads of faculty interviews provided a wealth of information to report on the principal's B leadership practices.

English Head of Faculty (HOF's) Interview:

The Head of Faculty (HOF) in School B is a western teacher who was assigned by ADEC to lead the English medium subjects at the school. She has a bachelor's degree from her home country in education with around 34 years of overall experience in education. She has been involved in leadership positions and research committees in her home country, however, did not undergo specific leadership training. She has been in School B for five years with the same principal and was retiring the year I interviewed her.

Leadership style:

I started the interview by asking the HOF what good leadership in schools looks like from her perspective. She said that good leaders have a 'vision' of where they want to go and a 'desire to help children achieve high and be well balanced people'. When I asked her specifically about Principal B's leadership style, she said

Principal B picks up the good qualities of a person and their abilities and then encourages them to do tasks that she knows is an area they can do quite well, then allows them to do it and move it the way they want it to go. So, people really want to do the best by her because it is generally about the school and the children and the school.

I asked the HOF about staff motivation; she said the principal supports her staff on an individual level, ‘making sure that provide them with the right resources,’ as well as their well-being by ‘ensuring that they take time to resolve any personal issues,’ that they might have.

When I asked the HOF about the principal’s interaction with the staff, she said:

She has a manner to get around things very well, especially if there is a negative thing. She will always start with the positive. She has a very calm manner to deal with the difficult staff members. She will find out how they are doing and gradually get into what needs to be changes. Just very good management style. I think there are a lot of techniques that she uses with the staff but also she wants to do well which leads the school forward.

I asked the HOF how the principal communicates with her staff; she said that the communication level at the school is very advanced and that the principal endeavours to keep all of her staff up-to-date with any changes as they occur even if it was at an individual level, if it is needed. She also added that the school’s vision and mission is embedded in classroom practice.

The HOF also added that the principal is very ‘patient’ when dealing with her staff as she gives them time and listens to their suggestions and asks questions to further understand their background and their perspectives on their practice.

When I asked the HOF about the principal's daily routine, she said:

She is in the school every day, very visible in morning assembly and in classrooms, making sure that teachers and students both have what they need to be successful. Even if she was tired, she will be at the school. She will lead professional development sessions and staff meetings and is very hands on in terms of what she wants from her staff. She has a very good understanding of good teaching practice and she communicates it very clearly to her staff.

Concluding the interview, the HOF explained that Principal B is very focused and specific about her school and what she wants of her teachers and that everyone is aware of her expectations, 'for children to become high achievers in all subject areas and to be contributing members of the UAE's community'.

Culture Building:

I asked the HFO what drives the principal to lead she said she has, 'A desire to do well by the students.'

She really feels the students are first and foremost. She knows it is important to do the best she can; she is a driven person to do the best. I think she really wants the best for children we have and the country we are in.

When I asked the HOF about the school's culture, she said:

The principal really strives to work with us as a team; it is like a family here. I believe that this came as a result of her direct instructions and from the fact that I work very closely with the Arabic HOF, we both learn from each other's strengths. We are very lucky with the staff we have here.

When I asked the HOF to give me examples of the principal's practices that influenced the school's culture she said, 'she has that personal side, being around the rooms asking about people'.

The HOF also explained that there is a sense of justice in the school's culture as the principal endeavours to be just and equitable with her staff members all of the time.

I think she tries to be fair and equitable with everyone. I am not saying that it is easy, but she really tries. She listens to everyone and gives them time to talk about their problems.

Additionally, the HOF explained that the principal's calmness has contributed positively to culture building

It is her very calm nature, which influences difficult people really well. She has that with staff members, students and even parents. The fact that she will come to school even if she is ill to be there for her staff members is really empowering.

As a final remark on culture building the HOF shared that the principal strives to include her staff members in the decision-making process, 'It is about making sure that everybody knows that they are heard and that they are appreciated for their input'.

Cross-cultural elements:

I asked the HOF how the principal motivates her staff, she said,

By making sure that they know they are doing a good job and that they are appreciated for their hard work. It is the expectation that we keep doing that as HOF's during our individual meetings with the

teachers. She will always thank teachers during staff meetings for their hard work. When a teacher stands out for something extra she did, she will recognise her by a certificate for her hard work.

There is evidence in the HOF interview that indicates that the school's culture places high importance on maintaining good relationships at the school. For example, on different occasions during the interview process, the HOF highlighted that the school's culture is like 'a family':

We are really lucky here; the relationships between the Arabic medium teachers (AMT's) and the English medium teachers (EMT's) are quite strong. There is a lot of sharing of good practice. It is a norm in the school; it is also a result of teachers being here longer so the relationships are stronger. The principal has a unique way of dealing with conflict; she defuses any problem in a very calm manner and will always give people time to talk about their issues.

Equally highlighted was that the school's culture constantly balances between implementing the policy changes and ADEC's directives while maintaining a focus on achieving the school improvement plan

ADEC requires at the last minute a lot of things done and sometimes the demands can make it very difficult to actually reach the many goals that we set for the school, but it is still seen as what we have to do.

When I asked the HOF to share an example of the principals' practices that contributed positively to the school's culture she explained

After Irtiqa'a inspection the principal had a lunch served at the school and everyone received certificates for their hard work in the school. Acknowledging what everyone has been through, being really happy and saying what a great job we did as a team.

Arabic (Head of Faculty) HOF's Interview:

The Arabic HOF at School B is an Emirati woman with over 10 years teaching experience. She has a bachelor's degree in Arabic from a local university. She has been at School B for more than 9 years and has worked with the current principal since her appointment in the school for more than five years. She completed several two-day conferences in leadership, however, she does not have a masters or formal educational qualification in leadership.

Leadership style:

I asked the Arabic HOF about the principal's leadership at the school; she said that she is very 'supportive' of her staff and 'calm' in her manners.

Our principal is very supportive of us; this has led us to work harder for her. Her support has resulted in staff's creativity. They now strive to do the best by her. Her calm demeanour humbles us and drives us to follow her lead and work harder.

School B has been identified by the Irtiqa'a report as a high achieving school. When I asked the Arabic HOF what, in her opinion, drove the school forward, she said that this came about as a result of everyone knowing where the principal wants them to go and what she wants them to do:

The principal wants the best for our students; she wants them to excel academically and personally. We all know that she keeps focusing on it in her daily conversations with teachers. There is no doubt about that in anyone's mind.

I asked the Arabic HOF how the principal keeps her staff focused on her vision, she said:

Our principal strives to include her staff in decision-making process. During our preparation for the next year, we come together as small teams and come up with strategies and action plans that build the school improvement plan. So, all the staff is aware about our actions to improve and they feel like they contributed to its development.

Concluding her remarks on the principal's leadership the Arabic HOF added, there is mutual respect between the staff members and the principal, which drives our school forward.

Culture building:

Frequently, the Irtiqa'a report affirmed that the school's culture is 'warm' and 'positive'. I asked the Arabic HOF, how does the principal affect the school's culture?

The principal is very supportive to all of our teachers, she encourages us as heads of faculties to work with teachers, and support them. We would do anything in our power to assist in any way possible. We have staff members that live off Abu Dhabi Island, but will still rather do the drive every day because of the support they get from her. She cares for them and will accommodate to their needs as much as possible. We are like a family here.

Additionally, the Arabic HOF believes that the family-like environment at the school resulted from the sense of 'fairness' that everyone at the school feels and that the principal is trustworthy, 'she knows how to deal with staff members without causing chaos; that is why everyone trusts her'.

Towards the end of the interview, the Arabic HOF asserted that the principal respects her staff members, which in her opinion, has led to more harmony at the school:

She is very respectful and will never hurt anyone or embrace them. She respects us as human beings and colleagues. This has reflected positively on our school's culture.

Cross-cultural elements:

I asked the Arabic HOF why do they have a lower percentage of teacher turnover in comparison to other schools in Abu Dhabi. She said that the school's culture is very warm and welcoming, which makes it really hard to leave this school:

We care about each other a lot, even outside of the work environment. If a teacher is ill or hospitalized, we always make an effort to visit her and check on her well-being. We often go in teams, our principal always makes an effort to be with us. Relationships bring us closer together, just like a family.

Additionally, the Arabic HOF explained that the principal is open about conflict management, by allowing staff members to express their emotions during difficult situations and interactions:

In several occasions, the principal had to deal with conflict at the school. However, it is always resolved in a calm manner between teachers. We have a very good rapport with one another. This is why our school's culture is very positive.

The above statements suggest that the school's culture came as a result of the principal's demeanor of being calm and flexible.

I asked the Arabic HOF about staff motivation; she said that honouring teacher's efforts is a solid practice at the school. She explained that staff are acknowledged in meetings, during morning assembly and even through the evaluation process.

Additionally, the Arabic HOF frequently indicates that the school is involved in many projects at the same time, which places significant pressure on teachers. However, she reported that through individual support and motivation, teachers are willing to work hard to overcome these challenges.

Teacher's focus group Interview:

The teacher's focus group provided a wealth of information on the leadership practices of Principal B. Four teachers took part in this interview. They are all westerners with different backgrounds and teaching experiences. They all shared one common factor, that is, being in School B for four or more years. They were all eager to talk about her and how she contributes to the school's community. Below are the findings of this session presented by theme

Leadership style:

I asked the teachers to share with me their experience so far with Principal B; they all agreed that their experience has been positive and consistent for more than four years.

T2: This school has grown under her leadership and it will continue to grow.

T4: She wants her school to be exemplary in everything, health and safety, academic and prestige. However, what is really important to her are the students and how they grow.

In the interview data, there is a wealth of information that consistently indicates that the principal raises the staff's self-esteem and that she has an elevating effect on them. For example, teachers shared the following views and impressions:

T2: She can get you to move a mountain and you do not actually realize that you are moving that mountain, while if someone else asked you to do the same you can be very resistant. However; with her, it is very hard to resist.

T3: She takes care of us like her own family and that is the most important thing. You would want to work so hard for her; she deserves all the credit she gets for everything.

T4: Her expectations are very high and we all know it, however; they way that she demands what she wants in a very calm manner, makes want to go that extra mile for her.

Additionally, the teachers shared that they believe the principal is a very good leader as she has high expectations and that she communicates them successfully to all of her staff members. For example, the teachers reported that:

T3: Our principal is a very good leader; she does not sit on her table and tell us to do this and that. She gives us all the support that we need.

T4: She leads by example.

T2: She is always open to suggestions, she will listen and takes them on board and find the best way to implement it at the school.

Culture building:

Given the high demands of the school and the principal's high expectations, I asked the teachers what motivated them to stay this long at the school. They all shared that the relationships at the school are very positive and attracting. They also agreed that the principal's leadership practices have contributed positively to culture building in the school. For example, the teachers explained:

T2: Our principal's demands are very high, she asks us to do a lot of things, however; her demeanor is very positive and calm. Even though I am older than her, I feel like she is my mother. She often tells me I am your UAE sister.

T3: Her interpersonal skills are outstanding; she treats us all with respect, even tea ladies, cleaner and the nurse. She is just a special lady.

T4: She is a people person and that is key.

Moreover, there is evidence in the interview that implies that the principal provides her staff with individual support

T3: Our principal does not dictate tasks, she provides us with the support that we need to carry on with our tasks.

T4: She wants us to grow as teachers; she will encourage us to go to professional development, even if it means we are missing out on school hours. She gives us the freedom to go out of the school and learn new things that we can implement at our school so we can all improve.

During the interview process, teachers attributed the positive school ethos as a direct result of the principal's fairness in dealing with the staff

T4: Part of her leadership that I really admire is her fairness, no matter who you are, or what is your status at the school, fair is fair. I think this part has opened doors to everything else. I can go to her with any problem I might have and I know that I can rely on her to be fair and treat the situation fairly.

T3: I think it is because of her just is why we are the way we are, a good school. I think that is one of the reasons why we don't have a large percentage of teacher turnovers.

Concluding their statements on the positive school ethos, teachers stated that they feel they have a voice and they are asked for input during the decision-making process

T1: Our principal discusses most of her decisions with us, we feel like we have a voice in the school.

T3: She acknowledges our expertise and asks us for our opinion on how can we improve an aspect of the school.

Teachers all agreed that the most important quality of their principal is having patience, which can be concluded from the interview data as teachers consistently reported that the principal is always calm. For example, one of the teachers reported:

T4: During my five years working in this school I have never seen her angry except one time. Even though I am sure that there are many situations that resulted in tones of anger, I only saw her angry one time, and she quickly turned that over and reverted to her calm demeanour.

It is the teacher's belief that all of these factors have contributed positively to building a family-like culture in the school.

Cross-cultural elements:

Reflecting on the school's positive ethos, I asked the teachers to share how the principal deals with cultural differences in the school.

T1: In the school, it is not important what your status is. We are all treated with respect. Even the principal, she does not have that prestigious notion about the principal, she is very humble.

T3: It is because we are given the freedom to make decisions that I feel I have grown in the school professionally. It is based on her support and motivation.

There is evidence that suggests that the school's culture focuses on relationship-building and tolerates emotional expression. For example, teachers reported:

T4: There are many occasions when I went to the principal's office and I cried and she listened to me. I feel like she is not going to be judgmental. She said you are like my baby. We all treat each other like sisters.

T3: Our staff members are all connected. We are like a family. It is not only about the school and work. It goes beyond that. If anyone of us is ill, our principal will be on the phone calling. She will be the first to go to the hospital. The care in the culture is genuine, because our principal has a heart of gold.

The teachers repeatedly and consistently reported that the work demands are very high in School B and that they are frequently asked to take a part in different school projects at the same time:

T2: Our school is a high-profile school; we get asked to do at the last minute a lot of things. It may come as a sudden demand, however; it is not passed as an unsympathetic request. Our principal often expresses her gratitude to all of us who work really hard. She appreciates that.

T3: We could be asked to prepare for a big event in just two days, and she will always appreciate the hard work we put on these events.

Cluster Manager Interview:

The cluster manager is a western former principal in his mid-fifties. He has over 28 years of experience in education eight of which was as a principal in his home country. He worked for more than 10 years in the Gulf area as a principals' advisor. He also has an inspection background. He works as a cluster manager for Schools B and C. Some of the demographic information has been omitted to preserve the anonymity of the research participants.

Leadership style:

I asked the cluster manager to tell me about Principal B and how she leads the school to be a ‘good school’, similar to the information given in the Irtiqa’a report, he said:

Good leadership means that the principal has high expectations with clear communication. Principal B has high expectations from her staff and the students. She is very clear about her expectations. Students in School B are two years higher than the national average in all subject areas. This does not happen by chance; it happens when everybody knows what is expected.

I asked the CM about staff motivation in School B, he said that the principal has ‘personal qualities’ that she models in the school so she can motivate her staff. When I asked about these personal qualities, specifically he said:

She is consistent about the messages she sends to her staff. Her staff knows that she will support them when it comes to student’s best interest.

When I asked the CM, how can Principal B navigate through the cultural differences in her school, he said that with her current knowledge and experience he has every confidence that ‘Principal B could be a successful principal in any country, not only the UAE’.

Concluding his comments on leadership in School B, the CM said that the school has gone through a remarkable change from being a satisfactory school to a very good school in most areas. This, in his opinion, was primarily the result of good leadership practices by Principal B.

Culture building:

I asked the CM what, in his opinion, drives principal B to lead the school, he responded:

I believe that Principal B enjoy learning and enjoy seeing how people grow in her organization. She is highly professional and committed to do what she is assigned to do by the government. She is committed to do the best in her job; she has a combination of both pride and personal qualities that drives her to be at the school doing what needs to be done to make it a successful school. It is the value of seeing how people grow and to help them doing that.

During the interview process, different participants indicated that the school's culture is positive and respectful. I asked the CM how the principal contributes to culture building in the school. He said:

Principal B allows people in her organization to grow and they are able to put their ideas forwards. She provides time for peer-observation so you are able to learn from your colleagues. It is that sharing and collaboration which takes the school forward.

When I asked the CM how the principal balances between her staff members he said that principal B 'works from her heart' to get the school's community to work. He further said:

I think it has to be linked to being equitable and fair to everyone in your school. When you are respectful of those who work with you and you have that professional dialogue for student's best interest, all staff members will get on board.

These elements contributed, in the opinion of the CM, to the positive school's environment.

Cross-cultural elements:

I asked the CM how Principal B deals with change in her school, he said that she looks for 'external influences' from policy and ADEC and she tries to find the best way to implement these changes. He further added that:

Principal B understands that if you keep adding tasks to the school's system, it will result in interrupting the learning process in the school. However, Principal B is good at recognizing this and she manages it successfully.

When I asked the CM about staff motivation, he said:

Principal B values her staff members; she understands that they need to feel secure to be able to do their jobs. She ensures that her staff members are praised and recognised for their individual efforts.

The cluster manager believes that principal B focuses on promoting good relationships at the school. For instance, he explained that Principal B gives her staff members time to meet and discuss any pressing issues that they might have. He further clarified that she has a 'human side' that predominates in her relationships with her staff members; which further contributes to the positive school's culture.

2.3 School C:

2.3.1 School's profile

Located near Abu Dhabi Island, School C accommodates around 900 students every year (age six to twelve). They are all Muslim with a majority of Emirati children. It is a fairly new school that was built in the last seven years. The principal leads around 75 staff members that serve the school each year in core subject areas, Arabic, Islamic, English, mathematics, science as well as physical education, music, special needs, social studies, library, information technology and art. There are also cleaners, security guards and bus monitors. The staff is a mixture of over seventeen

nationalities with the high proportion being Emirati. It also has Americans, Australians, Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians, Algerians, U.K, Irish and Palestinian staff members. The staff turnover is around 15% and the administrative staff has been in their posts for more than four years. The senior leadership team consists of the principal, vice principals and heads of faculty. The school follows the Abu Dhabi School Model for instructional activities and follows Abu Dhabi Educational Council's policy for day-to-day procedures and operational systems. Some of the school's profile information has been kept from this analysis for anonymity purposes.

2.3.2 Contextual account of school C:

The first thing you observe about the school's building is that there is no surrounding outside fence. It is very spacious and welcoming. As you enter the school, your eyes are automatically diverted to the reception area where you notice the Sheikhs in framed pictures above the reception area. Besides the reception area to the left there is a white bulletin board that is hand written on a daily basis to inform the staff about upcoming events, school visits, absent teachers and cover teachers. Also, to the left of the reception area there is a replica of Qaser Al Hoson door (an old traditional Emirati palace) with a big picture of a police officer saluting the flag. To the right side you can see the school's mission and vision as well as the national mission and vision of the Emirate. There is also a display area for projects that children did with their parents during the National Day celebration. The School's awards and trophies are also displayed in a glass cabinet that reflects and celebrates its contribution to the local community. Also, to the right hand side there is a huge wall that is decorated by staff, cleaners and security guard pictures receiving their awards for best attendance, classroom environment and/or different other reasons. There is also a seating area that

leads to a room with comfortable couches. I was later informed that this is the waiting area for parents.

The principal's office is not very obvious to visitors. You normally pass by the secretary and the vice principal's office before you are able to reach the principal's office. When I was invited to the principal's office the first thing that caught my attention was a board that is decorated by student's art and writing work. The principal's office is a working chamber with different teachers' files and students' work. There is also a small seating area that I used for interviewing the principal. Although the door was closed throughout the interview, teachers and staff members were not hesitant to knock on the principal's door when they needed to address her.

The hallways leading to classrooms are very clean and spacious. There are huge pictures that show late Sheikh Zayed and other prominent figures of the government. The main entrance is decorated as an old house door with a huge phrase written in Arabic that translates as: He with no past has no future. Throughout the corridors there are traditional artifacts decorating walls and corners that reflect the UAE's culture and heritage. For example, there is a huge wall covered with Sa'ef Al Nakheel (dried palm leaves) and a fanous (an old Lantern). The school's inner pillars are all decorated with Shiekh Khalifa's photos. There are many examples of respecting the UAE's culture and traditions throughout the school. For example, there is a wall that is decorated with children's art work that reflects that the UAE is a compassionate country. There are also newspaper clippings of different occasions that the school's students contributed and were recognized for in the local newspapers.

Outside each classroom there is a table with art projects that students made to represent their love for and respect of the UAE culture. There is a unique corner where I found a number of students gathering and talking about the martyrs of the UAE with their individual photos pinned to the UAE map. All classrooms are spacious, clean and decorated with student's work. Teacher's working areas are all filled with memos and bulletin boards. There is also a small seating area that teachers can sit in and relax while they are off duty, however, it was empty at the time of my visit. Both English medium teachers and Arabic medium teachers who form the same grade level share the staff room, which allows them time to discuss the curriculum and student's progress during their lunch breaks. The general atmosphere of the school is welcoming and calm, yet, it reflects the busy and hard work by teachers and children. To me, it looked like a busy hive during summer time where everyone knows exactly what to do and is constantly working to achieve it.

The Irtiqa'a report conducted in 2013-2014 places the school at an acceptable performance level. It indicates that the principal was appointed to her post eighteen months prior to the inspection. The inspection report highlights the 'support of the leadership team to improve teaching and learning' as a strength in the first page. It also states that the 'staff has strong commitment to co-operate and willingness to improve'. These two statements suggest that there is a level of individual support provided by the senior leadership team to teachers, as well as culture building, as it highlights the staff commitment. Additionally, the report indicates, 'staff share common identity and sense of direction'. The report also mentions that 'students and teachers enjoy coming to school' and that the school 'has positive ethos' as one of its strengths. It also complements the 'caring ethos and students feel well looked after', it also mentions that parents feel that their children are safe and they are getting good educational services. Moreover, the report states that a

‘particular success in the school is the close links which have been established between Arabic Medium teachers (AMTs) and English Medium teachers (EMTs)’, which is an indication of the team-oriented approach in the school. The report clearly complements the principal as being able to drive the school towards significant improvements. It also identifies that the school runs clubs, hands on science projects for children and actively participates in national projects. Moreover, it attributes the warm school’s culture to the senior leadership team as it states, ‘Teachers and students enjoy coming to school, knowing that the senior leadership team value them individually and recognise their efforts’.

The second Irtiq’a report completed in 2015-2016 places school C at a ‘very good’ performance level. It indicates that there are ‘very warm relationships between students and adults that supports good teaching’. This implies that the culture building was more effective, which could be attributed to the consistent tenure and presence of the principal and the senior leadership team. The report also highlights that ‘the principal and the senior leadership team set a strategic direction for school improvement and promote a vision that is shared by the whole school community’. Additionally, the report emphasises the ‘effective and positive learning culture’ in the school and that ‘relationships and communication are professional and effective’. Positive culture is also evident in Irtiq’a statement ‘most teachers demonstrate their commitment in well-organized classrooms’. Furthermore, individual support was clearly stated in the report as it states, ‘senior leadership roles are focused on coaching and regular professional development’. Moreover, the report indicates, ‘Self-evaluation is systematic and involves input from all staff’. Additionally, ‘positive and effective relationships’ is a clear indication to positive leaders. Furthermore, the report mentions ‘comprehensive planning’ that led to improving the school’s performance.

Moreover, the report indicates that ‘staff input in the school self-evaluation form’. It also states that ‘the school has a vision of inclusion and fairness that is shared by the whole school community’. Additionally, the Irtiqa’a report documents that the school runs different projects at the same time to help all of the students to reach their full potential.

The school improvement plan (SIP) is a very detailed document that is professionally developed with very specific details and strategies to move the school forward. The document is about 30 pages long with timelines and actions to monitor and support children’s learning. For example, the very first page of the document reflects culture building in the vision statement and statement of purpose. It clearly indicates that the vision of the school is to create a ‘community that supports thoughtful learning approaches’. Additionally, the SIP document indicates that the main focus is ‘to improve the quality of teaching and learning’. It also indicates culture building and individual support through the specific professional development sessions to assist teachers in planning and delivering lessons. It also demonstrates culture building as it indicates a partnership between Arabic medium teachers (AMTs) and English medium teachers (EMTs). The SIP document was also complimented in the Irtiqa’a inspection report as an indication that the principal is competent and team-oriented, as it involves the staff input and feedback in completing this document.

2.3.3 Interview data

The following paragraphs represents narrative interview data conducted with the school's principal. The vice principal, English Head of Faculty (HOF), Arabic Head of Faculty, three teachers as well as the cluster manager who works very closely with the principal were also interviewed.

Principal's interview:

Principal C is a western principal in her mid-forties. She has a bachelor's degree in Education from her home country. She started off as a teacher and then she was promoted to a principal's position where she stayed at her school for seven years. As a result of her success she was promoted to work as a superintendent where she remained for around 10 years. She is married with two children. She has two master degrees in Educational Leadership, and, Curriculum Leadership. According to her, she had some family issues that required her to take a year off work and to do some self-reflection on her future plans. It was then when she decided that she missed being a school principal and that she was ready for a new challenge, so she accepted the offer to come overseas and join ADEC where she has worked for the past six years. Some of the demographic information has been kept confidential to preserve the anonymity of the research subject.

Leadership style:

When I asked the principal what a good leader looks like. She said that a good leader is someone who is not caught up in managing people but is leading for change. She further explained that micro-management does not move the school further towards its vision

Leading is different, it is having a vision of where you want to go and how do you go there. I do not come in and say I want to move the school from good to great without having an idea on what I need to be sharpened to get there.

When specifically asked about her leadership style, the principal explained that she embraces a participatory model of leadership. She likes to involve her staff in decision making almost all of the time. However, she sometimes has to be firm and make a quick decision, too:

I learned as I was growing into leadership that heavy-handed approach does not work well. I worked with different types of people and I know who made me work and who turned me off. So, I try not to embrace the pieces I did not like. I learned to listen and take input from people, when I have to make a quick decision and I did not listen or did not have the grace of time to listen enough, I go back and find the time to talk to people who were affected by my decisions to help them understand my decision. I call it 'right your wrongs'.

This statement implies that the principal uses a mix of transforming transactional characteristics.

When I asked the principal, how can she lead in a multicultural community she said that the unique culture of her school made her a better leader because she learned to be patient and to listen more:

My followers do not always come from the same point of view that I come from, I come from a more holistic view and they are coming from what it matters for them. I have to remember to be patient and listen still and even though I listen and I value their input, they still have to do what I find better for the best interest of the students.

I asked the principal, how does she motivate her staff and keep them focused on her vision she explained that the staff understands her high expectations and understands that she wants a high level of commitment from teachers and want them to have a high level of commitment from their students as well:

When I first came, teachers used to say but students cannot do this, so the school was very weak. However, once you set high expectations, teachers will rise to it and students will eventually follow. Now we are a band A school. They believed that children can do it and they did.

I asked the principal to share a success story from her previous experience, she said that her biggest success story when she was a principal in a low performing school that was one of the schools called 90, 90, 90 schools. These schools have 90% of the students from low socioeconomic background, 90% of students were second English language learners and 90% of the students were below national achievement level. It took her and her team seven years to become an outstanding school in closing the achievement gap between boys and girls and meeting the national level.

Just like in this school, we were very weak, now we are overall good levels, some actually very good level. It takes a lot of work.

The principal also referred to herself as a positive person that takes negative situations and turn it into a positive experience. She simply said:

I love challenges, it is less leading when everything goes smoothly and I want to lead. Not simply manage.

Culture Building:

I asked the principal what motivates her to lead. She explained that she has a personal desire to lift the school from one place to another. When I asked her about her where did she get her motivation from she said:

Examples of my life from my upbringing, my father was a very driven man. He was goal oriented and my mother was a schoolteacher. I was always a leader in my family since we were children even until today. My siblings look up to me to lead. I just had the drive to do well in their eyes. I wanted to be successful and I wanted their approval. I wanted to do well in the world.

There is evidence from the interview data that implies that the principal depends on a model of consultation through her everyday practice and that she is team oriented. For example, when I asked the principal how she leads, she said that she tries to get the input from her staff members. When I asked, how could she balance moving the school forward and still include her staff she said:

Often times, in order to move forward, you have to slow things down. I slow things down to get the staff's input and then make a decision. This is how I have more people on board and understand and realise that their opinion really matters. I feel we go way farther when people get on board with your decisions.

When I asked the principal how she inspires her staff to rise to her expectations she explained that she has worked with staff on an individual level to help them understand the impact of using students' data to improve their practice.

I have inspired them to reach high level of achievement and together we figured how to reach that and how to use data. They now understand it at an individual teacher level and they use it in their daily work. It took a lot of work to get them on board. I started with my cleaning staff helping me then I sat a board for individual students' levels. Then I got teachers to reflect on it, one grade level at a time. It was very enlightening for them. They now use this information to make better changes on their daily practice.

When I asked the principal about what drives her to lead she said that she has always been driven to do the best she can. The principal also added that this has led her to put pressure on herself, which then was reflected on her practices in a sense of fairness (*Adel*) as she became aware of what her followers can handle.

I am always careful of what I ask others to do and make sure that I would do it myself. I am always cautious to make decisions that affect others without involving them in the process. The type of leader that I am, I like to get people's opinion.

Cross-cultural elements:

During the interview process the principal indicated that her school has about 17 different nationalities of staff members working at the school, with the majority of them being Emirati, Americans, Australians, Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians, Algerians, UK, Irish, Palestinian and Indians. When I asked the principal how could she lead this multicultural environment, she explained that the only way that she could do it was through involving the staff in the decision making process. When I asked how she manages that she said:

It works; it just takes more time to do things. I have staff on different nationalities. I have no idea about their educational systems and how they were all trained. I have to take more time to explain things, so I can get them all on board.

In different occasions during the principal's interview she referred to the consultation model that she uses almost every day with her staff. For example, the principal strives to obtain input from her staff before making decisions that affect their lives. It appears the principal build trust and rapport with her staff and has a positive attitude in her daily practices. Moreover, the principal consistently

assured that she is careful about her decisions and how they affect others. She always tries to listen to them and get their input to help them understand her perspective. Additionally, the principal takes time to build relationships and respects other's needs when making decisions.

When it comes to policy implementation the principal explained that she is very specific about following ADEC's policy. However, she acknowledges that the policy sometimes changes very fast and even though she follows it as an ADEC employee, she takes the time to help her staff to understand it from an administrator's point of view. This suggests that the school's culture is often affected by the policy change. When I asked the principal how she motivates her staff she explained that in the school's culture it is very important for teachers to get recognized for what they do. This is why the principal has set procedures to acknowledge staff members for different aspects, such as attendance awards or innovation awards.

A big part of this culture is people want to be recognized for their efforts. They tend to do more for the children if they get recognized for their efforts.

Vice Principal's interview:

The vice principal of School C is a western vice principal from a different country than the principal. She has over 18 years of experience in Education starting as a teacher and gradually becoming a vice principal in her home country before moving to Abu Dhabi. She has a Master's degree in Teaching and Learning and has completed extra leadership training courses. She was appointed at School C five years ago and has worked with the principal ever since. Some of the demographic data has been withheld to preserve the anonymity of the research subject.

Leadership style:

When I asked the vice principal to tell me what a good leadership look like to her, she said:

A good leader is someone who is able to see the bigger picture. Being able to identify strength and weaknesses and wanting to work on that and take the whole school with you.

When I specifically asked about the principal's leadership, the vice-principal explained that she is very collaborative and that she allows people to come with ideas and solutions themselves and share it with others so as long as it serves the best interests of the students. The above statements are consistent with the data from the principal's interview. Additionally, the vice-principal emphasised that this consultation model has allowed all staff members to feel that they are included in the decision-making process and that all of them feel valued and recognized as a result of this approach. This also indicates that the principal's approach has had an elevating effect on the staff by raising their self-esteem. This, according to the vice-principal, has resulted in raising the school's ethos and has contributed to the positive atmosphere in the school.

I asked the vice-principal what were the principal's ethics in work; she said working hard and making sure that all of the staff stay true to the vision and the mission of the school and that is why all the staff appreciated her.

During the interview the vice-principal indicated on several occasions that the principal's style is collaborative and that she values open communication. She also said that the principal consults with her staff and elicits their input, which helps them to feel that they are valued and appreciated.

For example, when I asked the vice principal on how does the principal include the staff in the school's mission and vision she said:

Through distributed leadership, everyone feel like they have a voice and that they can be heard. One thing that the principal does, through the discussion with the senior leadership team, she identifies teachers in each grade level that are good leaders or have the potential to be good leaders and she invited them to participate in senior leadership meetings. Then in turn, those teachers take discussions back to the teachers so that teacher feel they are involved in the decision-making process.

Culture Building:

Throughout the interview the vice-principal indicated several times that the approach in the school is to provide teachers with individual support for the teachers to help them stay focused on the end value and achieve the mission and vision of the school. For example, the vice-principal explained:

I get real enjoyment from working with this team and being a part of the professional dialogue. I think it is really powerful to see, over time, how individual skills come out and how it can be used in a team approach.

These statements suggest that the school's direction is built on teamwork where at the same time, each member's need is being considered and catered for. It also indicates that there is a level of individual support provided to teachers to help them to achieve the school's vision.

I asked the vice principal about the diverse culture in the school and how the principal leads in this environment she said:

When we first opened the school, it was with a different leadership and with staff coming from different backgrounds and culture. So, we were not cohesive. It took time and efforts to build that collaboration culture that teamwork where we are all working together for the same reasons. The principal's role in that is getting people on board who understood her vision and she put them into the right position in leadership and in the right grade level and so now we are a team.

I asked the vice principal to comment on the distance that the principal has between herself and the staff:

Ultimately, there has to be some distance. I think she has to be able to say at the end of the day I have listened to all of your input and I value your opinion, but my decision is this. However, because of her leadership style, teachers will follow her decision and want to be part of the school's success.

Cross-cultural elements:

Reflecting back on the diverse cultures and backgrounds of the working staff in School C, I asked the vice-principal what is more important: building relationships or enforcing rules and regulations; she answered with no hesitation: 'Relationships'. I then asked her: how do you and the principal manage to get things done? She said:

If you have a good relationship with the staff, they want to work with you and they are far more likely to follow your directions and instructions and suggestions. Because most of the non-negotiable have been agreed on in a whole staff meeting. In terms of the policy and the school-wide procedures. If you elicit the support from the staff through good relationships, you are less likely to get a push back.

This was also reflected during the principal's interview when she mentioned that she needed to slow things down to get all of the staff on board.

In terms of motivating the staff and recognizing their efforts, the vice principal agreed with the principal's comments that, in the school's culture, it is very important to recognize individual teacher's efforts. For example, the vice principal said:

Teachers really thrive for positive reinforcement. Even if something is not going well, you have to identify the good bits. This might be true for every culture, but it is more emphasised in this school's culture.

In terms of dealing with policy change the vice principal explained that the principal has a good approach when a new policy comes, she includes her staff in ways that they can comply with policy implementation while minimizing its effect on the daily routine:

The principal is very mindful about the culture and she strives to balance this knowledge while deciding how to make the next step or next change. As a school it is an ongoing challenge to balance all the aspects of policy change at the same time but we do try our best.

This is also consistent with the principal's interview as she indicated that policy change is rapid. A significant link emerged from the vice-principal's interview to acculturation when she identified a positive skill that the principal has in this area:

The principal strengths manifest in her vision, her previous experience and quickly identifying the differences between her country and here in terms of getting people on board who understands her vision for the school.

English Head of Faculty's (HOF) interview:

The English Head of Faculty (HOF) is a western teacher who was assigned by ADEC to School C. She has over thirty years of experience in education most of which were in her home country. She has around six years of experience working with ADEC two years of which was in another school. She has been working in School C for the past four years with the same leadership team. She does not have a formal leadership education.

Leadership style:

I asked the HOF how the principal leads, she reported that the principal understands the value of strong team building and that she knows what her ‘priorities’ are, the best interests of the students.

I asked the HOF how can the principal get every teacher on board while having different personalities and cultural backgrounds, she said that sometimes it has been difficult to get everyone on board, and that the principal had to stand her ground when implementing the policy:

This is very difficult, depending what the issue is she has to stand her ground sometimes. However, when new directive comes in from ADEC she gathers everyone and helps them understand and come with solutions on what is the best way to implement the policy.

This indicates that the principal uses a combination of transforming and transactional approaches to shape the day-to-day school procedures. I asked the HOF what she thinks motivates the principal to lead she said that the principal is a very smart person and that she has an intrinsic motivation to lead:

If you hear her stories from high school, you will know that she is that type of person who will push herself to go a little bit farther. When you lead you have to set a good example. If you expect your staff to be in the canteen for supervision, you have to be there, too. She is good at that.

During the interview, the HOF indicated that the principal has earned the staff's respect, therefore, they follow her lead:

I think one of the things that our principal do well is that when she talks to the staff about things they know that she is knowledgeable about what she is talking about, so they admire her level of understanding. She is quick, so when the staff brings in ideas, she sits there and listens. She is knowledgeable enough to say I understand what you are saying but have you thought about doing this.

Culture Building:

When I asked the HOF about the principal's leadership approach she said that she likes to have the buy-in from her staff.

I think she has a lot of knowledge working with particular personality types. She has gone through the training and she has tried an assortment of things with a good level of success. I do think she follows the 'buy in' style because she uses it with everything.

These statements are consistent with the principal's interview and it indicates that the principal elicit the staff involvement in the decision-making process.

I asked the HOF how the principal gets the staff to understand her vision. She explained that the principal provides a level of support for teachers to help them to understand her vision and that this approach came as a result of understanding the local culture:

The principal came with the idea that it is going to be easy to bring stuff from our home country and implement it here, however, she understood quickly that this is not the case. Just like when you

say all teachers will do guided reading twice a week, well do they understand what guided reading is? It is not that the staff is resistant, it is just they might not understand what the final outcome is.

I asked the HOF what she think are the principal's work ethics; she said that the principal has very strong ethics and that she has invested a lot of time in building the school's positive culture

When we first came here, we were here an hour before the staff and we would leave the school late. She was here on weekends. She had put a lot of time into the school. Sometimes, I have seen her in the school on weekends with her husband painting the school's walls. She has very strong work ethics.

Cross-cultural elements:

I asked the HOF if she sees evidence of growth in the school, she explained that the change is huge and that now the school is achieving at a high level. However, she indicated that there is so much to do in such a short span of time

Time is such an issue here, it is such a big problem to get everything in. We always need to step back and evaluate what we are doing and see what worked well and what did not and where can we have some flexibility. Our principal is very good at that, she understands that the school's day is just not enough to get all what needs to be taught.

These statements suggest that the school's try to implement many projects at the same time rather than each one at a time. This is also consistent with the principal's interview.

When I asked the HOF how does the principal recognize her staff for their efforts, she said that at the school we celebrate achievements all of the time:

Our principal inspires the staff, maybe in not every single piece. However, she makes the majority of the staff know what they are doing well. I think she is very motivational and her success comes from the 'buy in' model that she follows.

A significant link to acculturation was highlighted during the HOF's interview as the HOF drew attention to the importance of focusing on building a good relationship before focusing on the business

When the principal first joined the school, she quickly understood that you could not come and mandate rules and regulations and expect the staff to totally embrace it. Here, relationships are more important. It takes time to build relationships that the staff is willing to trust and do what you say.

Arabic Head of Faculty (HOF's) interview:

The Arabic HOF is an Emirati teacher in her mid-thirties. She is an acting HOF (not officially appointed by ADEC). She completed her bachelor of education from a local university and did not go through formal educational leadership training. However, she indicated that she is a natural leader in her family. She has gained her experience through working with this school's principal.

Leadership style:

I asked the Arabic HOF what motivates the principal to lead; she explained that the principal cares a lot about student's achievements and that she directs all her efforts towards the students. This is

consistent with the interview data from the principal and the vice-principal. Furthermore, I asked the HOF about the policy implementation at the school and how do teachers accept that:

She follows it to the word level. Some teacher respect her enough to follow her leads, others, they have to be reminded consistently about their work obligations as per the policy. However, the majority follows her because they respect her. It is only a small minority that needs to be reminded about the policy.

The above statements suggest that the principal's approach to leadership is a balance between the transforming and transactional forms. However, reflecting on the HOF's statement, it appears that the principal leans towards the transforming approach more so than the transactional. The HOF believes that the principal is a role model for the staff

Our principal sets high expectations of the staff and the children. She believes it is their right to improve. Some teachers started to change as a result of her commitment.

The HOF also indicated that the principal has a lot of patience, which was also reflected in the principal's interview as one of her skills that was sharpened as a result of her leadership in this school:

When we have a low moment in the school, the principal gathers the staff for a meeting and we discuss how can we deal with the situation, whether it is low achievement data or anything else and together we think about solutions to address that. She is very patient in her support.

This statement also suggests the level of support that the principal provides for her staff to assist them in their problem-solving abilities.

Culture Building:

I asked the Arabic HOF about the principal's leadership style, her answer was consistent with the principal's interview that she likes to include everyone in the decision-making process, which further indicates that the principal consults with her staff. When I asked the HOF how the principal motivates the staff, she said that she rewards them for their hard work:

She accommodates for breast-feeding hours for teachers even if it means changing the whole schedule. She tries to help teachers all the time. She is always sympathetic if a teacher is stressed she will do her very best to help her.

There is evidence in the HOF's interview that further supports that the principal is team oriented. For example, the HOF indicated on several occasions that the principal elicits staff input through staff meetings and that they problem solve for best solutions together, '*we do everything like a team*'.

Cross-cultural elements:

According to the HOF the principal sets systems in place to recognize teacher's individual effort for attendance and innovation. This, according to the HOF, has lifted the school's ethos and motivated the staff to work harder. As with the previous interview data, the HOF highlighted the efforts that the principal continues to do to build relationships in the school. Additionally, the HOF emphasised that the school has undergone considerable pressure while trying to uphold to ADEC's policy as most of the time directives come in late which makes it harder to plan and prepare for these new directions.

Focus group interview:

The focus group targeted three teachers from different subject areas and grade levels. Targeted teachers were from different nationalities. All teachers were Arabic language speakers with different years of experience. They shared one common factor, which is working in School C for four years.

Leadership style:

I asked the teachers what the school's vision is. They all said that she wants students to become high achievers and her decisions always focus on that aim:

T1 said: I have dealt with principals before; you might feel that they are like mothers. However, they miss seeing the whole picture. Our principal oversees everything at the school. She cares about the students and wants to make sure that they are achieving.

This statement is consistent with the principal's interview. When I asked the teachers if they feel inspired by the principal's actions they all agreed that they do:

T2: she knows how to develop teachers' talents. There are some teachers whom do not have appreciation for their skills. Our principal knows us and she helps us flourish.

T3: Some principals might be the reason behind teachers' laziness. They keep you cornered, our principal focuses on your skills by giving us chances to practice these skills to perfect them.

These statements indicate that the principal has an elevating effect on her followers. It also suggests that the principal raises the staff's self-esteem. I asked the teachers if they feel that the principal is

distant from them, they all agreed that the principal is very near and always visible in the hallways and in the classrooms.

T1: We may not speak to her every day because of our teaching load, but I do not feel I am left out of the loop. She always communicates effectively with us. She has an open door policy and you do not need a mediator to speak to her.

T3: She is hands-on leader, she does not sit in her office and order you around; she is always with you. Reception, canteen or hallways, you always know that she is there.

These statements further imply that the principal is communicative and visible in the school. Additionally, teachers reported that the principal is very patient and listens to her staff members as many times as they require her to do:

T3: She is very calm and does not get irritated easily. She is very professional and was never disrespectful to anyone, even when staff was stressed in addressing her.

T1: For me personally, I know that I had some pressing circumstances. She was very patient when dealing with me and never once was disrespectful to me.

Culture Building:

The data from the teachers' interviews strongly suggest that the principal cares about the staff as it was frequently highlighted throughout the interview

T1: what is nice about our principal that you feel that she has a human side that accommodates for all teachers. She does not hesitate to give you exceptions if you show her evidence of your specific case.

T3: She has a human factor. She is not sentimental, but will respond to you and accommodates for you if you have an evidence to support your case.

A significant link to the principal being ‘just’ was frequently highlighted during the teachers’ interview:

T1: All working staff in the school including the principal, teachers, guards and cleaners, they all smile to you. We are all one family; there is no discrimination against anyone.

T2: She appreciates hard working teachers. She does not favour teachers based in personal interest, but appreciates you according to your commitment.

T3: If you do your work, you get fair comments. You are not favored because of your nationality, your style or how expensive your clothes are. You are an employee and you stand out because of your hard work.

Another link to the principal being team oriented, was evident from the interview data. The teachers agreed that the principal always includes them in the decision making process and she encourages team work all of the time:

T1: Even though we might not see each other every day all the time because of our teaching load, yet relationships are well established in the school. We feel like family.

T2: She stays with us late and works with us during weekend when we have special events. She always includes us in staff meetings, so we feel like we are all one team.

Moreover, all teachers agreed that they help and support one another to do their jobs at the best possible levels. They also indicated that they feel that they are supported when they need help.

T1: You have to differentiate between teacher’s abilities just like you differentiate between your students. Our principal knows that and she always support me through my job.

T3: during my evaluation last year, we had a new vice-principal. She asked us to prepare a folder of evidence to support our evaluation. The principal sat through my evaluation and she was able to verify all of the points because she knew what I could do.

The teachers also confirmed what the principal said about consultation:

T3: She always meets with us when new policies or procedures need to be implemented. She gathers us in team of grade levels and asks us to put ideas on how to best implement the new policy. We feel like we are valued for our input.

T2: She asks us about our input on how to best implement new policies. The way she approaches it, by giving us a voice into finding a way that will minimize the effect of implementing the policy in our practice is unique.

All teachers agreed that the workload at the school is demanding; however, they all reported that they feel comfortable working in the school, as they feel valued, appreciated and that they belong to a work family.

Cross-cultural elements:

The interview data from the focus group is consistent with the principal, vice-principal and both English and Arabic HOF interviews. The teachers reported that the principal rewards individual teacher's efforts. They also reported that this approach allows them to feel more appreciated and motivated to do their work:

T1: When I see that the principal acknowledges my hard work. I feel like could do anything she asks me to do. Even if I was feeling tired.

T2: I will never forget the day when the principal rewarded one of our newly appointed staff member for her elegance. She was rewarding different staff members for their achievement and it was not her fault that he came in late to the school, but she still found something to make her feel valued and appreciated.

The teachers' answers also were consistent with the data from the principal's interview in terms of the importance of building good relationships in the schools' culture

T2: The principal does not encourage separation of staff and she does not promote it. Administrative staff plays a significant role in that.

T3: She takes a leading part in school-organised activities. Especially during national day activities and sport day. When students and staff see her involvement, they follow her leads.

When I asked the teachers about their workload, they all said that it is heavy workload. However, the policy changes sometimes put pressure on them during the school year

T3: Work pressure filters down from ADEC and you are usually pressured because it is not distributed evenly throughout the year. Sometimes you have a bunch of tasks dumped on you at the same time and it has to be done at the same time.

This statement indicates that the school's culture is affected by the rapid policy change from ADEC.

Cluster manager's (CM) interview:

The cluster manager is a western former principal that works as a cluster manager for Schools B and C. Some of the demographic information has been omitted to preserve the anonymity of the research subject.

Leadership style:

I asked the cluster manager what good leadership looks like from his perspective. He said that principals with good leadership skills have high expectations from their staff and clear communications. He further added:

Principal C models what she expects from her staff. She is very visible and will ensure that her staff knows what is valued within her school. Her strength is being able to demonstrate her vision. She is very clear on that side.

Furthermore, the cluster manager stated ‘when principal C is trying to lead change in her school all of her staff members knows about it’. These statements suggest that the principal C has high expectations from her staff. Additionally, the cluster manager emphasised that principal C is consistent with the messages she sends to her staff and that her staff members are able to predict what her response will be when it comes to their requests

When a staff member goes into the principal’s office, they know that if their ideas and suggestions are for the best interest of students, they will be encouraged.

When I asked him how principal C leads in a multicultural environment he said in order for a principal to be successful in a multicultural environment, he needs to ‘listen more than he speaks, principal C is good at that’, this also suggest that principal C is patient in her leadership.

Culture Building:

I asked the cluster manager how principal C influences her staff, he said that ‘her approach is more of developmental, she leads professional development sessions’.

When I asked him about the principal’s motivation to lead he said:

She enjoys seeing people develop; she is committed to do what she assigned to do in government schools. She has a combination of pride and personal qualities, which means she is in the school showing what needs to be done to move the school forward. It is not necessarily the financial gain; it is the value of enjoying people and seeing them grow.

I asked the cluster manager how the principal allows people in her school to grow, he said that the principal sets in place procedures that facilitate peer observation, sharing and collaboration.

Throughout this interview there was ample evidence to suggest that principal C is fair and truthful in her daily practice. For example, when I asked the cluster manager about the ethics and values of the principal he said:

It has to link to being equitable and fair to everybody at the school whether it’s a staff member, a student or a parent. If you are respectful of those you are working with, fair chance to have conversations around development of talent. This is a key thing. You cannot say one thing and not be seen around the school and you sit in your office. Principal C is very good at that; she is always visible and involved.

I asked the cluster manager to share a success story as a result of working with School C, he said that being able to talk to the principal about during lesson observation and seeing that they both agree on what good teaching looks like. He further stated that his partnership with principal C allowed him to learn from her.

Cross-cultural elements:

The data from the cluster manager's interview reveals many similarities with the interviews conducted with the principal and the school's staff members. For example, the cluster manager reports that the principal dedicates time for her staff members to get to know them and build relationships:

I don't think that you can run a school without building relationships. You have to have human side to you. You cannot be a competent leader without having relationships. You then become a manager. School C is very good in building relationships.

Additionally, the cluster manager confirmed that in school C, the principal celebrates the staffs' achievements individually, which allows them to feel valued and appreciated. This is consistent with the previous data from school C. A reoccurring theme was also highlighted during the cluster manager's interview as the school accommodates many initiatives all at the same time. This is especially the case when adhering to policy implementation.

A significant link to acculturation was highlighted in the cluster manager's interview as he stated:

When principal C first came to the school her style was more top managerial style. She made it very clear what her expectations were. Over series of years her style has been able to be more relaxed, more developmental. She is now more of an instructional leader.

These findings are also consistent with the interview data from the principal and the English Head of Faculty.

Conclusion: Summary of three cases:

Chapter four of this thesis has provided a comprehensive analysis drawing from four main sources of data, UAE national document analysis, three school observation studies, three schools documents' analysis and schools' interview data from principals and co-workers in relation to this thesis' theoretical framework.

The national document analysis revealed that the UAE's direction and vision embed this thesis' theoretical framework in successful leadership through Burns's (1978) and Klann's (2007) models. For example, all national documents analysis indicated elevating effect, focus on end value, modelling high expectations and shared vision/goals elements as represented and stated in Burns's model. Furthermore, there is a unified link to the importance of justice (*Adel*) as in Branine's model (2011) in all of the national document analysis. Likewise, caring about people, being communicative and team oriented from Klann's model were highlighted. Additionally, some of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) cross-cultural elements were highlighted in the national document analysis, specifically the past/future dimension (see Table 11). The national

document analysis of this chapter will help to expand on the first research question of this thesis and will be discussed in-depth in chapter five.

The school observation data provided an overview of the school's culture and the UAE's heritage and culture and how it is represented in the school. The observation data revealed that the UAE's culture is an integrated part of everyday life in the school through the artifacts and symbols around the school. It also indicated how the schools' vision correlates with the UAE's national vision and mission. It also reflected that all schools share a common factor of harmony in the schools' communities.

Likewise, the school's document analysis provided a wealth of information to report on the principals' leadership practices, culture building and cross-cultural elements. It also reported on how schools changed from being 'acceptable' into being 'high achieving schools', noticeably as a direct result of principals' direction and leadership practices as judged by the findings from two rounds of Irtiqa'a inspection reports. The information collected from school observation and the school document analysis provides a contextual account of each school and will be further examined in Chapter Five of this thesis in reference to the sixth research question and the theoretical framework of this thesis.

The data collected from the principals' interviews, their followers and supervisors indicates that successful leadership practices in high performing schools in Abu Dhabi share common factors of culture building and cross-cultural elements and similar leadership characteristics. The principals reported that their schools' successes came about as a result of three main factors. Firstly, their

leadership style (modelling high expectations, staff's motivation, being visionary, being able to focus on end value, being positive, raising staff's self-esteem, having an elevating effect on staff members, being communicative, and having patience. Secondly, positive culture building through dedicating time to build personal relationship with the staff and providing them with support and care. Lastly, being aware of the cross-cultural elements to navigate through the school's culture successfully.

In interviewing vice principals, teachers, heads of faculties and cluster managers, it is clear that they hold a similar view of the participants' leadership practices as the participants themselves- associating their definition of good leadership practices to modelling high expectations, focusing on end value, raising self-esteem, having an elevating effect and being patient.

Interview data (principals and non-principal participants) provides a wealth of information that will be further analysed in chapter five of this thesis to assist in answering the third and fourth research questions where participants views of principals' leadership practices, their understanding of leadership role within the Abu Dhabi School model and cultural and cross-cultural influences will be scrutinised and assessed in reference to this thesis's theoretical framework.

In summary, Chapter Four reports the main information collected from interviewing principals, their followers and their supervisors, identifying common themes. Chapter Five will expand on the findings presented in chapter four and compare it with the literature review from chapter two.

Chapter Five: Data analysis and interpretation

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the emergent themes identified in Chapter Four and discuss them in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. This chapter reports on each case individually drawing on the main themes that are strongly supported in the data analysis, arising from the document analysis, observation of material culture and interviews. Then it gives an overall summary of each case as well as comparing the cases for similarities and differences and presenting possible explanations. The final section of this chapter presents a model for Emirati leadership at the school level and explains its relevance for the research findings.

The key emergent themes identified in Chapter Four are leadership style, culture building and cross-cultural elements. The first two themes emerged from the overlapping elements of Burns' (1978) transforming/transactional leadership theory, Branine's (2011) managing in Islamic culture and Klann's (2007) good leadership model. The third theme represents Trompenaar and Hampdon-Turner's (2012) cross-cultural dimensions. These themes are presented in the figure below

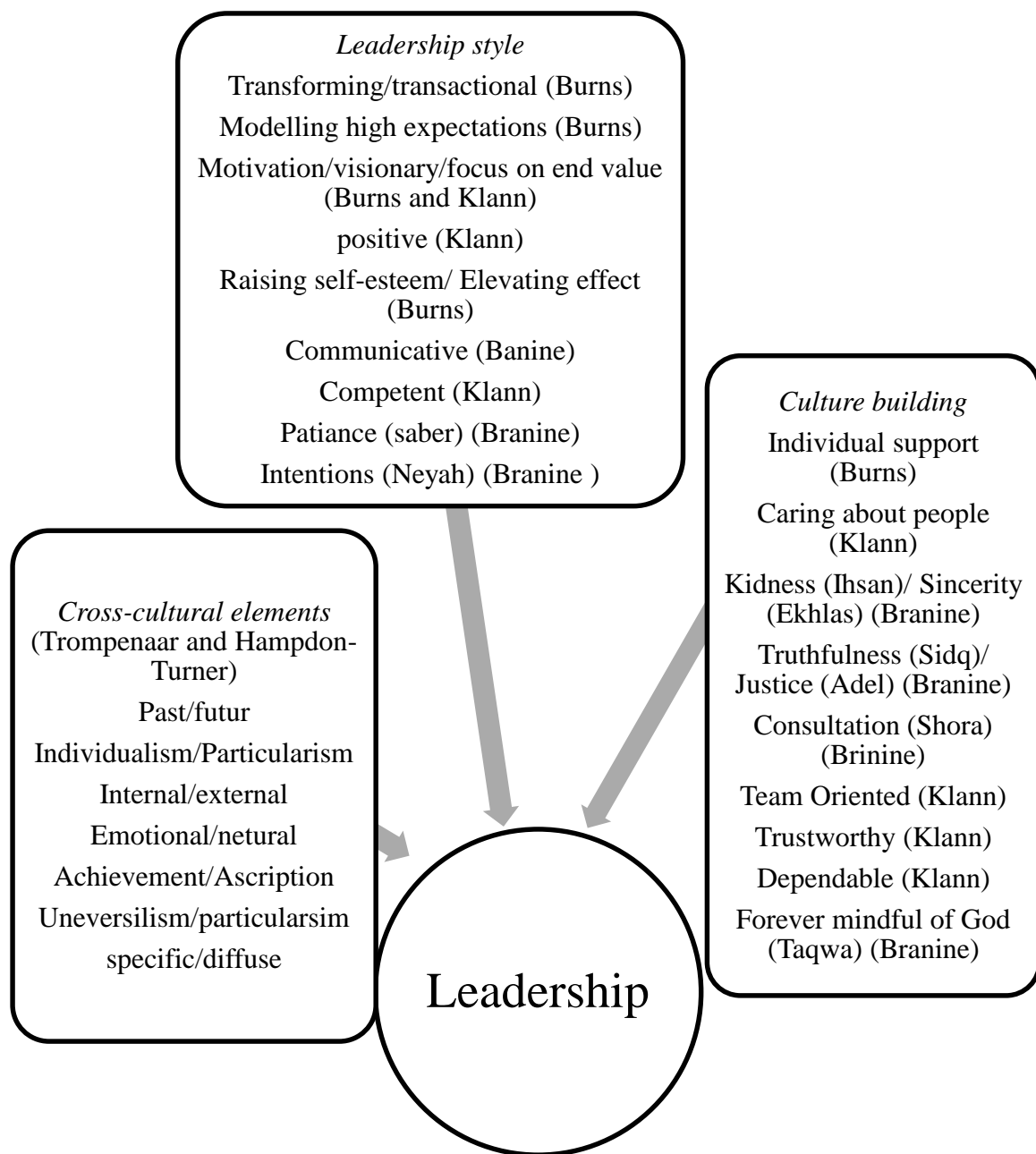


Figure 12. Data analysis themes

School A:

Presented below is the case analysis of School A; it will discuss the emerging themes from the different sources of data in relation to the theoretical framework for this thesis.

Document analysis:

Leadership style:

Data analysis suggests that principal A uses a mixture of both transactional/transforming characteristics of Burns's theory. In some parts of the inspection report it appears that she leans towards the transforming end as she raises self-esteem in her staff members and has an elevating effect on them. For example, the report states, 'school improvement planning is managed through committee structure that is led by teachers'. The buddy system that exists in the school suggests a mentorship model that is effective and is reflected in the school's culture, which is consistent with Sackney and Walker (2006) in building professional learning communities. The data further suggest that the principal is visionary and communicative as the report states 'the positive relationships which exist generated a very positive school ethos and sense of belonging to a community that cares'. However, the inspection report suggests that the principal's vision is communicated to staff members, students and wider community, which reflects a level of transactional characteristics, as it does not indicate negotiation between the principal and her staff members, it implies that the principal injects her own values to her staff members rather than sharing it with them. Hallinger (2003) argues that shared vision from teachers and principals eliminates the notion of centralized leadership and allows teachers to connect with the school's

aims and goals. Additionally, the inspection report, although written in a positive language, links consistently positive principals' practices to day-to-day management procedures and routines, which demonstrate a focus on the input/output business model identified by Robertson (2002). It does not capture the transforming characteristics of the principal that focuses on the humanistic model (Burns,1978). Frequently, the report links high performing levels of students to good management practices rather than focusing on the principal's transforming characteristics.

Culture building:

As presented in Chapter Four, School A data analysis suggests that principal A practices support a positive culture building in the school. For example, data analysis suggests strongly that the principal promotes team building through a well-developed buddy system that provides individual support for all teachers. It further suggests that the principal cares about people in her school as the inspection report states that 'student's welfare is a priority for all staff members' and that she is team oriented (Klann, 2007). However, the Irtiq'a report partially attributes good relationships and high morals to the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation and the accuracy of school improvement planning which highlights the school's priorities. It describes the channels of communications between senior leadership team members and teachers and highlights it as a very 'effective leadership structure'. These characteristics do not support the 'Shura' concept that is embedded in Branine's model of managing in Islamic culture, which suggests that all team members, contributes equally to problem solving. Additionally, the school improvement planning does not appear to provide opportunities for teachers to participate in the development of the

document as it consistently uses ‘teachers will monitor, teachers will analyse...’. The frequent use of this language indicates a top-down approach rather than the ‘Shura’ approach.

The document analysis implies that principal A might have several characteristics of kindness (*Ihsan*), sincerity (*Ekhlās*) and justice (*Adel*) that further contribute to the positive school culture, however, it does not report on the level of justice and how that contributes into building the school’s culture. For example, there is no reference in the school documents about the collective well-being of the school community members, liberty and/or equality which are essential elements of transforming leaders.

Cross-cultural elements:

Some elements from Trompenaars-Hampden-Turner are evident in the document data analysis in different variations. For example, the data analysis strongly indicates that the school’s culture is interwoven between past and future as the school addresses different projects at the same time to promote children’s learning. This appears to be as a result of the school being external rather than internal as the school documents refer to accommodating different ADEC’s weeks/celebrations. There is very little evidence to suggest, despite detailed planning, that the school controls its own environment. Moreover, there is evidence in the data analysis that implies that the school’s culture leans towards particularism rather than individualism as the school documents consistently refer to the group activities rather than individual activities. Additionally, the strong relationships between staff members and the local community is a strong indication that the school’s culture leans towards being more diffuse and emotional.

Material culture observation:

Leadership style:

The observation data suggest that School A exhibits elements from Burns's transforming/transactional theory in elevating effect and raising self-esteem. For example, the school's building is decorated with quotations from late Sheikh Zayed about the importance of investing in education to harness the full energy of the Emirati people. Displayed trophies and certificates of appreciation reflect the pride in the school's achievements. It also echoes focusing on end values as the Sheikh quotations are deliberately chosen to reflect the UAE vision to invest in Emirati cultural building to proclaim their role in building their country. Additionally, the corridors and hallways are all decorated with Emirati cultural artifacts, which suggest a strong connection with the Emirati heritage and culture. However, it implies a focus on performance management verses human development as the display of trophies is highly concentrated to show the effectiveness of the school. It reflects that the school places considerable emphasis on input and outputs.

Culture building:

School A reflects a strong sense of culture building. For example, the seating area for visitors suggests a hospitable atmosphere with coffee and teapots for visitors to use. This reflects caring about people, kindness (*Ihsan*) and sincerity (*Ekhlas*) for the local community. All staffrooms are equally furnished with computers and printers, which implies a sense of Justice (*Adel*) in the school. The general sense of the school is warm and inviting and all staff members and students appear to

be happy and in harmony judging from the light sense of humour and laughter that I heard in the school in different occasions while I visited for data collection.

Cross-cultural elements:

There are two main cross-cultural elements that are strongly suggested by observation data from School A. These are past/future element and individualism/particularism. The first element is reflected in the different projects/rewards that the school is involved in, which would suggest different projects/activities that the school is engaged in simultaneously. The second element is reflected in the trophies and the certificates that the school and/or individuals achieve as a result of participating in national events/competitions, which reflects pride in the individual and the organisation. However, there is no evidence in the material culture observation that supports the idea that individuals are encouraged to be creative and/or possess the autonomy to make their own decisions. This might suggest that the school's culture is more inclined towards collectivism than individualism. The remaining elements of the Trompenaars-Hampden-Turner framework do not appear to be supported by observational data.

Interviews:

Leadership style:

The interview data provided more opportunities for participants to talk about the nature of the principal's leadership style. Participants talked about the principal vision and how she communicates it to staff members. They talked about their commitment to work as a result of the

principal's appreciating her staff members and giving them autonomy to teach the way they know is best for students. Interview data suggest strongly that the principal uses a mix of transactional/transforming characteristics of Burns (1978). It could be argued that principal A leans towards transforming leadership as she strives to be equitable and just with her staff members. She appears to be committed to the end value 'preparing a generation that is able to lead in the future'. However, it could be equally argued that the transcending end of Burns's model is not fully developed with principal A as her staff members talked about being informed about the vision and that they are working towards it, while a transforming leader, according to Bass (1985) and Burns (1978), is a leader that unite followers' goals and beliefs and will lead to higher levels of commitment

Culture building:

Interview data provided more opportunities for participants to report on positive culture building as a result of feeling supported and motivated. They talked about the principal being just, kind (*Ihsan*) and sincere (*Ekhlas*). Additionally, the data reveal that the principal cares about people, is team oriented, forever mindful about god (*Taqwa*) and consults (*Shura*) with the staff members. Yet, it could be argued that the level of kindness (*Ihsan*) and sincerity (*Ekhlas*) comes as a result of the principal leading with modal values and being honest, responsible, fair and honoring staff's commitment to the school, these are characteristics of transactional leaders. It does not suggest the transcending end of a transforming leader that leads for liberty, justice, equality and collective wellbeing of the school members.

Cross-cultural elements:

Four elements were strongly evident throughout interview data on cross-cultural elements and these are past/future, internal/external, specific/diffuse and individualism/collectivism dimensions. The triangulation of evidence from participants suggested that the school's culture is interwoven between past and future as the school is always involved in different projects simultaneously. It also suggests that the school is affected by external direction as it responds to policy changes from ADEC. Furthermore, the principal takes the time to build relationships with her staff members. Additionally, family and sense of belonging and acceptance were repeated patterns throughout the interview data. Additionally, it is noticeable that the principal seeks to achieve a balance between individual achievements and collective achievements, however, group achievements and the school's achievements are much more strongly reflected in the data.

Case Summary:

Both document analysis and observation data refer to the elements of this thesis framework; however, it does not demonstrate that these elements are strongly embedded in the school's practices. The interview data provided more evidence to reflect that School A principal uses a combination of transactional/transforming characteristics of Burns's model, however, it could be argued that the transforming end is still developing in principal's A practices.

Table 11. Aspects of the theoretical framework that were revealed in School A from three sources of data:

	Documents	Observations	Interviews
Culture building			
Individual support (Burns)	✓	✓	✓
Caring about people (Klann)	✓	✓	✓
Team-oriented (Klann)	✓	✓	✓
Trustworthy (Klann)			
Dependable (Klann)			
Competent (Klann)	✓		✓
Kindness (<i>Ihsan</i>) (Branine)	✓	✓	✓
Sincerity (<i>Ekhlas</i>) (Branine)	✓	✓	✓
Justice (<i>Adel</i>) (Branine)	✓	✓	✓
Truthfulness (<i>Sidq</i>) (Branine)	✓		✓
Forever mindful about God (<i>Taqwa</i>)			✓
Consultation (<i>Shura</i>) (Branine)	✓		✓
Leadership style			
Transforming/transactional (Burns)	✓		✓
Modelling high expectations (Burns)	✓	✓	✓
Mentorship (Klann)	✓	✓	✓
Motivation/ (Burns)	✓	✓	✓
Focus on end value (Burns)	✓	✓	✓
Raising self-esteem (Burns)	✓	✓	✓
Elevating effect (Burns)	✓	✓	✓
Communicative (Klan)	✓	✓	✓
Visionary (Klann)	✓	✓	✓
Positive (Klann)	✓		✓
Patience (<i>Saber</i>) (Branine)			
Intentions (<i>Neyah</i>)(Branine)			
Cross-cultural elements			
Universalism/ Particularism			
Specific/diffuse	✓	✓	✓
Internal/External	✓		✓
Past/Future	✓	✓	✓
Achievement/Ascription	✓		
Individualism / collectivism	✓	✓	✓
Emotional/Neutral	✓	✓	

School B:

Presented below is an analysis of the school data that was gathered based on document analysis, material culture observation and interview data. School B is a new school built in the last ten years. The leadership team has been appointed in that school for over five years. It is important to note that both the vice principal and principal did not participate in the interview process despite repeated attempts over the past two years to have a meeting with them. Additionally, it was very challenging to obtain a copy of the schools' documents for the same timeframe. However, the document analysis, observation and interview data from teachers, heads of faculty and the cluster manager provided good information to conduct the analysis of School B.

Document analysis data:

Leadership style:

Both inspection reports and school improvement plan provided an indication that the principal uses a mixture of transactional/transforming leadership characteristics presented in Burns's theory. There is evidence in all three documents that suggest that the principal is visionary, focuses on end values and is communicative. However, it could be argued that the shared vision did not come as a result of a transcending practice suggested by Burns's model. The Irtiq'a reports states 'the principal has a vision that is shared and understood by all staff members'. This implies injected values and beliefs rather than shared vision (Bass, 1985 and Burns, 1978). The report also states that 'the principal has high expectations for students and staff members' which indicates the transactional end of Burns's model as the principal sets expectations for the staff to follow.

Additionally, the report mentions that ‘senior leadership ensures that the quality of teaching and learning across the school’. This implies a focus on the output as opposed to focusing on the humanistic end of transforming leadership. Moreover, the report states that the principal meets with ‘senior leaders to discuss their plans’, which implies a top-down management, approach in contrast to elevating effect and raising self-esteem in transforming leaders. Similarly, the school improvement plan indicated that ‘teachers will be provided with professional development to raise their skills’, this could be referenced as individual support, however, it indicates that teachers have no control over their professional learning, instead, it is mandated as a school priority (Ching and Cheong, 1997; Batagiannis 2011; James and Shmitz 2011; Marques 2006). It could be argued based on the document analysis that principal B leans towards the transactional end of Burns’s model rather than transforming end.

Culture building:

Evidence from the document analysis suggests that ‘the school promotes respectful and caring relationships between all staff members and students’. It also reports that ‘the school has a positive culture that is evident on many areas of the school’. There is also evidence in the reports to suggest that consultation (*Shura*) is practiced in the school. However, the level of consultation appears to be only embedded in the formation of the school improvement planning while it is absent in the school activity planning and professional development planning. This suggests that the level of consultation (*Shura*) is still at a basic level in the principal’s practice. The other elements of Branine’s theory truthfulness (*Sidq*), Justice (*Adel*) and forever mindful about God (*Taqwa*) are

referred to in the document analysis, however, it does not appear to be embedded in the principal's practices.

Cross-Cultural elements:

There are two main cross-cultural elements that are strongly suggested by the document analysis and these are past/future and external/internal. These elements appear to be interconnected as the school responds to policy changes and accommodate different projects at the same time in the school. The rest of the cross-cultural elements do not appear to be evident in the document analysis for School B.

Material culture observation data:

Leadership style:

Observation data provides some evidence for Burns's transactional/transforming characteristics. It suggests that the principal is visionary and communicative. It also implies that the principal raises self-esteem judging from the positive remarks and quotations from late Sheikh Zayed about the importance of investing in human capital. However, there is very little evidence to suggest that this practice is a result of a transforming practice. It could be argued that this is a result of transactional leadership as transactional leaders promote fairness and honours one's commitment while transforming leaders promote collective well-being and equality (Bass, 1985 and Burns, 1978).

The remaining characteristics of Burns's model of modelling high expectations and focusing on end values do not appear to be supported by the observation data.

Culture building:

Based on observation data, School B reflects a strong sense of Emirati culture and traditions. The building is decorated with Emirati artifacts in the administration, hallways, classrooms and library. It could be argued that there is a lot of emphasis on the Emirati culture in the school premises, however, the level to which are these embedded in the daily practice of teachers and students is not evident/supported by the observation data. The general sense of the school is warm and welcoming. It suggests a level of kindness (*Ihsan*). The staff rooms are equally furnished for all teachers, which imply a level of justice. However, these were only two indications of cultural building elements of Branine's model. The remaining elements of sincerity (*Sidq*), individual support, consultation (*Shura*) and forever mindful about god (*Taqwa*) do not appear to be supported by the observation data.

Cross-Cultural elements:

There were two cross-cultural elements that were strongly supported by the observation data and these are past/future elements and collectivism. The first element is indicated by the different projects that the school is involved in and the second element is reflected in the 'wall of fame' that the school dedicated to display different awards and certificates that were provided to the school

for contributing in community projects/contests. The remaining elements of the cross- culture elements were not supported by observation data.

Interview data:

Leadership style:

Interview data suggests that principal B uses a mixture of both transactional/transforming practices. There is a strong indication that the principal has an elevating effect on her staff members on a personal level, however, when it comes to decision-making, the data reveal that the principal leans towards a transactional practice, as the level of staff involvement was only reported in the development of the school improvement planning. Participants reported that the principal has a vision and it is communicated to all staff members, nonetheless, it could be argued that this vision was introduced and that the staff is adopting it based on compliance, data does not support that staff members' vision came as a result a state of unison between the staff's and the principal's aspirations towards a higher goal (Burns, 1978, p. 117). A significant finding in the interview data suggests that the principal aspires to create a culture of equity and quality in the school as she deals with conflict. Participants reported repeatedly that the principal has patience (*Saber*) and 'calm demeanour' when dealing with conflict and that she listens to conflicts and ensures that she mediates towards the greater good to achieve a level of harmony between staff members. This is the essence of Burns's moral system: leaders who strive for greater moral and social values (Burns, 1978, p. 208).

Culture building:

Interview data suggests that School B has a family-like culture and that relationships are positive, strong and respectful. According to participants, this came as a result of feeling respected and valued as professionals. Repeatedly, interview subjects reported that they feel that the principal is just (*Adel*) and fair. This is highly supported by the evidence that suggests that there is a strong sense of equity and quality, which is one quality of transforming leaders. Additionally, patience (*Saber*) was highlighted frequently by all staff members as a unique quality that contributed positively to culture building. A significant link to Klann's good model of leadership was also evident in the data analysis (caring about people), it appears to be embedded in the principal's practice. It could be argued that the transforming nature of the principal's practice, her patience and caring about her staff members were all strong factors that contributed positively to building a strong sense of family-like culture in the school. Other elements of Branine's model such as kindness (*Ihsan*), sincerity (*Ekhlas*), forever mindful about God (*Taqwa*) and Truthfulness (*Sidq*) are referred to briefly during the interview. There is little evidence to suggest that they are embedded in the principal's practice.

Cross-Cultural elements:

Five cross-cultural elements were strongly supported by data analysis, past/future, internal/external, neutral/emotion, specific/diffuse and individualism/collectivism. The first two elements appear to be interconnected with the interview data. Participants reported frequent

external influence (policy changes from ADEC) that ‘interrupts’ the school’s culture, however, the school is mandated to respond to the external pressure, which will leads to the past/future element to be manifested in the school. Likewise, it could be argued that the third and fourth elements are associated because of the family-like culture that dominates the school. Staff members take time to build relationships and almost all reported that being able to show their emotions is very important to the work environment. As for the last element, data reflects that the school has pride in the collective group efforts; it is highly appreciated and respected, moreover equally valued are individual achievements. They are recognized and celebrated. It could be argued that by honouring both collective and individual efforts/achievements staff members demonstrate more sense of belonging and attachment to the school’s culture. The remaining elements of the cross-cultural model do not appear to be supported in the interview data.

Case summary:

Document analysis and observation data refers to some elements of the thesis framework; however, there is very little evidence to suggest these elements are strongly embedded in the school’s practices. Interview data provided more evidence to reflect that School B principal uses a mix of transactional/transforming characteristics of Burns’s model, however, it could be argued that elevating effect, raising self-esteem, caring about people and patience are strongly embedded in the principal’s practice, which contributed positively to the family-like culture that School B exhibits. Only two cross-cultural elements appeared to be consistent in the data collection, however, three more elements are supported in the interview data. Below is a summary of these findings.

Table 12. Aspects of the theoretical framework that were revealed in School B from three sources of data:

	Documents	Observations	Interviews
Culture building			
Individual support (Burns)			
Caring about people (Klann)			✓
Team-oriented (Klann)			
Trustworthy (Klann)			
Dependable (Klann)			
Competent (Klann)			
Kindness (<i>Ihsan</i>) (Branine)	✓	✓	✓
Sincerity (<i>Ekhlas</i>) (Branine)	✓	✓	✓
Justice (<i>Adel</i>) (Branine)		✓	✓
Truthfulness (<i>Sidq</i>) (Branine)			
Forever mindful about God (<i>Taqwa</i>)			
Consultation (<i>Shura</i>) (Branine)			
Leadership style			
Transforming/transactional (Burns)	✓	✓	✓
Modelling high expectations (Burns)			
Mentorship (Klann)			
Motivation/ (Burns)			
Focus on end value (Burns)			
Raising self esteem (Burns)	✓	✓	✓
Elevating effect (Burns)	✓	✓	✓
Communicative (Klan)			
Visionary (Klann)			✓
Positive (Klann)			
Patience (<i>Saber</i>) (Branine)			✓
Intentions (<i>Neyah</i>)(Branine)			
Cross-cultural elements			
Universalism/ Particularism			
Specific/diffuse			✓
Internal/External	✓	✓	✓
Past/Future	✓	✓	✓
Achievement/Ascription			
Individualism / collectivism			✓
Emotional/Neutral			✓

School C:

The following paragraphs provide the analysis and interpretation of different sources of data gathered from School C. School C is a fairly new school that was built eight years ago at the time this case study was conducted. The senior leadership team had been appointed at the school for over four years. The principal in School C is western having extensive leadership experience in her home country; however, leading this school was her first experience in an Arab country.

Document analysis data:

Leadership style:

Inspection reports and the school improvement plan provide evidence to suggest that principal C uses a mixture of transactional/transformational leadership practices. The inspection report consistently links the positive outcomes to the success of the principal's management style. It clearly states that principal C 'established effective management systems and strategies to address the school's needs', which is an indication of a transactional style. Additionally, the school improvement plan, although comprehensive and detailed, is heavily focused on monitoring teachers, analysing assessment data and measuring students' performance. The language that is used in developing the SIP suggests a level of micro-management as opposed to transforming leadership. A significant word that was used around 100 times in developing this document was 'monitor' while the word 'fidelity' was used around six times. It could therefore be strongly argued

that micro-management is the more dominant leadership style as compared to transforming leadership.

Evidence from the report implies that there is a level of individual support for teachers; however, it is heavily focused on measuring students' inputs/outputs. There is no clear indication that it is directed towards the humanistic level of support suggested by Burns's model (Burns, 1978, p. 65; Gill, 2011, p. 85). Moreover, document analysis suggests that teachers share a common vision with the principal, however, there is no evidence to suggest that the vision statement was a collaborative effort between the principal and the teaching staff. It could be inferred from document analysis that teachers adopt the principal's vision as a result of sharing expectations and injecting personal perspectives on what a school should look like. Burns's argue that transforming leaders raise self-esteem and reach out to the moral values of the followers where the organisation's vision becomes their own vision and they strive to achieve it (Bass, 1985 and Burns, 1978). On the other hand, document analysis consistently refers to the principal as being competent and dependable (Klann, 2007). However, this could be attributed to the management structures and strategies that have been developed by the principal to lead the school.

Culture building:

Document analysis suggests that school C has a 'positive ethos', while it might be implied that it came as a result of consultation (*Shura*) and truthfulness (*Sidq*); it has been consistently linked to analysing students' assessment data and the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation form. It could be argued that the consultation (*Shura*) requires equal opportunities of problem solving/ valued

input from all staff members including the principal, which was not indicated in the document analysis. Moreover, analysing data suggests that the focus is on inputs/outputs not on the personal and moral development of children. Additionally, the school improvement plan appears to have very limited teacher voice in the development of the document as it is heavily focused on monitoring teachers' performance and 'scrutinizing' students' written evidence and assessments. However, there is some evidence in the document analysis that suggests that students and teachers 'enjoy coming to school because they feel valued and appreciated' which links to Klann's model of caring about people.

Cross-Cultural elements:

Two cross-cultural elements are supported by document analysis individualism/collectivism and past/future elements. It is suggested that teachers and children enjoy coming to school because they feel that they are recognised individually. However, document analysis does not provide evidence to conclude that the staff is given sufficient autonomy to make their own decisions and apply their own initiatives and it is not clear precisely how the staff members are allowed to be creative and to learn from their own mistakes. This is an indicator that individualism might be partially attained in the school's culture. Additionally, the past/future element is evident from the many projects that the school is involved in at the same time. It suggests that the school is flexible in the approach to work and accommodates the policy changes from ADEC on a daily basis.

Material culture observation data:

Leadership style:

Observation data provides evidence to suggest that the principal leans towards the transactional end rather than transforming characteristics. For example, the wall on the right to the entrance hall of the school is decorated with reward pictures of staff members in appreciation of their commitment to good attendance, good organisation skills and good classroom environment. This suggests that the principal uses rewards/sanction system to lead the school. Observation data suggests that teachers and staff members move in the school with a sense of direction and purpose. Additionally, the active boards, notice boards inside the teacher's common rooms suggest that there is a sense of urgency to comply with deadlines and the principal's systems and direction. Moreover, the teachers' common rooms that they share are equally furnished with desks and computers that suggest a level of fairness given to all staff members. According to Burns (1978), Gill (2011) and Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) transactional leaders focus on roles, responsibilities, honesty and keeping promises while transformational leaders focus on liberty, justice, equality and collective well-being of the staff in the organization.

Culture building:

There is evidence from the observation data to suggest that the school honours and strives to reflect the UAE heritage and culture as UAE artifacts and symbols are distributed throughout the school's building. Additionally, staff members from different nationalities/grade levels of teaching share

the same working area, which suggests that relationships between teachers are respectful and warm. However, it could be inferred from the observation data that relationships between staff members, senior leaders and children are governed and evaluated according to roles and responsibilities. There is very little evidence in the observation data to conclude that consultation (*Shura*), truthfulness (*Sidq*), sincerity (*Ekhlas*), and kindness (*Ihsan*) are embedded in School C's practices. Similarly, individual support could be referred to in the form of targeted professional development and rewards, however, it does not reflect the level of support that Burn's model articulates. Burn's model suggests that transformational leaders reach out to the personal needs of the followers and develop links between them and the organisation's goals and mission that have an elevating effect on the followers' moral system (Burns, 1978).

Cross-Cultural elements:

Evidence from the observation data suggests that the collectivism/individualism element is evident in the school judged by the school's trophies and the individual rewards displayed in the school's foyer. Additionally, it appears that creativity and innovation is encouraged in the school's culture where teachers are given the autonomy to implement new strategies to enhance children's learning. However, the school takes pride on the collective achievements of the group judged from the celebration of their achievements. The rest of the cross-cultural elements however do not seem to be supported in the observation data.

Interview data:*Leadership style:*

The interview data suggests that the principal uses a mixture of transactional/transforming leadership style. For example, the principal allows staff members to participate in the decision-making process where she consults (*Shura*) with her staff members and everyone has an equal chance to participate (Branine, 2012). However, it could be inferred from the interview data that the principal leans heavily towards the transactional model in sharing expectations with staff members, following policy implementation, clarifying roles and responsibilities, honouring one's commitment and listening to staff's inputs while in the end deciding based on her own best judgment. Additionally, focusing on end value appears to be geared towards an input/output model which does not support Burns' transforming model of leading with transcending values focusing on liberty, justice, equality and the collective well-being of all staff members and students. Furthermore, data suggest that the principal is a competent leader (Klann, 2007) and has an elevating effect on staff members and students judging from the overall results of the school's performance. However, it could be argued that this is a characteristic of a transactional leader in sharing and following through specific expectations and focusing on a transactional input/output model of leadership as opposed to Burn's transforming model of reaching out to followers' needs and linking it to the organisations' goals for the greater good.

Culture building:

Evidence from interview data supports that the school's culture is positive and warm. Participants reported that they feel valued and respected for their inputs (consultation) and they feel that the principal is fair to all of the staff (Branine, 2011). Consistently, analysis of the data suggests that there is a sense of team collaboration/team-building in the school's culture (Klann, 2007) and that all staff members feel that they are cared for on a personal level (Klann, 2007). However, individual support that was reported in the interview data suggests that it is heavily focused on an input/output model in contrast to Burns's transforming model (1978) especially in the context of analysing the data reflecting on students' achievements.

Cross-Cultural elements:

Five cross-cultural elements were supported by the interview data from School C and these are diffuse/specific, individualism/collectivism, past/future, emotional/neutral and universalism/particularism; all were evident in the interview data. The participants agreed that the principal's practices developed and changed as she became more exposed to the local culture from when she first joined the school (Austin, et al., 2014; Daft, 2011; Flores et al., 2006; Oerlemans and Peeters, 2009). It appears that the principal's practices combine elements from both ends of the cross-cultural elements to affect the school's culture, positively. The triangulation of evidence from the interview data suggests that the school's culture is interwoven between past and future as the school is involved in different projects simultaneously. Likewise, the school's culture appreciates and honours individual achievements, allows from creativity and gives teachers the autonomy to make decisions when it comes to raising students' achievements.

Case summary:

Document analysis and observation data refers to some elements of this thesis framework; however, there is very little evidence to support the interpretation that these elements are strongly embedded in the school's practices. The interview data provided more evidence to reflect that School C's principal uses a mixture of transactional/transforming characteristics of Burns's model, however, it could be argued that principal C leans more towards the transactional end of Burns's model than the transforming end. Two cross-cultural elements appeared to be consistent across the methods of data collection and five elements are supported in the interview data. Below is a summary of these findings.

Table 13. Aspects of the theoretical framework that were revealed in School C from three sources of data:

	Documents	Observations	Interviews
Culture building			
Individual support (Burns)			✓
Caring about people (Klann)			✓
Team-oriented (Klann)			
Trustworthy (Klann)			
Dependable (Klann)			
Competent (Klann)	✓		✓
Kindness (<i>Ihsan</i>) (Branine)			
Sincerity (<i>Ekhlas</i>) (Branine)			
Justice (<i>Adel</i>) (Branine)			
Truthfulness (<i>Sidq</i>) (Branine)			
Forever mindful about God (<i>Taqwa</i>)			
Consultation (<i>Shura</i>) (Branine)			
Leadership style			
Transforming/transactional (Burns)	✓	✓	✓
Modelling high expectations (Burns)			
Mentorship (Klann)			
Motivation/ (Burns)			

Focus on end value (Burns)			
Raising self esteem (Burns)			✓
Elevating effect (Burns)			✓
Communicative (Klan)			
Visionary (Klann)			✓
Positive (Klann)			
Patience (<i>Saber</i>) (Branine)			✓
Intentions (<i>Neyah</i>)(Branine)			
Cross-cultural elements			
Universalism/ Particularism			
Specific/diffuse			✓
Internal/External			✓
Past/Future	✓	✓	✓
Achievement/Ascription			
Individualism / collectivism	✓	✓	✓
Emotional/Neutral			✓

Three cases compared:

This section will compare the emergent themes from the three schools and identify similarities and differences between principals' practices in relation to the theoretical framework and thesis research questions. While document analysis and observation data provided some information about principals' leadership practices, it was the interview data that provided more in-depth information about the nature of the transforming end of the participants.

Leadership style:

Transforming/transactional leadership characteristics of Burn's model were evident in the practices of all three principals with variations. While both principals from Schools A and B demonstrate close relation to the transforming end of Burn's model in elevating effect, focusing on end value and raising staff's self-esteem, the principal from School C leans towards the transactional end of

Burn's model in sharing expectations, clarifying roles and responsibilities and honouring achievements and staff commitment (Burns, 1978 and Gill, 2011). It could be argued based on analysis of the data that the principal from School C leans towards micro-management in some cases (high focus on monitoring teachers for the quality of their teaching) (see Ball, 2004; English, 2008; Gronn, and Lacey, 2006; Kechichian, 2005; Samier, 2008; Woods, 2006). Both principals A and B use transactional practices with the staff when it comes to policy implementation and following procedures, however, this is an important skill for principals as reported by Bass (1985), Burns (1978) and Kuhnert and Lewis (1987). It is noteworthy that the principal from School B revealed a high tendency towards the transforming end in having patience (*Saber*) and striving for equity and quality and participants reported they feel they can 'move a mountain without feeling the pressure' which is a strong relation to Burns's moral dimension in elevating effect (see Al-Taneiji, 2006; Al-Taneiji and Mcleod, 2008; Branine, 2011; Burns, 1978; ElKaleh and Samier, 2013; Gardner, 1995).

Culture building:

All three schools demonstrate a warm and positive school culture and the Emirati culture appears to be embedded within the schools' culture. However, participants from School B reported that the school is a 'family-like' culture, which can be linked to the principal's practices in ensuring equity among staff members (see Bolivar-Botia, and Bolivar-Ruano, 2011; Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin, 2013; Clements and Washbush, 1999; Goldring, Huff, May and Camburn, 2008; Goertzen, Nollette, and Nollette, 2011). All three principals care about their staff members and students (Branine, 2011 and Klann, 2007). It is important to highlight that the principal from School A had

developed a mentorship model at the school that increased the level of support for the staff members. This according to participants increased their feelings of support and belonging to the school (Bezzina 2004; Johansson 2004 and Sckankey & Walker 2006). Consultation (*Shura*) was reported in different variations and appears to be embedded in the practices of the principal from School B while it is less developed in principal's A practices (Branine, 2011 and Techannen-Moran et al, 2000). Principal C reported a level of consultation (*Shura*), however, it is evident from the data analysis that the principal has the final say in all decisions at the school which is a transactional characteristic as discussed by Bass (1985), Burns (1978), Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) and Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013). Participants from all three schools reported that they feel that their principals are just (*Adel*) which contributed positively to the warm culture in all three schools (ElKaleh and Samier, 2013; Branine, 2011; Burns, 1978 and Gill, 2011).

Cross-Cultural elements:

There were four cross-cultural elements that were evident in the schools' cultures in unison, past/future, external/internal, diffuse/specific and individualism/collectivism dimensions. Schools B and C demonstrated evidence of emotional/neutral dimension and only school C showed evidence of universalism/particularism. It appears that schools in general are heavily influenced and affected by policy changes demanded by ADEC and therefore, principals strive to support teachers with resources, give them direction and regular feedback, try to enhance teachers' confidence, balance positive and negative feedback and encourage their staff members to assume responsibility for their actions (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2000, 2012). The continuous change of policy/directive from ADEC could be linked to 'policy transfer' and the influence of

globalization on ADEC's policy (Litz, 2011). Moreover, external directions that affect schools' cultures direct them to accommodate to policy change. This approach has affected principals' practices and allowed it to be more flexible and to run different projects at the school simultaneously while allowing their staff to be flexible on tasks and at the same time highlighting the importance of punctuality and achieving deadlines. These are some of the characteristics of transactional leaders as reported by Bass (1985) and Goldring et al (2008). Building relationships between the staff, senior leaders and students were highlighted in all three schools. It appears that these principals all take the time to build relationships in the school before they focus on the importance of getting the work done and that people's work and non-work lives are interconnected and have contributed positively to building trust and harmony within the schools (see Bolivar-Botia, and Bolivar-Ruano, 2011; Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin, 2013; Clements and Washbush, 1999; Goldring, Huff, May and Camburn, 2008; Goertzen, Nollette and Nollette, 2011; and Schein, 2010). Additionally, the principals of all three schools, as reported in the data, build rapport with their staff members, manage conflict effectively and demonstrate an infectious positive attitude which added to the level of trust that the staff had with their principals (Berry, 2005; Bezzina, 2004; Branine, 2011; Johansson 2004; Kets De Vries, 2011; Klann, 2007 and Sckankey and Walker 2006). In School C, where the principal is western, another dimension was evident according to data analysis where the principal provides clear instructions and procedures, being consistent, allowing people more time to make decisions and taking time to explain her decision-making to other people who are affected by her decisions. These are similar characteristics of patience (*Saber*) stated in Branine (2011) model as well as Day (2000) and Kets De Vries (2011). Moreover, Faris and Parry (2011) have argued that western principals and principals from Muslim societies face

similar challenges when it comes to decision-making and are capable of solving problems even with different approaches while remaining positive.

National document data analysis:

Evidence from national document analysis (UAE National Vision, 2015; Abu Dhabi 2030 Strategic Plan, Abu Dhabi Government, 2008; Abu Dhabi Economic Plan 2007-2008, Executive Council, 2007; 2012 and the Abu Dhabi Education Council policy manual, ADEC, 2012) supports transforming/transactional characteristics of Burns's model in elevating effect, focus on end value and leading with transcending values focusing on liberty, justice, equality and the collective well-being of nationals and expatriates living in the United Arab Emirates (Burns, 1978; Klann, 2007). Additionally, evidence from the document analysis asserts the importance of consultation (*Shura*) (Branine, 2011) and shared vision (Burns, 1978; Klann, 2007). However, the Ministry of Education document appears to be geared heavily towards a business model rather than focusing on the humanistic level. While it focuses on equality of education for all, it clearly states that the focus of the educational reform is to prepare students to enter higher education to fulfil the needs of the job market (Ministry of Education, 2012). This model of policy has been heavily criticised in the literature as it eliminates the notion of free will and creativity in human capital (see Cohen and Centeno, 2006; Giles and Morrison, 2010; Hobson, Douglas and Pruitt, 2009; Tarc, 2012 and Varman, Saha and Skålen, 2011).

A significant point to highlight in relating national documents to principals' leadership, it can be argued that the policy indicators and standards could drive school principals towards transactional characteristics as it consistently links measuring performance and accountability to best and desired

leadership practices (Gay and Airasian, 2000; Walker and Shuangye's, 2007). National document analysis provides information to conclude that there is a focus on preserving the UAE heritage and culture while providing harmony, justice, equity and equality for all nationals and expatriates living in the UAE. These aspects have great implications for school leaders to ensure that the local culture is embedded in the school's culture and to strive for justice and equality while leading their schools. Additionally, there is a focus on justice (Adel) and consultation (*Shura*) (Branine, 2011). In the Ministry of Education and ADEC's policies, school principals are encouraged to establish positive relationships with parents and the local community to foster and promote students' learning. This is also similar to studies conducted by Klem and Connell (2004), Jeynes (2007) and Stronge, Ward and Grant (2011) who have argued that parental involvement is a key aspect of raising the performance of students in the school. More specifically, ADEC's policy appears to be aligned to the national vision in the identification of core values that govern the interactions between all ADECs' staff, which are integrity, team-work, transparency, respect, accountability and compassion (ADEC, 2012). These are all important elements for culture building as reported by Adair (1998), Drouillard and Kleiner (1996), Kellerman (2012) and Smith and Peterson (1988).

Additionally, analysis from national documents reveal a unified link to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) model in past/future as all policy agendas and national documents address several projects at the same time and in no specific order. This element has a significant implication for the Ministry of Education and ADEC as they continue to change, develop, and refine local policy agendas and procedures to ensure that schools keep aligned with the national vision and mission. This was reported by participants from all three schools and principals as they explained that in response to policy change/modification, the principal follows up on deadlines and

projects to ensure compliance with the national vision, which in turn, requires the principal to lean towards the transactional level of interaction. This continuous change in policy might be attributed to the rapid economic changes that continue to increase in the UAE and affect the educational policy (see: Altbach and Knight, 2007; Knight, 2004; Qiang, 2003). Another contributing factor to the continuous change and modification of educational policy could be linked to 'policy transfer' as reported by many researchers (e.g. Aydarova, 2013; Budhwar and Mellahi, 2007; Godwin, 2006 and Litz, 2011). Litz (2011) argues that the pace by which the Ministry of Education's policy and ADEC's policy changes does not suggest evidence-based policy formulation and implementation. Additionally, there are indications in both the interviews and documents data analysis to infer that policy agendas do not follow a reflection cycle as advised by Haddad and Demskey (1995).

An Emirati Model for School Leadership:

Based on the findings of this study, and Emirati model for leadership in schools was developed (see Figure 13). This model is based on the analysis and interpretation of this thesis's data in relation to the theoretical framework. It includes elements from Burns's (1978) transforming/transactional leadership theory with Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) adaptation for school leaders, some Trompenaars and Hampden Turner's (2000, 2012) cross-cultural elements, Branine (2011) management in Arab and Muslim organisations and Klann's (2007) good leadership model.

While there are similarities with all four theories used in this study, analysis of the data reveals that successful leadership practices in Abu Dhabi government schools are influenced by a number of cultural and cross-cultural factors. Based on this model, successful school principals should use

both transforming/transactional leadership characteristics with a focus on liberty, justice, equality, well-being (elevating effect) and raising self-esteem for all stakeholders within the school, while referring to transactional characteristics only when meeting deadlines and policy changes and maintaining consistency when it comes to following policies. Additionally, school principals should concentrate on building positive relationships within schools by implementing an effective approach to consultation (*Shura*) encouraging both followers' and leaders' inputs to ensure all stakeholders are focused on the aim and the mission of the school. Principals should have patience (*Saber*) and Justice (*Adel*) and care about the people they lead in their school. A successful school principal understands that taking the time to build relationships and connecting with staff members appears to have a positive influence on followers' commitment to the school and that emotions are crucial to building trust and rapport within the school. Appreciating followers and rewarding their efforts is a key aspect to the harmony of the school's culture while celebrating its collective achievements. Finally, successful school principals understand that the pace of change in the UAE is difficult to anticipate and often rapid, and therefore, they should be ready to accommodate these changes by being flexible with projects within the school to preserve the alignment of their respective schools with the country's mission and vision.

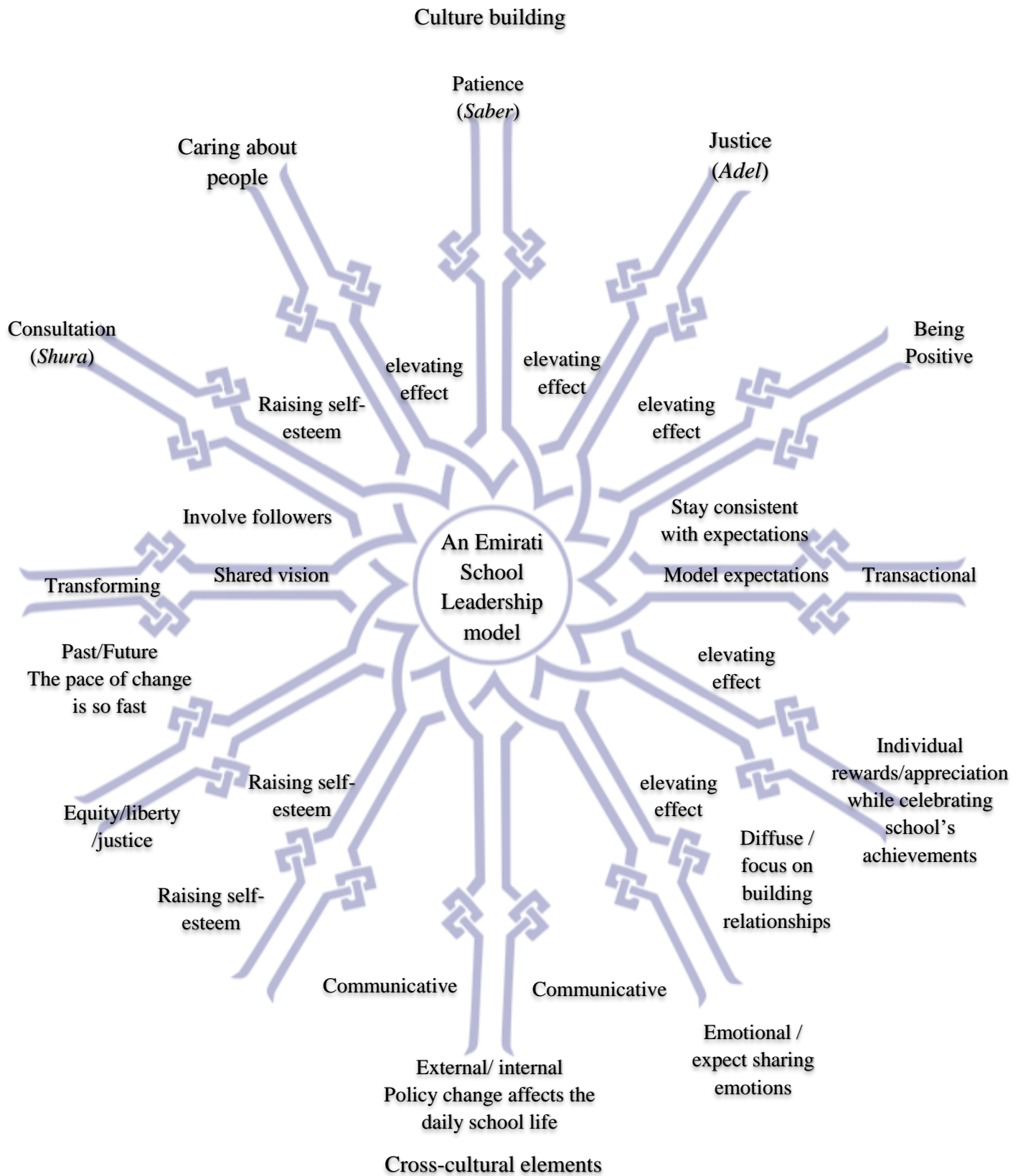


Figure 13. An Emirati School Leadership Model

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusions, recommendations and further research studies on leadership development, curriculum development for national and regional leadership training for principals, national and regional policy development and cross-cultural research studies to expand on this thesis's finding. It will also suggest further methodological approaches to use in similar research studies nationally and regionally for those who are interested in understanding school leadership in the United Arab Emirates and similar contextual regions.

Theoretical Implications and Recommendations

The study has demonstrated that leadership in schools is highly affected by cultural and multicultural factors. Successful leadership at a school level does not appear to be explained by one theory, rather, it requires principals to adopt a combination of models and theories to enable them to skilfully navigate through their role in leading schools during reform initiatives. Other models and theories of leadership should be examined for their transferability with attention to the UAE cultural values. For example, leadership models that focus relationships between principals and followers, empowering followers and leadership for building learning communities needs to be further studied. Additionally, my research has demonstrated that transferring one leadership model from a Western context and applying it in the UAE context does not capture the true nature and difficulties that principals face in leading schools in the UAE. Some of these difficulties include culture diversity of teaching and administrative staff, policy changes and centralisation of power

with the Ministry of Education and educational governing bodies such as councils (e.g., controlling recruiting, budgets allocations and school calendar).

It is recommended that more grounded theory studies be conducted to examine Western models of leadership before transferring it with attention to the cultural context of the UAE (e.g., Islamic values and diversity of teaching staff ...etc.). Furthermore, attention should be given to develop a modified version of leadership in UAE schools using a combination of models and theories, specifically tailored to match the cultural characteristics of the UAE and for more indigenous research to be conducted in the UAE culture.

Methodological implications and recommendations

There are four methodological implications arising from this study. First, since this is a hermeneutic study and in order to capture the research subject's thinking and how they see the world, research methods have to adopt an open-ended question approach as the aim of hermeneutic tradition was developed to represent the research subject's perspectives and views (Van Manen, 2016). Second, exploratory research is more appropriate given the importance of understanding leadership in UAE schools. Earlier in this thesis's literature review, I have examined some leadership studies in the Gulf region in general and more specifically in the United Arab Emirates. These studies suggested that there is a gap in international and national literature that identifies successful leadership practices in the UAE. The wide variety of schooling systems in the UAE and the diversity of principals' nationalities, educational and training backgrounds suggests that more exploratory

studies are needed to research successful leadership practices in the UAE. Moreover, triangulation from interview data combined with document analysis and observation provided more opportunities for participants to talk about specific leadership practices that would be less likely to have been captured in a quantitative research such as the moral dimension of Burns's theory, Branine model of Islamic management and how it relates and interact with diffuse/ specific and neutral/ emotional elements of the cross-cultural framework of Trampouaare- Hampdon-Turner in sustaining positive relationships at a school level. Therefore, similar studies of leadership must include qualitative research methods to ensure it capture the humanistic nature in schools' leadership.

Third, given the culture of the country and the importance of the Islamic values in the educational system, an open-ended approach is more appropriate for the oral culture that is still practiced in the UAE, the importance of the consultation at all levels through Shura (Hurriez, 2013 and Omair, 2010). Additionally, the educational system in the UAE is comprised of multi cultures and the open-ended nature to the research study is more appropriate to accommodate this.

Lastly, the hermeneutic approach of this research study allowed for more opportunities to critique and question some of the results to provide a more thorough explanation of the of leadership practices in Abu Dhabi schools given the open-ended nature of hermeneutics approach. It allowed for an in-depth analysis of participants understanding. It is important to understand principal's perception of successful leadership practices to gather comprehensive data from the national field to conduct other qualitative and possibly quantitative and comparative studies.

The main recommendation is to expand on this type of research to involve more participants from teachers, principals and possibly students to draw more information on successful leadership practices.

Cultural and cross-cultural implications and recommendations

This research study has demonstrated that culture building and attention to the national cultural differences between staff members and school principals highly affect leadership practices in Abu Dhabi schools. It demonstrated that successful leadership is possible when principals take the time to build and sustain a warm and respectful culture in the school, taking the time to know their teachers and allowing them to connect on a personal level before demanding and leading the change. It also demonstrated that by having a positive school culture, teachers will feel more supported and are able to keep up with the demands of the work environment during the reform initiative. Some cross-cultural elements were evident in the schools' culture (such as diffuse/specific, emotional neutral, internal/external and past future); however, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's seven cultural dimensions do not appear to lean to either end, rather, it is an interwoven approach of these dimensions that enables the school to grow and flourish. Additionally, Islamic ethics and management elements appear to influence the schools culture positively, specifically, principals who demonstrate justice (*Adel*), consultation (*Shura*) and patience (*Saber*).

The main recommendation is that exploring successful leadership practices in UAE schools should always be accompanied with attention to cultural and cross-cultural elements to be able to capture the true challenges that principals face in leading schools in the UAE.

Policy implications and recommendations

This study has demonstrated that globalization and policy transfer hugely affect educational policy in the UAE. It has equally demonstrated that the fast pace of development in the UAE is reflected on a micro level in schools. It revealed that most of the UAE's local educational policies are being transferred from Western context without researching its transferability (e.g., the length of school day/year and students' absences). It is important for principals who work in the UAE be prepared to face the challenges of policy change and modifications while leading their schools.

There are several policy changes that need to be implemented in the UAE to ensure that educational leadership at school level is established. The following discussion relates to UAE context, however, can be relevant to other countries similar to UAE's context in the Gulf region and possibly the Middle East countries. These recommendations can be grouped into political level, government departments and agencies and higher education bodies.

Political level:

At a political level, the UAE is undergoing rapid change to rise up to the national policy agenda's aims and vision. It is important for policy makers in the UAE is to ensure that more indigenous policy research is encouraged to be able to rely on before initiating any policy change rather than transferring policies from other Western cultures. Additionally, policy makers should pilot any policy change on a small scale before it is implemented on a large scale to minimise negative effects and/or the loss of financial and human resources. It is also recommended that the pace of policy change should be carefully considered to minimise the ripple effect resulting from the lack of knowledge and understanding of change requirements at a school level.

Government bodies and agencies (MOE and ADEC):

This study demonstrated that educational government bodies exert an influence on school leadership practises. It revealed that most of the principals' jurisdictions are centralised within MOE and/or ADEC. Principals at government schools have no control over budget, recruiting, resource allocations, students' registration, maintenance and/or school calendar. These factors limit principals' leadership at the school and compromise their authority. While these bodies strive to provide top-of-the range resources both human and financial, it is important that the authority of these bodies is decentralised gradually to allow more freedom at a school level. It is recommended that successful principals are identified and be allowed to have more control over their schools. This will allow successful principals to become role models and mentor other school principals so that best practice is shared among other government schools.

Education sector:

The education sector contributes greatly on influencing leadership practices at a school level. It helps shapes the identity of school principals. Currently, higher educational training relies heavily on Western leadership models (ElKaleh and Samier, 2013 and Miller- Idriss and Hanauer, 2011). This study demonstrated that Western leadership model do not transfer successfully into the UAE culture. It is recommended that these institutes provide tailored training programs to adequately prepare school leaders for their role by examining cultural related cases and models. These models may include Islamic and culture appropriate elements that are important to successful leadership practice in UAE schools.

Further Research

This research study is a starting point to explore leadership practices at a school level in the UAE in a multi-cultural and Islamic context. Further qualitative and possibly quantitative research studies are needed to expand on this study's findings to identify successful leadership practices in UAE schools, for example, in other Emirates. Additionally, other research studies could target higher education to examine the kind of curriculum that principals are receiving in their qualifying degree to identify successful training programs. Moreover, there is a need to conduct similar comparative studies between the UAE and other Gulf and possibly Middle East countries to identify similarities and differences between them when it comes to leading schools in the UAE. Furthermore, this research study explored cultural and cross-cultural factors within the context of

an Islamic UAE culture, while the Emirati model for leadership that resulted from this study cannot be generalised because of the exploratory nature of this study; it is recommended that this model could be further explored in similar contexts to the UAE, such as the Gulf region and the Middle East countries to provide more comprehensive understanding of leadership challenges in similar schools' contexts.

Additionally, this research study explored elementary government funded schools in Abu Dhabi; other research studies are needed to explore K-12 schools and private funded schools to further understand challenges that face principals while leading UAE schools with multi-cultural differences.

The qualitative nature of this study using in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, material culture observation and document analysis provided suitable methods and tools for the exploratory nature of this research study that elicited an in-depth understanding of the unique challenges that principals face within the cultural context of the UAE. Other research studies are recommended with a larger population of participants, which could provide more reliability and validity to the Emirati leadership model resulting from this research study.

This thesis research is a stepping-stone towards understanding leadership practices that are relevant to the UAE cultural context. In presenting the findings of this research study, I aim to shed new light on the challenges that face school leadership in a fast pace developing country that strives to claim a leading role among other well developed and established countries.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1

Dear participant:

My name is Rihan Nasab, I am a student at the Doctoral programme with The British University in Dubai. You are invited to participate in a research paper to understand the leadership practices that can promote the schools in UAE and good leadership practices. To gain a better understanding of what shaped the principals views of good leadership practices. The study will focus on the principal's perceptions and understanding of how leaders become successful in leading the schools and what affect the principals' leadership practices.

Procedure:

You will be asked to participate in a 90 minutes interview session. The interview will be audio recorded and it will take place in a place we mutually agree on at the time of your convenience.

Confidentiality:

Your name and identity will not be used in the research study. All audiotapes will be locked in a secured location during and after the research is completed.

Freedom to withdraw:

You are completely free to participate in this study, at any time you feel the need to stop the interview or withdraw from the research study you can do so with no obligation. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Researcher information:

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at my phone number, 0558647195 or email me at: rihan.nasab@adec.ac.ae

Appendix 2

Interview guide for Principals and Vice-Principals:

Principals and Vice-principals will participate in narrative conversational interviews interview with the participants, designed to be as unstructured as possible to be able to capture their understanding of their leadership experience

1) Where did principal get their leadership characteristics?

- a. What motivates a good leader to lead? What motivates you to lead?*
- b. What was your greatest influence to become a leader?*
- c. What style of leadership do you adopt when leading the school? Examples? Where does this style come from (e.g., books, workshops, etc.)*
- d. Describe an incident that best demonstrates your leadership style?*

2) How does a principal lead?

- a. How do good leaders allow individuals to grow? How do you allow individuals to grow and yet keep the spirit of the organization together?*
- b. In your opinion, what is more important your relationship with the staff? Or the rules and regulations? How do balance both? Give examples?*
- c. How close should a good leader be with his/her followers? How close are you with your staff members? How do you define your relationship with them?*
- d. How do good leaders balance achieving goals with coherence? How do you balance that? Examples?*
- e. How often does the culture affect your decision?*
- f. How do you reconcile differences between the staff? Community?*

3) How do culture and religion background shaped the participants' experience?

- a. Who is your role model in leadership?*
- b. What inspired you to become a leader?*
- c. What are your ethics? Can you give me an example when your ethics drove a decision you made?*

4) Policy implementation?

- a. The school's vision and mission statement?*
- b. How does it materialize in the school?*
- c. How did you include staff in the creation and the implementation of it?*
- d. Is it reflective in school activities? Examples?*
- e. To what extent the policy is implemented? How?*

5) *How do participants view good leadership practices?*

- a. Daily routine in leadership?*
- b. Examples of their leadership practices.*
- c. How do they inspire people?*
- d. What do you think a strong leader most important skill?*
- e. How does good leadership look like?*
- f. What leadership style that is most suitable to lead your school?*
- g. Share some success stories of leadership*

6) *Demographic questions:*

- a. Educational background.*
- b. School of thoughts you adopt (western principal)*
- c. Successful leadership experience in a western school (western principal)*
- d. Challenges faced in UAE culture (western principal).*

Appendix 3

Interview guide for Heads of faculty:

Heads of faculty will participate in an in-depth interview that seeks to motivate participants to talk about their experiences through stories and situations.

1) Where did principal get their leadership characteristics?

- a. What do you think influence the principal's leadership?*
- b. What would you classify their leadership like? Examples?*
- c. What, in your opinion, drives the principal to lead?*

2) How does the principal lead?

- a. Do you think that working in the school with this principals allow you to grow?*
- b. Do you see evidence of growth in the organization? Please share an example?*
- c. How does the principal motivate the staff to perform?*
- d. How close is the principal with the staff members? How does this affect the staff when tasks need to be completed?*
- e. In your opinion, does the principal follow policy in all decision-making processes?*
- f. How do you achieve goals while keeping staff members focused on their overall performance?*
- g. How does the culture affect the principal's decision?*

3) How do culture and religion background shaped the participants' experience?

- a. How familiar is your principal with the local culture?*
- b. How would you say your principal follows as a role model for leadership?*
- c. To what degree would you say that the principal follow the NSM policy?*
- d. What would you say are the work ethics that your principal has? Examples?*

4) How do participants view good leadership practices?

- a. Daily routine in leadership?*
- b. Examples of good leadership practices.*
- c. Examples of inspirational moments of the principal.*
- d. In your opinion what is the most important skill of the leaders?*
- e. How does good leadership look like?*
- f. Some success stories.*

5) Policy implementation?

- a. What is the school's vision and mission statement?*
- b. How is it aligned to the UAE 2021 vision statement?*
- c. How is it implemented in the school? Classrooms?*
- d. How far is the NSM policy implemented in the school?*
- e. How does the principal follow on the implementation of the policy?*

6) Demographic questions:

- a. Educational background.*
- b. School of thoughts you adopt (western HOF's)*
- c. Successful leadership experience in a western school (western HOF's)*
- d. Challenges faced in UAE culture (western HOF's).*

Appendix 4

Interview guide for Cluster Managers:

1) Where did principal get their leadership characteristics?

- a. What model of leadership do “good leaders” practice, what would you say that your principal is practicing?*
- b. What do you think influence the principal’s leadership?*
- c. What would you classify their leadership like? Examples?*
- d. What, in your opinion, drives a good leader to lead? What is driving your principal to lead?*

2) How does the principal lead?

- a. Do you see evidence of growth in the organization? Please share examples?*
- b. How close is the principal with the staff members? How does this affect the staff when tasks need to be completed?*
- c. How do these principals achieve goals while keeping staff members focused on their overall performance?*
- d. How does the culture affect the principal’s decision?*

3) How do culture and religion background shaped the participants’ experience?

- a. Would you say that these principals are successful at what they do? Why?*
- b. Do you think that the local culture is respected and represented in these schools? ADEC’s school in general?*
- c. What would you say the work ethics of these principals are?*
- d. What would you say the biggest challenge that may affect the performance of the school and stands in the way of the successful leadership?*

4) How do participants view good leadership practices?

- a. What would you say the best leadership model for UAE schools?*
- b. What good leadership looks, feels and sounds like for your?*
- c. What are the most important skills that principals in UAE should have? How is it represented?*
- d. What would you define as the ultimate success story that you experiences during the NSM implementation? What made it a big success?*

5) Policy implementation?

- a. How far do you think the NSM is implemented and followed?*
- b. Is the policy clear to understand and follow?*

- c. What is the biggest challenge in following and implementing the policy?*
- d. In your opinion, is the policy well adapted to meet the needs of the UAE educational system? How is that?*
- e. Who set the first policy draft? Which model is it following or being transferred from?*
- f. How well is the ADEC policy aligned with the UAE 2021 vision statement?*
- g. In your opinion, did the policy and policy implementation started to reflect in schools? Teacher's performance? Students' performance?*

6) Demographic questions:

- a. Educational background.*
- b. School of thoughts you adopt.*
- c. Successful leadership experience in a western school.*
- d. Challenges faced in UAE culture.*

Appendix 5

Focus group guide:

Four teachers will participate in 45 minutes focus group meeting the discussion will be around these points.

1) What are the principal's leadership characteristics?

- *What leadership style does the principal adopt?*
- *How does that affect your work at the school?*

2) What do you think motivate the principal to lead?

- *Does the principal inspire you?*
- *How often do you speak to the principal?*
- *Does the principal know you by name and class assignment?*
- *Do you have a good relationship with your principal?*

3) How do principals motivate you as a teacher?

- *How do they show their support to you?*
- *Do you feel that you are motivated to come to school?*
- *What influence your decision to stay at this school?*

4) How do culture and religion background shaped the participants' experience?

- *Do you think that the culture has any effect on the principal? If so, how? Examples.*
- *Where do you think the leadership style that the principal has came from? Who shaped it?*

5) How do participants view good leadership practices?

- *What do you think good leadership practices look like? Feels like? Sounds like?*
- *What do you think is very important for the principal to do in order for the school to be successful?*
- *What do you think the principal should do to support you in class.*

6) Policy implementation?

- *Do you understand the policy?*
- *Do you follow always?*
- *Give examples where the policy affected a decision in the school.*
- *What is the school's mission and vision statement?*
- *What is the UAE mission and vision statement?*