An explorative study into the influence of principal's leadership style on building and nurturing students' leadership in a school: a case study of a private school in Sharjah

دراسة استقصائية عن تأثير أسلوب قيادة المدير في رعاية و بناء القيادة عند الطلاب: دراسة حالة مدرسة من المدارس الخاصة في الشارقة

by

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ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH

This thesis explores, through a qualitative approach, the possible influence that the school's principal has on student's leadership. The current educational reform projects in the UAE and the UAE national agenda focused on building capacity in students and teaching lifelong skills. Three theoretical frameworks are used in this research study, Transformational Leadership Theory presented by Burns (1978), Youth Leadership Development Model presented by Redmond and Dolan (2016) and Emotional Intelligence Theory presented by Salovey and Mayer (1990).

The methodology adopted was qualitative exploratory in nature designed to understand the principal's practices that promote students' leadership practices. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with students, teachers, a vice principal and the principal. To ensure triangulation of evidence, data was also elicited from observation and document analysis. Several themes were identified based on this research study, building capacity, curriculum implementation, leadership building initiatives and principal's elevating effect as elements that promote students' leadership. Additionally, policy restrictions and peer pressure as possible barriers to student leadership.

It is recommended that this research study is further expanded to other similar context schools to verify the findings of this research study.

ABSTRACT IN ARABIC

تستكشف هذه الدراسة، من خلال نهج تفسيري، التأثير المحتمل لأسلوب إدارة مدير المدرسة على قيادة الطلاب. وقد ركزت مشاريع الإصلاح التعليمي الحالية في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة وجدول الأعمال الوطني لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة على بناء القدرات لدى الطلاب وتعليم المهارات الحياتية الطويلة. تم استخدام ثلاثة أطر نظرية في هذه الدراسة البحثية، نظرية القيادة التحويلية التي قدمها بيرنز (1978)، نموذج تنمية القيادات الشبابية الذي قدمه ريدموند دولان (2016) ونظرية الذكاء العاطفي التي قدمها سالوفي وماير (1990).

وكانت المنهجية المعتمدة استكشافية نوعية في طبيعتها مصممة لفهم ممارسات مدير المدرسة التي تعزز ممارسات قيادة الطلاب. وقد تم جمع البيانات من خلال مقابلات متعمقة مع الطلاب، ومدرسين و نائب مدير ومدير المدرسة. ولضمان استنباط الأدلة من عدة مصادر، استسقيت البيانات أيضاً من الملاحظة وتحليل الوثائق. تم تحديد عدة مواضيع بناء على هذه الدراسة البحثية، مثل بناء القدرات، وتنفيذ المناهج الدراسية، ومبادرات بناء القيادة وتأثير ممارسات المدير التي تعزز روح الفريق كعناصر تعزز قيادة الطلاب. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم ملاحظة القيود المفروضة من السياسات وضغوط الأقران كحواجز محتملة أمام قيادة الطلاب .

ويوصى بأن يتم توسيع نطاق هذه الدراسة البحثية لتشمل مدارس أخرى مماثلة للتثبت من نتائج هذه الدراسة البحثية.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Education has been identified as a priority in the UAE national agenda to match the UAE 2021 vision (Alfaki and Ahmed, 2015). One of its major goals is to 'provide future generations with the necessary technical and practical skills to drive the economy in both public and private sectors', contributing towards a knowledge economy (Alfaki and Ahmed, 2015). Some of these skills have been identified in literature as students' leadership, ability to communicate effectively and ability to think outside of the box (Chiang and Lee, 2016; Karacan-Ozdemir and Yerin-Guneri, 2017; Park et al., 2017). Schools around the world in general are facing a challenge of teaching towards the unknown future (Fayolle, 2018; Quigley and Herro, 2016; Wilson and Zamberlan, 2017). It is essential to focus on teaching lifelong skills, not only academic content, to be able to prepare students for their future career paths (Demirel and Akkoyunlu, 2017; Feng and Jih-Lian, 2016; Lüftenegger, et al, 2016). In the international literature, the relationship between the school's principal leadership style and building student leadership has been widely documented (Damanik andAldridge, 2017; Day, Gu and Sammons, 2016; Louis, Murphy and Smylie, 2016). However, very little research has been documented in the United Arab Emirates on the possible relationship between principal's leadership style and nurturing student's leadership abilities, the possible policy restrictions and/or challenges and barriers that school principals face in leading schools towards building student's leadership skills (Alhosani, Singh and Al Nahyan, 2017; Bock and Schulze, 2016; Chebbi, 2017; Hammad and Hallinger, 2017). Given the voluminous international research on student leadership, influence of principal's leadership style, barriers and opportunities, student leadership practices and perceptions, research in the UAE context must examine how student leadership is shaped and influenced by school culture, school leadership, educational obstacles and catalysts, as well as practices and perceptions, against the backdrop of educational reforms in Emirati schools.

1.2 Overview of the chapters:

This thesis is designed in five chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction with a general overview of the research problem, the significance of the study and the research question. Chapter two will present a review of the international literature and will discuss the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter three will discuss the methodology adopted for this exploratory research, data collection methods and data analysis. Chapter four will present the data from this research study and will discuss it in relation to the literature review. While chapter five presents the conclusion of this study and will discuss further research possibilities

1.3 Background: Review of Educational Reforms in the UAE

The UAE is witnessing innovative educational reforms, in keeping with the need for a skilled and educated workforce and a knowledge economy. As part of the reforms, the development of educational skills is the focus of investing in programs and policies. New programs are being initiated at diverse levels, from K-12 to universities. According to El Tom and Vogeli (2020), educational reforms on the UAE have focused on increased professionalism, better standards, greater accountability, and improved readiness to learn, with more interactive learning opportunities being provided. The National Agenda UAE Vision 2021 asserts the UAE on the international education front, with a focus on an education system that embraces diversity and enables the Emirati student to be equipped for a knowledge based economy (Alfaki and Ahmed, 2015; Brock and Kirdar, 2017). The launch of UAE Vision 2021 encompasses the need for a highly productive, competitive and knowledge-based economy entailing a student-centered approach to learning (Brock and Kirdar, 2017). Educational reforms are influencing schools across the Emirati educational sector.

Reforms are driven based on the idea that private school students as well as public school pupils are in need of a supportive learning environment and teacher as well as principal leadership styles play a key role in nurturing leadership in students. Good principal leadership styles equip teachers to perform efficiently, model instructional processes, and encourage best practices and help in

building innovative strategies to positively influence student self-efficacy, sense of initiative and leadership. Effective leadership styles promote collaboration, responsibility and knowledge sharing and empowerment to develop a culture which promotes open learning. The link between school and student leadership is suggested by contemporary researchers on an international scale, as well as within the UAE school systems.

Research on a global scale promotes the centrality of principal's leadership style in shaping student leadership (Pietsch and Tulowitzki, 2017; Urick, 2016). Principals leadership style is a key role in impacting educational quality in schools and mobilizing students as leaders (Daniëls, Hondeghem and Dochy, 2019; Jacob, et al., 2015 and Sebastian, Huang and Allensworth, 2017). Student leadership is linked to school leadership and instructional leadership (Smith and Squires, 2016). On a global scale, school principal's leadership style plays a critical role in the student's educational success, with extensive research suggesting democratic and transformational leadership styles that contribute to the development of student leadership (Makgato and Mudzanani, 2018; Zheng, Li, Chen and Loeb, 2017). As numerous educational reforms have sought to raise achievement levels and inculcate leadership in students, school leadership has evoked great interest in the field of education, as it can influence the quality of learning and teaching in schools and the emphasis is on principal leadership styles that molds the collaborative establishment of school learning vision and awareness of student leadership (Cruickshank, 2017; Yokota, 2019). Research has also established that future studies should attend to numerous dimensions of principal leadership and its role in influencing student leadership, given the complexity of principal leadership styles (Chen, Ning and Bos, 2020; WU, Shen, Zhang and Zheng, 2020). Currently in the UAE, the principal leadership is being promoted (Barza, 2013). There has been a great shift in decentralizing the authority of the Ministry of Education towards more accountability to school principals (Stephenson, Dada and Harold, 2012). The key role of a principal is to ensure the student advances and exhibits leadership characteristics that signal effective achievement of educational learning goals, utilizing transformational educational leadership styles as opposed to laissez-faire leadership (Numa, 2018; Hariri, Monypenny and Prideaux, 2016). Therefore, leadership styles adopted by principals are potentially linked to student leadership.

Cross national evidence suggests student leadership is deeply influenced by school governance and administration styles, as well as leadership and decision-making approaches adopted by principals and teachers (Jeong and Luschei, 2018). Successful principal leadership styles foster a cooperative approach and maintain an ideal school climate (Arya, 2017). Educational leadership exerts a positive relationship on student leadership, as meta-analytic reviews have revealed the most comprehensive influence is found in distributive and transformational leadership (Arya, 2017). School leadership has a critical role to play in nurturing student leadership in the context of school climate (Agasisti, Bowers and Sonic, 2018). Researchers have examined how student leadership is influenced by principal leadership styles predicated on emotional intelligence and anticipation of student needs (Obi and Onyeike, 2018; Wirawan, Tamar and Bellani, 2019). Recent research work in school leadership also highlights the importance of considering instructional leadership skills. Students excel at leadership when principals rate themselves strong on instructional leadership and organization (Boberg and Bourgeois, 2016; Sebastian, Allensworth, Wiedermann, Hochbein and Cunningham, 2018). By supporting collective responsibility and shared leadership, a principal's leadership style influences school and student leadership in distinct and diverse ways (Siwi, Siswandari and Gunarhadi, 2019; Park, Lee and Cooc, 2018).

In UAE schools, the link between principal's leadership style and student leadership is a topic increasing researcher interest, although there is limited research in this context. Few research studies examined principal leadership styles across UAE's private and public high schools and how this exerts a considerable influence on student and educational leadership, researchers have found differences in the type of leadership dominantly displayed by the principal in each of the school types, and school leadership styles among educators in the UAE influences the school climate (Ashfaq, 2020; Bahala et al., 2018; Litz, Juma and Carroll, 2016). Principals lead schools in an educational climate marked by continuous challenges and growing responsibilities, establishing an atmosphere for teaching as well as learning that removes barriers in the way of student leadership and adapt to challenges such as diversity in the workforce and administrative hurdles (Abdallah and Forawi, 2017; Aldaheri, 2020; Arbabi and Mehdinezhad, 2015). Research demonstrates that school principals in UAE practice leadership styles that reflect cultural differences between western orientations of such models adopted by Emirati principals and the

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population's Islamic orientation, leading researchers to propose a new model of transformational leadership based in Middle-Eastern paradigms (Litz, Juma and Carroll, 2016; Litz and Scott, 2016). Principals leadership variables play a key role in student attitudes towards lessons and initiative to tap leadership opportunities in secondary schools as well as private and public institutions, even as leadership and classroom management, student productivity and a supportive environment for students to achieve their learning goals effectively are critical to consider (Azeem and Mataruna, 2019; Sultan Nafa, 2020).

The focus on schools' success has intensified in the UAE. It is suggested that leading a successful school is now focused on principal's leadership styles (Litz, Juma and Carroll, 2016; Litz and Scott, 2016). Key educational stakeholders have proposed a three-pronged strategy built on vision, leadership and school climate to enhance school success in Emirati educational institutions. In the UAE, researchers have examined school principal instructional leadership in Sharjah Education Zone, Principals of Sharjah-based schools are focused on framing school goals, evaluating instruction and offering incentives for learning and school leadership (Alsaleh, 2018). The focus on teaching and learning is necessitating a closer look at how principal's leadership style can influence professional development and the emergence of student leadership in the classroom. School reform is only successful if students feel engaged and display effective leadership styles. t

1.4 School Culture and Student Leadership

Before education can be reformed, school leadership must be modified. Student leadership, student achievement and positive school cultures are closely related (Ghamrawi, Ghamrawi and Shal, 2017; 2018). A school culture which nurtures leadership skills, at all levels, is linked to student leadership. According to Ghamrawi and colleagues (2017;2018), the association between school culture and student leadership derives from the role a positive school environment plays in instilling positive emotional growth in student leaders and serves as a positive model for influencing leadership skills in students, such as conflict resolution, planning and active participation in schools and communities. Through a participatory school culture, school environment can prepare students for future leadership opportunities (Lyons, Brasof and Baron, 2020). School culture and student leadership are inextricably linked, in that students are

acknowledged for their work and play a critical leadership role in formal systems of decision-making (Lyons, Brasof and Baron, 2020; Seemiller,2016). Leadership and empowerment are closely interrelated with school culture (Casado-Perez, Carney and Hazler, 2017; Seemiller, 2016). Integrated student leadership and shared decision-making are at the heart of a positive school culture that empowers pupils (Kirk et al., 2015; Lyons, Brasof and Baron, 2020). In this manner, a collaborative school culture has distinct interlinkages with inculcation of leadership skills in students across school systems. In UAE schools, as well, the role of school climate and school culture in influencing student leadership has been widely explored.

Collaborative school cultures influence student leadership in UAE schools. Ibrahim (2020) has examined school cultures in a UAE school district and their role in fostering student leadership development. The research found mandated learning outcomes and student assessment needs require effective school leadership. While public schools in the UAE are characterized by a centralized school system, and educational uniformity in terms of policies, curricula, textbook and regulations, private schools share a decentralized system where important decisions are left to schools and principal leadership plays a critical role here (Badri et al., 2019). School leadership is mediated by factors such as student interest and motivation influencing student leadership (Badri, Al Rashedi, Yang, Mohaidat, and Al Hammadi, 2016). Furthermore, according to Badri et al. (2019), the linkages between educational and student leadership must be closely examined. A strong link exists between parental expectations and student leadership (Badri et al., 2019; Badri, Al Rashedi, Yang, Mohaidat, and Al Hammadi, 2016). Best practices are needed to ensure school improvement, effective communication and student leadership skills. According to Al Qahtani (2019), the role of the school leadership in nurturing leadership skills in students is critical in the UAE context. Research by Al Qahtani (2019) has found goals defined by principals and inculcated in school culture must show a commitment to a leadership style oriented towards guiding the teaching and learning process through shared beliefs and values. A critical factor to consider is that principal leadership styles can facilitate student leadership through a learning community that serves and supports powerful learning and teaching. Professional school leaders can establish a good rapport with students and elicit effective support and feedback, inculcating key leadership skills in pupils (AlQahtani, 2019; Al Ahbabi, 2018: Badri et al., 2019; Ibrahim and Mahmoud,

2017). Thus, school culture or climate plays a central role in building leadership skills in UAE students.

1.5 Policies on Student Leadership in the UAE and Sharjah Education Council

Strong student leadership is vital for reforming the school system in UAE. Educational leadership is strongly linked to reform within the school systems in the UAE (Iskander, Pettaway, Waller and Waller, 2016; Zahran, Pettaway, Waller and Waller, 2016). Given that the educational sector in the UAE has become a focus of improvement and reform efforts, preparing students for leadership opportunities within the global context is the key concern of such developments in the education sector (Alhebsi, Pettaway and Waller, 2015; Iskander, Pettaway, Waller and Waller, 2016). Students must develop leadership skills in order to navigate an ever-evolving, global society that is highly networked (Pettaway, Waller and Waller, 2015; Pettaway, Waller, Khodr and Waller, 2015).

Modern systems of education are a key focus of the UAE reforms. According to Al Suwaidi and Schoepp (2015), the UAE educational reform project has focused on developing a modern, world-class, innovative system that puts students first, and focuses on school leadership through which the reform project can be initiated and student learning can be enhanced. Within the UAE, reforms are in order as Vision 2021 has placed 8 key performance indicators such as increased student proficiency in TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) and on increasing the percentage of quality teachers and school leaders in alignment with the needs of the educational sector (Al Suwaidi and Schoepp, 2015).

The emirate of Sharjah, in 2005, created the Sharjah Educational Council. The education council focuses on decentralized decision making to increase efficiency and effectiveness in school organizations (Albadri, 2013). The SEC was restructured in 2016 under the leadership of Chairman Saeed Al Kaabi (Oxford Business Group, 2017). The Sharjah Education Zone manages the operations of educational institutions in Sharjah, including public sector and private schools and educational institutions, as well as adult education, granting approval for private and public schools and working on improving leadership development skills in students (Oxford Business Group,

2017). Policy initiatives and reforms have focused on building student leadership and citizenship skills.

1.6 Student Leadership Practices

Student leadership practices are the key to effective development of leadership and self-efficacy in pupils. Studies have found leadership practices associated with student skills for individual and school success are diverse (Lee, Walker and Bryant, 2019). According to the researchers, key dimensions of leadership practice underpin leadership theories such as instructional, transformation and strategic leadership (Lee, Walker and Bryant, 2019). In analyzing student leadership, practices that hold relevance include strategic resourcing, establishment of goals and expectations, evaluation, planning and coordination, and development of core student leadership skills (Lee, Walker and Bryant, 2019). Strategic planning for school improvement influence student leadership in diverse ways. School leadership needs to focus on aligning resource selection as well as priority teaching goals allocation to inculcate leadership skills in students (Kane, 2019; Lee, Walker and Bryant, 2019). Student leadership is a critical issue in educational reform, and is considered a type of school leadership beneficial for the development of self-esteem and self-confidence as key shared traits (Nashuha, Bakrin, Mahmudah and Isticharoh, 2019). Exploring student leadership practices in UAE schools requires considering such factors, as well.

The reform of the education systems in UAE is at the forefront of inculcating effective student leadership practices in UAE schools. Educational literature attests the value of building effective student leadership skills and practices, focusing on how teachers, schools, and education systems can develop student leaders (Madden, 2019). The need for professional learning in UAE schools has also been emphasized, even as strategic leadership practices have been aligned with the emergence of student leaders (Hitt and Tucker, 2015: Madden, 2019). Leadership practices involve engaging with communities, integrating quality teaching and learning and mentoring to ensure effective classroom management and student leadership development (Taha Thomure, 2019). Student leadership is at the core of growth as well as transformation of K-12 education in the UAE (Kippels and Ridge, 2019; Taha Thomure, 2019). High quality teaching involves developing, preparing and tailoring teaching methods adapted at building student leadership skills (Balik Hourani and Litz, 2018; Cochran Smith et al., 2018; Gallagher, 2019). Effective teaching-learning

context is a key facilitator for nurturing student leaders. An equally important aspect to consider are barriers to student leadership.

Student leadership programs have formed the focus of educational interventions for reforming school systems. However, barriers to effective student leadership development include gender socialization, gender role expectations, biased perceptions about leadership held by parents and students themselves (Fulton, Greene, Hartwigh, Blalock and Haiyasoso, 2019; Fulton, 2017; Haber-Curran and Sulpizo, 2017). Low levels of self-confidence are associated with lack of leadership skills in students (Fulton, Greene, Hartwigh, Blalock and Haiyasoso, 2019; Shapiro et al., 2015). Additionally, peer pressure can be a significant inhibitor to student leadership (Vega, Moore and Miranda, 201). Research on the student voice suggests student opinions not being acknowledged or evaluated also form sizeable barriers to student leadership (Mitra, 2018; Lyons and Brasof, 2020). Governance structures and decentralized decision-making are at the heart of student leadership initiatives. However, Lyons and Brasof (2020) reiterate that in most cases, positions of student leaders is limited to planning social events, as opposed to the power to make decisions regarding instructional or budgetary issues. Lack of inclusive student leadership practices also form considerable obstacles for effective student leadership development (Fulton, 2017; Lyons and Brasof, 2020). For facilitating student leadership, student inputs must be valued. Lyons and Brasof (2020) recommend that student self-regard, competence and engagement levels, academic performance and an explicit focus on sustainability and inclusivity are central to factors influencing student leadership. Lack of perceived competence and devaluation of student inputs can come in the way of effective student leadership development. According to Lyons and Brasof (2020), student leaders must be given the authority to work collaboratively in educational settings with support from adults, teachers and parents, besides organizational support mechanisms that enable the student voice to flourish.

As suggested by Litz, Blaik-Hourani and Scott, 2020, factors that hinder student leadership in the UAE context may include organizational and systematic issues, policy constraints, issues pertaining to curriculum suitability and delivery and follow up as well as progress management. For developing successful school leadership context shaped learning and leadership approaches are critical, requiring multifaceted development support efforts to facilitate the emergence of

student leaders (Van Vuuren and Sayed, 2017). Lacking role experience and absence of strategic operational management functions in schools are other potential barriers and student leadership challenges (Van Vuuren and Sayed, 2017; Litz, Blaik-Hourani and Scott, 2020). Lack of self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, social skills, empathy and motivation can also serve to hinder student leadership while fulfilling roles and responsibilities, as constraints and challenges require the demonstration of emotional intelligence traits and skills (Blaik-Hourani, Litz, and Parkman, 2020). Exploring student perceptions of barriers and facilitators to student leadership development is, therefore, critical.

Student leadership perception adds yet another facet to understanding the link between student and principal leadership and the role played by student leaders in classroom management. Tan and Adams (2018) examined student leader's perceptions of their leadership styles to discover different leadership styles between genders, those attending secondary and post-secondary school and different ethnic groups. Furthermore, the researchers reiterate development of student leadership is based on student's perception of their leadership skills, knowledge linked to leadership frames and personal capacities as organizational leaders. Development of student leadership perceptions requires a multi-frame orientation and intense, analytical programs for leadership development to enhance the understanding of key leadership concepts such as leadership self-efficacy (Diaz, Sanchez-Velez, Santana-Serrano, 2019; Tan and Adams, 2018). Thus, student leadership perception influences student leadership development in distinct ways.

In UAE schools as well, student leadership is shaped by student perceptions. Research has examined the way students perceive and navigate leadership opportunities, suggesting perceived positive as well as challenging experiences associated with student leadership development (O'Sullivan, 2017). Student's perception of student leadership encompasses a sense of responsibility, excellent communication skills and effective conflict resolution and risk management (O'Sullivan, 2017). Relationships with faculty, peer and balancing student responsibilities is the key to effective student leadership development, as per research on student leadership perception in the UAE (O'Sullivan, 2017). The role of peer feedback in impacting student perceptions for developing leadership attributes such as confidence in UAE educational institutions has also been identified and analyzed (Hojeij and Baroudi, 2018). Student's perception

of their leadership skills plays a central role in impacting student leadership development in UAE schools and colleges.

1.7 Rational of the study:

The link between the principal leadership style and youth leadership development has been long documented in the international literature (Bertrand, 2018; Brasof, 2015; Day, Gu, and Sammons, 2016; Louis, Murphy and Smylie, 2016; Poon-McBrayer and Wong, 2013 and Rodela and Bertrand, 2018), however, in the context of a fast-paced educational development in the UAE, there is an increased need for similar research studies to guide educational reform towards success (Aburizaizah, Kim and Fuller, 2016 and Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji, 2015). Without local based research, the UAE will not be able to capture lessons learned to guide the educational system in the UAE.

1.8 Purpose of the study:

The main aim of the study is to understand/identify the principal leadership practices that promote student leadership abilities. Although many studies have been conducted internationally to examine the relationship between principals' leadership and youth leadership internationally, there have been few studies that are conducted in the Gulf region generally.

1.9 Objectives of the study:

This research study aims to explore the following key objectives:
1. Understand the current leadership policy in the subject school
2. Understand the principal's practices that lead to student leadership
3. Examine the current barriers the school's face that may hinder student's leadership practices.
4. What is the current school's culture and how does it contribute or hinder students' leadership?
5. How do students perceive their leadership?

1.10 Significance of the study

As UAE educational institutions focus on reform, building on student leadership and interlinkages such as school culture and student leadership, principal's leadership style and influence on student leaders is a critical area of research, as educational and school leaders impact the school climate and the student's leadership skills. The present study aims to bridge the gap between existing research studies in international literature and the current situation in the UAE. The lack of research data in the UAE context suggests the need for exploratory studies in this field by focusing on the link between principal's leadership style and student leadership, exploring the role of barriers, facilitators, school culture and opportunities for inculcating and nurturing student leadership, besides examining how students perceive leadership. Identifying gaps in research and focusing on truly sustainable student leadership development, the current study also lays groundwork for policy makers to be aware of the opportunities for building student leadership in UAE schools and utilizing effective leadership programs and initiatives, reforming organizational mechanisms and contributing to the emergence of talented, skilled and capable student leaders in Sharjah schools.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the literature review and the theoretical framework of this study. It will first present an overview of leadership practices focusing on transformational leadership theory by Burns (1978) and its application in school settings and how it links to students' leadership. It will then introduce a youth leadership model by Redmond and Dolan (2016). The literature review will also present an overview of emotional intelligence theory and how it will be used in understanding students' perception about their own leadership practices. It will then present the theoretical framework of this theory and how all these theories will be used in this research study.

2.2 Leadership Theories:

Leadership has been the focus of many research studies (Goldring et al., 2008; Leithwood, 2008). In its simplest form, leadership is the effort to influence others and the associate power to generate conformity (Chemers, 2014). Over the years, the study of leadership has undergone many stages. For example, the early twenties 'personality era', suggested that leaders are born (Kohs and Irle, 1920). The next phase of leadership studies focused on leaders' behaviors and how they treat their followers, it was known as 'Theory X and Theory Y' (Bass and Bass, 2009). The next phase of leadership studies 'leader-member exchange' (LMX) (Graen, Novak, and Sommerkamp's ,1982). However, recent research studies viewed leadership from a cultural perspective (Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, 2014). It argued that leadership differs in different contexts and cultures. What is defined as successful leadership practices in one culture may not necessarily transfer to different cultures (Shien, 1985).

Burns (1978) introduced a new dimension for studying leadership. He argued that it is time for leadership studies to focus on the relationship between the leaders and the followers. He presented transformational leadership theory with a focus on followers where transformative leaders have an elevating effect on their followers as they look up to their leaders (Andersen, 2018). This theory is

of high importance for this research study, over other models, as it links to building capacity in followers (teachers and students). Which will be further explored in the following sections.

2.2.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

The theory of transformational leadership was developed by Burns in 1978 (Ghasabeh, Soosay, and Reaiche, 2015). Transformational leadership emphasizes the capacity of a leader to meet the needs of followers and inspire them to innovate and discover new solutions. Burns (1978) identified transformative leaders as distinct from transactional on the basis of biographies of leaders, emphasizing how such a leader engages with followers to elevate them to higher levels of motivation (Andersen, 2018). Burn's theory focused on how leaders inspired followers to meet goals (Andersen, 2018). The transformational leader was identified as a leader distinct from transactional leadership, where the exchange of rewards contingent on the performance of desired behaviors established mutual reciprocity as the focus of the leader-follower relationship. Transforming followers' serves at the heart of the transformational leader (Siangchokyoo, Klinger, and Campion, 2020). Burn's theory identifies common features that transformative leaders follow in their relationship with their followers. These elements are elevating effect, raising self-esteem, focus on end value, modelling high expectations, culture building, vision/shared goals and individualized support (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2018; Siangchokyoo et al., 2020). These elements are of high importance to this thesis as principals promote student's leadership.

The theory assumes that leaders transform followers, impacting performance and serving as a basis for research and practice (Northouse, 2018; Siangchokyoo et al., 2020). A multitude of empirical studies propose and explore the role of transformational leaders in impacting individual, groups, as well as organizational performance, besides performance, engagement and satisfaction on the part of followers (Alase, 2019; Minai, Jauhari, Kumar, and Singh, 2020; Yadav, Choudhary, and Jain, 2019; Zaman, Nawaz, Tariq, and Humayoun, 2019). Comparing transformational leadership with other forms of leadership such as transactional, ethical, authentic and servant leadership styles suggests the predictive validity of transformational leadership theory is high (Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, and Wu, 2018; Rodriguez, Green, Sun, and Baggerly-Hinojosa, 2017).

Three underlying assumptions of transformational leadership theory exist. Firstly, leaders are responsible for relatively enduring change or transformation among the followers. Transformational theory of leadership associates the transformation of followers with specific leaders. Burns (1978) has described the transformation in terms of real change, emphasizing that there needs to be marked change in the followers' values and attitudes, regarding the change's magnitude, as well as persistence of the transformation, in that change must be enduring (Northouse, 2018; Siangchokyoo et al., 2020).

The second assumption is that followers undergo transformation in specific ways, in that particular transformation is stimulated in followers by transformational leadership, underlying the basis of society and system-wide change (Northouse, 2018). Bass (1985) has furthermore identified collective identification, value internalization, self-efficacy in followers to heighten their sense of potential and ability for task accomplishment (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020). The final assumption is that transformational leadership is effective only if there is follower transformation. Transformational leadership has been developed to explain variations in the effectiveness of leaders and a key indicator of the influence of a transformational leader is systematic, enduring follower change (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020).

Transformational leadership theory is associated with significant advancement in leadership research (Farahnak, Ehrhart, Torres, and Aarons, 2020; Mahmood, Uddin, and Fan, 2019; Yizhong, Baranchenko, Lin, Lau, and Ma, 2019). Transformational leaders have been associated with the diffusion of innovation in organizations (Carreiro and Oliveira, 2019), high achievement outcomes (Kovach, 2019) and leadership development (Rosari, 2019). Transformational leadership also impacts job satisfaction and the diversity climate (McCallaghan, Jackson, and Heyns, 2019; Ohunakin, Adeniji, Oludayo, Osibanjo, and Oduyoye, 2019). Therefore, diverse organizations and settings have experienced the influence of transformational leaders. Among these is the school system and the field of education.

2.2.2 Transformative Leadership Theory: Application in Educational Settings

School systems are facing a demand for accountability, a need for school performance and the requirement of student achievement (Anderson, 2017). School leadership remains at the heart of

15

strong performance and inculcation of leadership styles in students (Alase, 2019; Anderson, 2017). School leaders need to display proper management skills, approaches and leadership styles for ensuring the effective emergence of student leaders in schools and higher educational institutions. Transformational leadership style is critical for educational leaders to transform schools and meet the needs of student leaders (Anderson, 2017). According to Anderson (2017), principals as transformational leaders have the ability to facilitate change in the school. They work with teachers to empower them and gather them towards a shared vision. According to Liethwood (2008) transformative principals work with staff to meet the increasing needs of all stakeholders through learning new things, reinforcing schools' norms and values. Principals work with subordinates to identify required change, serve as a vision for change through inspiration and change in unison with committed group members. Principals, in this context are accountable for leadership tasks such as evaluating, developing and assisting student leaders (Anderson, 2017). Leithwood (1992) has also suggested transformational leadership styles be featured within principal preparation programs as there is a positive link between such styles and the emergence of teacher, as well as student leaders, enabling student leaders to acquire new knowledge, build strengths and establish new ways of thinking and meaning (Anderson, 2017). With the introduction of student diversity in school and higher education systems, leadership skills can be inculcated by encouraging the school leadership to adopt a transformational leadership approach to diversity management and student leadership skills building (Bush, 2017; Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou, 2016). The theory has been associated with wide applicability and value for scholars and practitioners across diverse disciplines and fields, including education.

2.2.3 Link between Principal Leadership Styles and Student Leadership

MacNeil (2006) conducted a comprehensive review of leadership literature to examine the link between principals' leadership and youth's leadership. In his review he argues that despite the extensive research on leadership, very little research is conducted on youth leadership. He further explains that youth leadership is usually presented as a set of learned skills that youths are expected to practice when they are adults. This argument further emphasizes on the importance of this research study as it is aimed at understanding the link between adult's leadership and youth leadership.

Nevertheless, educational leadership has always been at the forefront of inculcating and nurturing student leadership skills. Scholars in the past decades have examined transformational leadership in the context of research on successful schools, as strong school leadership envisioned through this theory impacts instruction, curriculum and nurturance of student leadership skills by principals (Aas and Brandmo, 2016; Wang, Wilhite, and Martino, 2016). Across countries and cultures, schools and higher educational institutions the association between principal's leadership styles and student leaders is well established. Transformative leadership has the potential to enhance youth leadership as it promotes individualized support and holds high expectations from the followers (Anderson, 2017).

Recently, there has been a focus in international literature on the possible association between principal's leadership style and student leadership. Aas and Brandmo (2016) detail Leithwood's adaptation of transformational leadership into the educational setting. Consequently, Leithwood (1992 as cited in Aas and Brandmo, 2016) proposed a transformational leadership model for the educational sector comprising the following components: modeling, rewards, high expectations, intellectual stimulation, sharing goals, shared vision and individualized support. Transformational leadership theory, therefore, focuses on principal's leadership style as predicated on understanding the needs of the students rather than controlling them. The model holds that personal vision and individualized support are some of the components through which principal's leadership style impacts student and school leaders from the ground-up (Aas and Brandmo, 2016; Arokiasamy, Abdullah, Ahmad, and Ismail, 2016). Effects of principal leadership style on student leadership is based on modeling desired behaviors, promoting effective goals, providing intellectual stimulation and individualized support (Arokiasamy et al., 2016; Nisar, Shahzad, and Rabica, 2020; Prelli, 2016; Tengi, Mansor, and Hashim, 2017).

The growing evidence of the influence of transformational leadership theory on student leadership in connection with principal's leadership styles is predicated on several factors. According to Sun, Chen and Zhang (2017), the leader's qualities, the school's features and the follower's levels of development are the key factors in relation to how transformational school leaders are influencing student leadership in diverse cultural and national contexts. Empirical studies show transformational leadership styles adopted by principals influence accountability and performance based metrics in schools, leading to school improvement and satisfactory student leadership

initiatives across countries such as Australia, Israel, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Taiwan, UK and Turkey (Berkovich and Eyal, 2017; Day, Gu, and Sammons, 2016; Karacabey, Bellibaş, and Adams, 2020; Kitur, Choge, and Tanui, 2020; Litchka and Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2016; Nasra and Heilbrunn, 2016; Sun, Chen, and Zhang, 2017). The growing emphasis of educational leadership and principal's leadership style from the viewpoint of transformational leadership theory is especially relevant for Gulf States such as the UAE.

Given that the past decades in transformational leadership research have called for greater participation of knowledge traditions and research studies from non-Western countries, there is increasing agreement among scholars in Gulf nations that school leadership is shaped by principal's leadership style and a more complete understanding of how leadership is practiced, requires considering the power of the transformational school leader to cultivate and nurture leadership attributes in UAE students (Hammad and Alazmi, 2020). Given the growing complexity in roles expected of principals in Gulf nations, research seeks to understand how leadership expands beyond Western boundaries and cultures through the prism of transformational leadership theory (Bailey, Purinton, Al-Mahdi, and Al Khalifa, 2019; David and Abukari, 2019; Sharif, 2019). Other forms of leadership such as distributed and authentic leadership have been linked to a lesser extent to inculcation of student leadership skills and more to teacher engagement and educational administration in Gulf institutions (Hashem, 2020). The role of transformational leadership in the Gulf education system has been widely explored (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006). For instance, in UAE schools, the focus is on developing leadership skills among school principals who play a critical role in supporting student leaders and being effective change agents (AlShehhi and Alzouebi, 2020). In other Gulf states such as Oman and Kuwait, future student leaders are influenced by school principal's leadership styles to prepare peers for educational success and working towards being more assertive leaders, even as school principals across genders or different years of experience stressed the importance of preparing future leaders in educational institutions (Al-Kiyumi and Hammad, 2020; Alazmi and Al-Mahdy, 2020; Elsayed, AlFadda, Jeed, Afzaal, and Al-Haddad, 2020). In UAE schools, the need of the hour is to focus on the transformational leadership style for it impacts student leadership skills and attributes, besides impacting other school improvement outcomes such as teacher satisfaction and school performance (El Afi, 2019; Gallagher, 2019; Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji, 2019). Therefore, by directly influencing the student's

leadership capabilities, principal leadership and educational leaders transform the capacity of the students to meet educational goals and display effective leadership attributes. (M. AlKutich and Abukari, 2018; Litz and Scott, 2017). Therefore, principal leadership roles, methods and behaviors that may enhance the self-efficacy and other leadership abilities in students is deeply linked to transformational leadership theory in the UAE context, as well.

2.3 Conceptual Model of Youth Leadership Development

A rapidly advancing field of research in education is youth leadership development (Redmond and Dolan, 2016). Cultivating young leaders involves key skills development, commitment to action, and environmental considerations (Osmane and Brennan, 2018; Redmond and Dolan, 2016). According to Redmond and Dolan (2016), youth leadership forms the basis of nurturing key leadership skills in ways that are distinctly different from adult leadership. The youth leadership development conceptual model highlights these key differences.

While defining youth leadership, Redmond and Dolan (2016) reiterate that leadership itself needs to be comprehensively defined. The youth leadership development conceptual model proposed by the researchers is based on longitudinal research and focuses on environmental factors, commitment to action and key skills needed to develop young leaders such as student leaders. The foundation and formulation of skills development such as emotional and social intelligence, communication, partnership and discovering insights and knowledge critical to building leadership skills. The model then elaborates on the contextual factors and environmental determinants, the need for genuine opportunities for young individuals to hone their skills and the use of mentoring to assist young people in developing key skills (Osmane and Brennan, 2018; Redmond and Dolan, 2016). The ultimate aspect of the model is a focus on committed action through motivation and mastery for others and the self respectively in a focus area of leadership.

Youth leaders are young individuals involved in leadership. Redmond and Dolan (2016), in the conceptual model, have identified several allied definitions of youth leadership such as collaborating together to unleash the true potential of individual's treasure, time and talent for common welfare (Wheeler and Eldebeck, 2006 as cited in Redmond and Dolan, 2016). The

researchers have examined how youth leadership is defined in terms of leadership competencies (Zeldin and Camino, 1999 as cited in Redmond and Dolan, 2016). Empowering to inspire and mobilize youth towards a singular agenda, in response to issues and challenges it is the defining feature of a youth leader, according to Kahn et al. (2009 as cited in Redmond and Dolan, 2016). Others have emphasized the need for consistency in using the term and embedding theory within the concept, on the basis of which Redmond and Dolan (2016) identify what does not constitute youth leadership as well. The theorists hold that youth leadership as defined in past research has the capacity to diminish the role of youth leadership programs in initiating student leadership. Redmond and Dolan (2016) also cite the definition of youth development as distinct from youth leadership, as proposed by Edelman et al. (2004 as cited in Redmond and Dolan, 2016). This definition emphasizes youth development strives to meet the challenges associated with being teens through activities enabling them to succeed or deal with challenges, while youth leadership is goal oriented and focuses on young people to lead or get others to work towards a common vision (Redmond and Dolan, 2016). Redmond and Dolan (2016) also define leadership in the form of competencies and skills facilitating the change process and ensuring individuals capable of leading highlight the critical part of programs for teaching such skills. Therefore, leadership, as defined by the youth leadership development conceptual model, aims at facilitation of change, as well as individual and societal development through core emotional and social competencies such as relationship building, partnership, self-awareness, empathy and rapport establishment (Redmond and Dolan, 2016). The researchers also cite the different types of youth leadership activities focused on solving issues, or problems locally, coaching and developing younger teams, bolstering anti bullying programs or community drives for social and environmental causes, developing literacy skills or working with the elderly or those with special needs.

The model holds that leadership is essentially influence centered, drawing on the works of Northouse (2018) where leaders are viewed as following a process whereby individuals influence groups to attain common goals. For exercising leadership, the process of social influence has been emphasized by the model. The model also holds that adult leadership is distinct from youth leadership in that leadership skills can be taught, explored or experienced by youngsters through experiential learning (Kolb et al. 1971 as cited in Redmond and Dolan, 2015) or learning by doing (Dewey as cited in Redmond and Dolan, 2016). The youth leadership development conceptual

model emphasizes development of skills and provides opportunities to apply these skills in meaningful ways in that decisions influence communities and schools. Furthermore, as conceived by the model, youth leadership tends to plan for leaders of the future, as well as the present, and is tied to areas such as youth participation, engagement, development, citizenship and action.

The model holds that developing leadership skills is the key to influencing youth leaders. As far as skills are concerned, the model highlights concepts such as emotional and social intelligence, collaboration, insight, knowledge and articulation (see Figure 1).
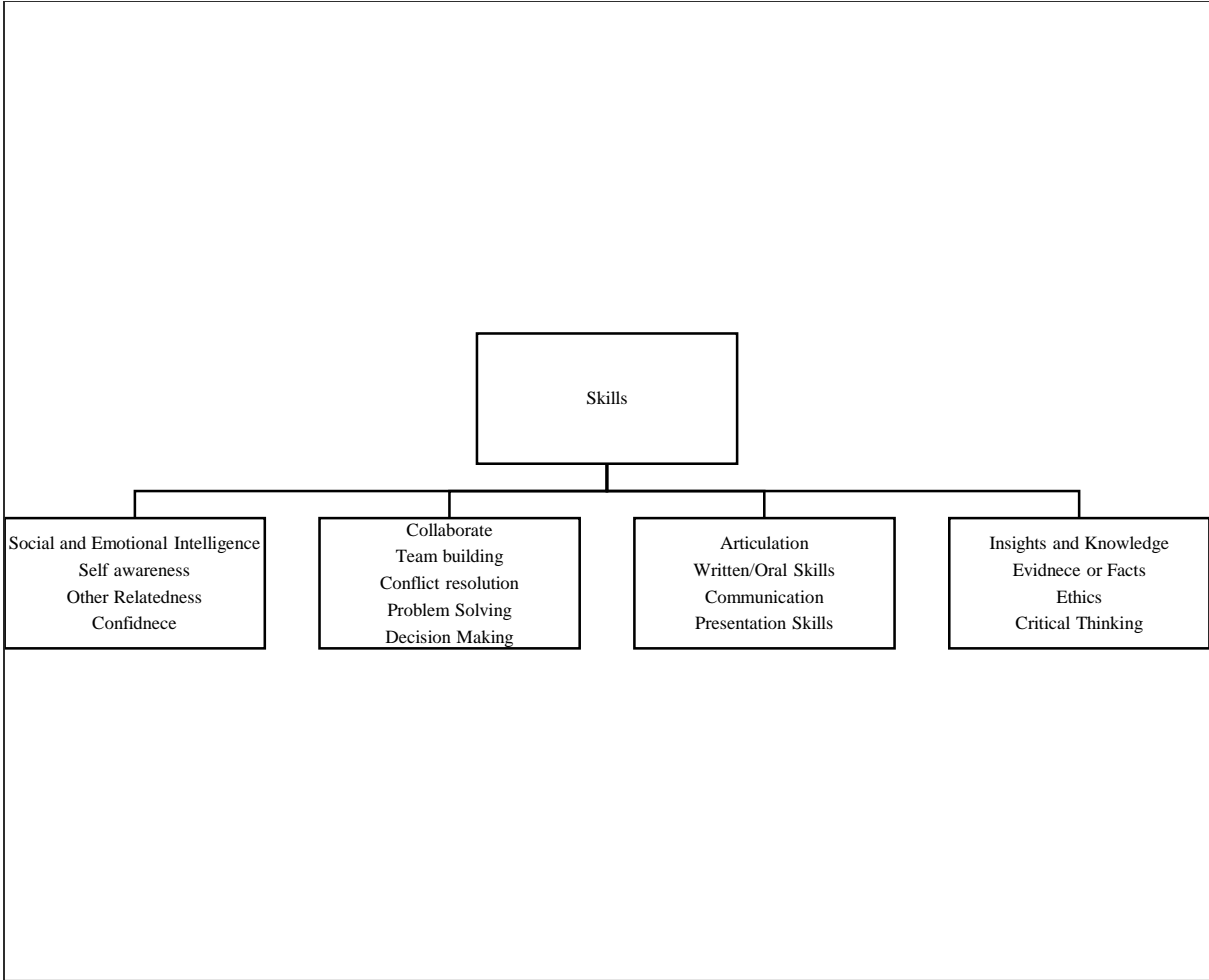
Figure 1 Leadership skills in the conceptual model

(from Redmond and Dolan, 2016, p. 4)

Emotional resonance with others is an effective indication of social and emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, as conceived by this model, involves self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Leaders, according to Redmond and Dolan (2016), need to spend time on personally developing and raising awareness of how to interact effectively with others. Collaboration is a fair partnership and youth leadership development involves inculcation of these skills at all stages of group dynamics. A leader sensitive to the obstacles in enabling different personalities to work together as a team is an effective youth leader, as per this model. Articulation involves sharing support to elicit good communication, both verbal and non-verbal. As individual leaders practice their communication skills, neural research suggests early training can impact confidence (Begley, 2000 in Redmond and Dolan, 2016). Knowledge is at the core of effective leadership, within which the leader must invoke ethical frames of reference. Ethical youth leaders model actions on solid ethical principles central to establishing a bond of trust with followers. An equally critical consideration for youth leadership development is the environment. The ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner emphasizes environmental context in which development takes place. In this model, the environmental conditions conducive to youth leadership development focus on building genuine opportunities for leaders and mentoring youth across the leadership journey. In this context, Redmond and Dolan (2016) emphasize participation of youth in leadership initiatives must be genuine, as opposed to being tokenistic (See Figure 2).
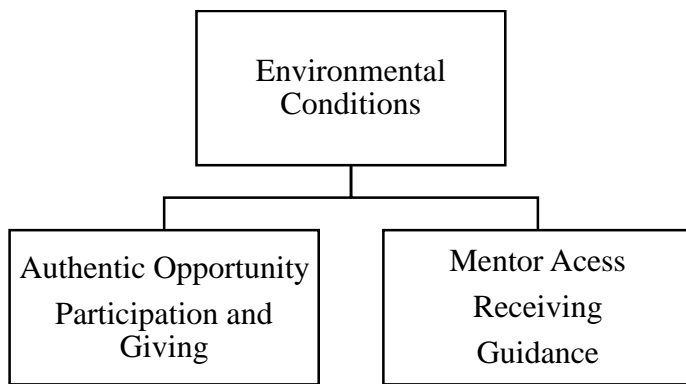
Figure 2 Environmental Conditions in the Youth Leadership Development Conceptual Model

(from Redmond and Dolan, 2016, p. 6).

As can be observed, environmental conditions also emphasize receipt of guidance from mentors to enable young people to overcome challenges and experience inspiration to continue on the path. Redmond and Dolan (2016) reiterate that a component of mentoring is the receiving of necessary help, advice and support.

A final component of the model is action and it involves dual sub-components namely motivation and mastery. Motivating the team to achieve the goal requires leaders to stimulate follower interest. For this, the model emphasizes the need for a role model and a sense of purpose to initiate goal driven, motivated behavior by team members under a youth leader (See Figure 3). Additionally, mastery involves persistence, reflection and commitment, In this regard, Coyle (2009, as cited in Redmond and Dolan, 2016) highlights the need for deep practice to enable skill set mastery and how this entails a sense of proficiency in critical reflection.

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │     Action      │
                    │                 │
                    └────────┬────────┘
              ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
    ┌─────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────┐
    │    Mastery      │          │   Motivation    │
    │   Persistence   │          │   Role Model    │
    │   Reflection    │          │    Purpose      │
    │   Committment   │          │                 │
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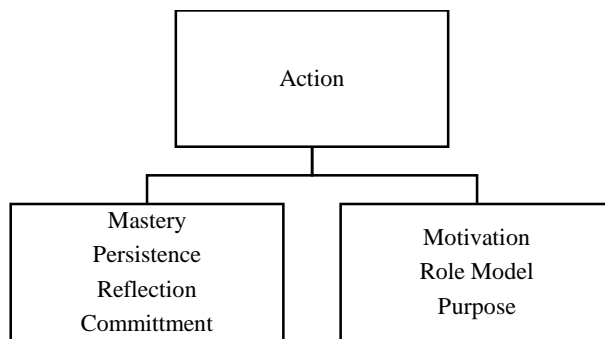
Figure 3 Commitment to action

(from Redmond and Dolan, 2016, p. 7)

Figure 4 Youth leadership development conceptual model

(from Redmond and Dolan, 2016, p. 9)

The model holds that at skills, environmental condition and action levels, youth leaders will engage in programs to achieve following goals (see Table 1).

Table 1: Youth Leadership Development Goals as per the Model

Level	Goals and Outcomes
Skills level	Clarification and personal development
	Work on problem solving in systematic and creative manner
	Demonstrate key communication skills such as listening and presenting
	Develop critical thinking abilities in the face of challenges
Environmental Conditions	Research issues at local, national and global scales
	Participate in, organize and plan team projects
	Access support from facilitator and mentor when needed
Action level	Develop clear visions of leadership achievement goal
	Develop negotiation skills for motivating followers
	Plan, develop and implement individual based, community action projects

Application of the youth leadership model is widespread in education, youth development, youth action and allied fields.

2.3.1 Youth leadership: Application in Educational Settings

This formal and comprehensive model of youth leadership development is emerging as a comprehensive framework in educational settings (Seemiller, 2018). The global community has established the need for effective coverage of childhood care and education services. As such, youth leaders are important agents of social awareness, transformation and community mobilization (Ponguta, Rasheed, Reyes, and Yousafzai, 2018; Seemiller, 2018). Exemplary youth leadership programs outline the skills, environmental conditions and actions needed to promote effective leadership skills among students, as envisioned by Redmond and Dolan (2014 as cited in Ponguta et al., 2018). Programmatic suggestions to maximize program influence include adherence to programmatic design and contextual considerations as well as maximization of the quality of the program (Ponguta et al., 2018). Thus, the youth leadership development conceptual model has far-reaching implications for school leadership and the inculcation of leadership skills

in students. Taking this model into school's everyday life, school principals and teachers can promote youth leadership by providing opportunities in curriculum development to practice the skill set in this framework. For example, Curran and Wexler, (2017) argues that the sets of values, behaviors and patterns that are learned during youth development are reflected and practiced later in leadership. Therefore, he suggested a proactive approach to enhance and train youths to acquire leadership skills through teamwork activities, decision making, using student's voice and getting involved in community service activities (Wu and Lin, 2016 and Zimmerman., et al, 2018).

2.3.2 Youth Leadership Development Conceptual Model in the International Context

The role of the model in assessing, monitoring and evaluating youth leadership potential and stressing the need for the correct environmental conditions, capable mentors and genuine opportunities is critical to consider (Sapaprot et al., 2018). Research has identified the effects of pedagogical and principal leadership on student leadership at secondary schools, as well (Bashir and Afzal, 2019) and the role of youth leadership in impacting the emergence of student leaders as future change agents through effective collaborations (Hanmore-Cawley and Scharf, 2018). Engaging youth leaders through mentors such as teachers and principals serve as a basis for effective leadership at schools (Attard and Holmes, 2019; Brady and Redmond, 2017; Cansoy, 2017; Leigh et al., 2017). Therefore, the youth leadership development conceptual model has wide range of applications across different educational settings and programs on an international scale. In the Gulf and UAE context, as well, student leadership is a growing focal area for educational reform.

2.3.3 Youth Leadership Development Conceptual Model in Gulf/UAE Context

The empowerment of student leaders is primarily the key focus of educational reforms in UAE and other Gulf countries. The objective of such reforms is to contribute towards educational leadership among UAE students, especially female students who are supported in leadership roles at school levels due to the reform initiated by the UAE educational systems (Al Naqbi and Samier, 2020; Alnajjar, Nassar, Dodeen, Daiban, and Darweesh). The UAE values leadership education

and the development of students as future leaders of the country (Anadol and Behery, 2020; Badri, 2019; Moneva and Pedrano, 2020; Thabet, 2018). Although no direct research has examined the role of Redmond and Dolan's (2016) youth leadership development conceptual model in UAE or other Gulf nations, the value ascribed to youth leadership and the role played by mentors such as principals leadership style in influencing student leadership is well documented (Akudo, 2020; Albugami, 2020; Alhosani, Singh, and Al Nahyan, 2017; Alkutich, 2017; Baroudi and Hojeij, 2018; Ibrahim and Mahmoud, 2017; ISERI, 2019; Kipng'etich, 2017; Litz, Juma, and Carroll, 2016; Madden, 2019; Tamam et al., 2020; Tuffaha, 2020).

2.4 Emotional Intelligence Theory

In 1990, Salovey and Mayer presented the framework for the emotional intelligence theory. The authors originally conceived of emotional intelligence as a subset of a broader theme of social intelligence. Their theory of emotional intelligence created the current conceptions of emotional intelligence and emotional leadership, paving the way for decades of scientific research, theory, scholarship, research development, critical appraisals, controversies and critiques on emotional intelligence (McCleskey, 2014). According to Mayer and Salovey (1997), a four-branched model of emotional intelligence was proposed, whereby emotional intelligence was characterized as the ability to engage in emotional perception, besides accessing and generating emotions to assist thought, to understand emotional knowledge and emotions and to regulate emotional, as well as intellectual growth reflectively (Gardner and Stough, 2002). The ability model of emotional intelligence, therefore, adopted a 4-pronged approach, namely identifying emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions. Although not intended as a theory of leadership originally, the model was found to be applicable because of the valuable insights it offered leadership competencies earlier not examined.

For examining leadership and emotional intelligence relationships, the distinction between management and leadership is the focal point of research. According to Gardner and Stough (2002), the capacity of leaders to be aware of their feelings and emotions allows accurate identification of emotions of individual and group followers, identifying emotions accurately and use emotions to motivate and understand followers.

The emotional intelligence theory and the ability model, particularly, focuses on emotional leadership (Caruso et al., 2002). Leaders high on emotional intelligence, according to Caruso et al. (2002), excel at decision making, planning and generating ideas by considering multiple viewpoints. They generate enthusiasm for projects by motivating and energizing themselves and followers. EI theorists and researchers have, therefore, defined emotional leadership in terms of embracing the emotional side of leadership (Caruso et al., 2002). Successful leadership, therefore, involves the use of emotions, as per this model. Understanding emotions provides the leader with the capacity to understand what determines and influences a follower's behavior. Global abilities such as emotional intelligence play a role in effective leadership (Caruso et al., 2002; McCleskey, 2014).

The ability model of emotional intelligence defines EI as inclusive of 4 distinct types of abilities namely emotional perception, use of emotion, comprehension of emotion and emotional management (Caruso et al., 2002). The model assumes the concept that EI incorporates purposeful mental processes and can be enhanced via training. Use of emotion is viewed pragmatically. The 4 branches or ability areas involve using emotions for perception, facilitation of thought, understanding and management. According to Caruso et al. (2002), the abilities span emotional perception to management, and ensure each ability aligns with a different aspect of personality. Perception and use of emotion to facilitate thought for example, is associated with informational processing. On the other hand, goal setting and emotional management align with emotional leadership.

2.4.1 Emotional Intelligence Theory: Main Features and Applications

Each branch of emotional intelligence comprises skills that move from basic to more advanced ones. Emotional perception, for example, involves being able to assess emotions in non-verbal and emotional expressions of followers or team members. The ability to use emotions to aid thinking is associated with informational decision making. Emotional understanding includes the ability to be aware and analyze emotions over a span of time, and label or differentiate between emotions. Self-knowledge, social awareness and emotional self-management form the basis of the fourth ability. According to Mayer and Salovey (1995), emotional intelligence theory also assumes

emotional responses are consistent or inconsistent with beliefs about emotions (Mayer and Salovey, 1995). Therefore, emotional intelligence is associated with higher leadership self-efficacy and self-leadership (Mullen, Limberg, Tuazon, and Romagnolo, 2019). The importance of EI has been highlighted as an important contributor in the field of leadership, especially educational leadership (Berkovich and Eyal, 2020; Wirawan, Tamar, and Bellani, 2019).

2.4.2 Application of in Educational Settings

Emotional intelligence has been widely applied in the field of educational leadership (Berkovich and Eyal, 2020; Chen and Guo, 2020; Khany, 2019; Setyowati, Rharjo, and Utomo, 2019; Shen, Yang, Lin, and Chang, 2019; Singh, 2020). Meta-analytic reviews and research studies have examined the role of EI in predicting the leadership trait among head administrators and principals and the influence on developing social and emotional skills in students as part of emotional leadership skills (Gutiérrez-Cobo et al., 2019; Hamid, Suriansyah, and Ngadimun, 2019; Harris, Jones, Ismail, and Nguyen, 2019; Hoffmann, Brackett, Bailey, and Willner, 2020; MacCann et al., 2020). These studies indicated a positive link between emotional intelligence to different life aspects, including well-being, academic progress and pro-social behaviors among students. These skill sets form the grounding level of youth leadership model as presented by Redmond and Dolan (2016) (see figure 2.4).

2.5 Conclusion

In this literature review, we presented an overview of leadership theories focusing on aspects of transforming leadership (Burns 1978). Principals who adopt transformative leadership approach inspire followers to achieve their personal goals as it links to the organizational goal (Shields, 2017). One of the most important aspects of the educational context in UAE is to prepare the youth in schools to assume global skills (Litz and Scott, 2017). As proposed by Redmond and Dolan (2016) youth leadership model, students can build their skills and competences in leadership when they are provided with the proper culture to practice their skills safely (Redmond and Dolan, 2016). When they are provided by a clear vision and direction (Kouzes and Posner, 2018). Emotional intelligence theory provides a framework for both principals and students to access their emotions

and to successfully link it with higher leadership self-efficacy and self-leadership (Mullen, Limberg, Tuazon, and Romagnolo, 2019).

These three theories and the proposed framework will be applied throughout this study to explore the possible link between transformative leadership and student leadership in the UAE context in one of the private schools in Sharjah. The review of the leadership theory will assist in answering questions number one and four of this research study. While the youth leadership theory will assist in answering questions number two and three. Emotional intelligence theory will assist in answering question five of this research study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the research methodology of this research study. Research methodology involves the utilization of methods for data analysis and the conventions associated with ensuring scientific, theoretical rigor for comprehensive data collection, detailed analysis and ample researcher transparency (Frey, 2018; McCrudden, Marchand, and Schutz, 2019). The aim of research methodology is to systematize research to answer the research questions, meet research objectives and explore critical research domains (Frey, 2018; Johnson and Christensen, 2019; McCrudden et al., 2019). The research methodology utilized for the present study will focus on the exploratory approach. The exploratory method of research involves a complex process, from making observations, to studying patterns and then drawing tentative conclusions or findings from observations based on patterns observed (Johnson and Christensen, 2019; McCrudden et al., 2019). The exploratory method commences with a particular data set or observation and aims at moving from data to patterns, and, eventually, theory, and it focuses on generating theories following the logic linked to discovery (Frey, 2018; Johnson and Christensen, 2019)

The main aim of the study is to understand/identify the principal leadership practices that promote student leadership abilities. Therefore, this study will adopt an exploratory approach. Using qualitative data will generate rich data that can guide this research study. The research methodology will implement the movement from observation and data to descriptions and patterns, forming the basis of theory building and theory-generation (Frey, 2018; Johnson and Christensen, 2019; McCrudden et al., 2019). This methodology can be seen as cyclical and iterative, whereby data is collected and analyzed in successive stages, whereby key educational issues pertaining to principal's leadership style and student leadership will be explored traversing the complete research cycle while emphasizing key aspects of the research cycle (Frey, 2018; Johnson and Christensen, 2019; Mertler, 2018)(see Figure 3.1):
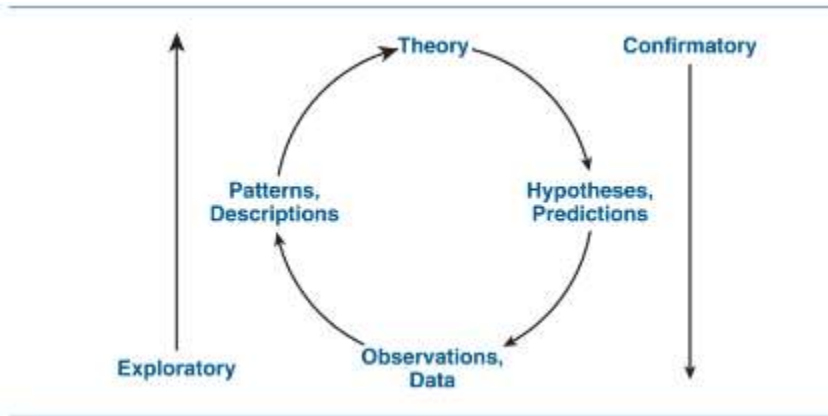
Figure 5 The research cycle

(Johnson and Christensen, 2019)

Thus, qualitative research methods in educational research offer rich information into key areas being explored by the researcher.

3.2 Research Design

The key goal of research is to find answers to research questions in a methodical and analytical manner and for this reason, the present study utilizes a qualitative research design. While qualitative research designs are rooted in empiricism, the present study also focuses on an approach that relies on an interpretive framework and a naturalistic perspective, drawing on multiple methods of inquiry, namely in-depth interviews, observation and document analysis. Considerable research scholarship in the field of principal leadership styles has utilized qualitative research design (Cieminski, 2018; Huggins, Klar, Hammonds, and Buskey, 2016; Lyons, Brasof, and Baron, 2020; Sanders, 2018; Sezgin and Er, 2016). Additionally, research on student and school leadership, as well as school leadership programs has also entailed the utilization of qualitative research design and methodology (Burstein and Kohn, 2017; Nelson, 2019).

The in-depth interview data, observation and document analysis will focus on thematic emergence to identify skills, practices and behaviors that principals use to promote students' leadership. The value of this research approach, over quantitative approach, is to allow storytelling and sharing examples which might not be clear in surveys and other quantitative tools. Merriam (2009) and

Glesne (2011) argues that researchers use this method when they need to understand the complexity of meaning developed by participants in their social context.

Research studies have utilized qualitative, multiple-case study designs to understand conditions impacting principal leadership strategies. Sanders (2018), for instance, examined the principal leadership practices in schools utilizing the constructivist approach and qualitative research design. The researcher used semi-structured interviews, school observations, and document review, whereby data source and method triangulation served to generate a deeper understanding of principal's leadership styles and practices, in relation to stakeholder interaction and engagement, building collaborative educational environments and address school conflicts, influencing trust levels within the school and inculcating school leadership (Sanders, 2018). The study underscores the need for a qualitative research design critical for a nuanced understanding of principal leadership styles and their impact on school and student leadership.

In the UAE context, researchers have deployed qualitative research designs in studies on school, principals, as well as student leadership. For example, the case study approach was utilized by Blaik-Hourani and Litz (2019) in the UAE context to study the alignment of professional development, principal performance standards and school self-evaluation. Likewise, a qualitative research design was also used by researchers to offer in-depth analysis and influence of professional development on principal leadership styles and how this influences student leaders (Tuffaha, 2020). Additionally, Blaik-Hourani et al. (2020) explored the emotional intelligence school leaders displayed across varied dimensions such as management of emotions, building of self-awareness, focusing on motivation, empathy and social skills. A qualitative research methodology was employed, where data was elicited from school leaders and managers using interactive, participatory data collection through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to reveal Abu Dhabi educational leaders' use of and display of emotional intelligence attributes in alignment with professional responsibilities and roles. The role of principal leadership styles in promoting student leadership has been explored in the context of collaborative school culture, in the UAE schools as well as utilizing qualitative interviews (Ibrahim, 2020).

Emergence of student leadership research, specifically centered around social identities and live experiences, has also utilized qualitative research methodology. Haber-Curran and Tapia-Fuselier (2020) explored leadership among Latina student leaders and the influences that shaped their approach to leadership using a qualitative research design. Similarly, Lyons and colleagues (2020) used exploratory research for developing and testing scales on student leadership capacity building using focus groups and interviews (Lyons et al., 2020). Researchers have also examined how leadership in schools initiates school reforms, using case study research and qualitative comparative analysis, utilizing exploratory qualitative research designs (Glesne, 2011). Therefore, qualitative research designs have been successfully utilized for in-depth, detailed research that reflects the worldview of research participants effectively and yields comprehensive data, examining the influence of school leaders on student leadership in the context of principal leadership styles and yielding rich insights into how student leaders can be nurtured.

3.3 Research Site:

Since this research is qualitative in nature, the focus will be on the depth of information provided. Creswell (2011) argues that in qualitative research, the sample size should be limited to allow for more in-depth analysis. The focus of this study will be on one school in Sharjah. The name of the school will be anonymous to provide protection for the participants. Participants will be purposefully selected according to a specific criterion which will be further explored in the following section.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

In order to answer research questions, three sources of data were employed. In-depth interview, document analysis and observation.

3.4.1 In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted among students (N=3), lead teachers (N=3), vice principal (N=1) and principal (N=1) to explore the influence of principal's leadership style on student leadership in a Sharjah-based private school in the UAE, in the present research study. The sampling method used was purposive sampling. The rationale for using in-depth interviews as a method of data collection reflect on the value of the interview method as a means of eliciting rich, detailed qualitative data that assists in meaning-making and drawing relevant conclusions with theoretical and practical implications for studying principal as well as student leadership styles and exploring the interface between them.

In-depth interviews permit researches to examine the topic under study from the personal perspective of interview respondents (Morris, 2015). It is a powerful means of gathering data and a common qualitative method, as a consequence of this. According to Morris (2015), it involves researchers asking questions from the interviewee and eliciting data from the respondent. In-depth interviewing is a highly effective method of accessing motives, experiences, interpretations and perceptions of research participants in educational research. In-depth interviews, for this reason, are also known as intensive interviews, involving active asking and listening and a collaboration between interviewer/researcher and respondents (Rutakumwa et al., 2020; Wilson, Onwuegbuzie, and Manning, 2016). As in-depth interviews are issue oriented, they focus on a particular area of research, eliciting rich qualitative data in the process (Morris, 2015; Rutakumwa et al., 2020; Wilson et al., 2016). In this context, open-ended interviews explore views or reality, permitting researchers to generate theory and complementing other methods of data collection effectively, using an interview guide comprising topical areas and questions to determine the line of inquiry and guide the research. Therefore, the researchers attempt to form a meaning-making partnership based on in-depth interview responses with the interviewee (Guthrie, 2020; Marvasti and Tanner, 2020; Tavory, 2020). Consequently, the method of data collection is well suited to educational research as it will allow participants to tell their stories and will allow for clarification and follow up questions that will lead to more enriched data. This will help in answering the research objectives and identifying possible principals' practices that promote student leadership.

In-depth interviews have been used to assess inculcation of leadership skills in educational institutions (Razak, Ab Jalil, and Ismail, 2019), including examining leadership practices among stakeholder school leaders in schools (Scott and Halkias, 2016). Researchers have also examined professional development for school leadership using in-depth interviews (Mero-Jaffe and Altarac, 2020). Therefore, in the international, as well as regional and UAE context, studies on educational leadership utilizing in-depth interviews as data collection tools abound (Alsaleh, 2019; Alyami and Floyd, 2019; Anadol and Behery, 2020; Llorent-Bedmar, Cobano-Delgado, and Navarro-Granados, 2019; Miqawati, 2019; Rina, 2019; Ronen, 2019). In-depth interviews have been conducted as per specific protocols to examine challenges and opportunities for female student leaders in Saudi educational institutions as well (Abalkhail, 2017; Alotaibi, 2020; Hammad and Hallinger, 2017; Oplatka and Arar, 2017). In-depth interviews have also been used as a leadership assessment tool in educational institutions in educational research studies based in Bahrain (Aldulaimi and Abdeldayem, 2019). In the UAE context, leadership styles of principals and students have also been explored using in-depth interviews (Ali, 2018; AlShehhi and Alzouebi, 2020; Bock and Schulze, 2016; Litz and Scott, 2017; O'Sullivan, 2017).

3.4.2 Observations

The present study also utilized the observational method as a means of drawing conclusions about principal leadership styles and nurturing student leadership skills. Students (N=3) and teachers (N=3) were observed for the entire duration of the study and assessed with respect to key criteria. The criteria that is used will be based on youth leadership model presented by Redmond and Dolan (2016). The venue that is used for this observation is an activity that the school uses as part of developing leadership skills in the students. The criteria for observation are presented in the table 2 below.

Table 2 Criteria for field observation

Criteria	Student	Teacher
Confidence	√	
Team building	√	√
Conflict resolution	√	
Problem solving	√	√
Decision making	√	√
Written and oral skills	√	
Communication	√	
Presentation skills	√	√
Evidence or facts	√	√
Ethics		√
Critical thinking	√	√

The above table is a guideline to focus observation. Some of these elements will be observed from a students' perspective. During the event, the researcher will use the guideline to record the teachers' and the principal's practices that may promote the elements of youth leadership in the table.

Furthermore, the principal will be observed based on Burn's elements of transformational leadership to understand the practices that may support student's leadership. These elements are presented in the below table.

Table 3 Elements of Transformational Leadership for field observation

Criteria	Principal's practices
Elevating effect	
Raising self-esteem	
Focus on end value	
Modelling high expectations	
Culture Building	
Vision/shared goals	
Individual support	

The method of selection of the sample was purposive or non-probability sampling. According to Klar and Leeper (2019), purposive sampling can be thought of as a convenience sampling subset, where respondents are subjectively selected. The viability of the purposive sampling technique for research has been amply demonstrated (Etikan and Bala, 2017; Klar and Leeper, 2019; Creswell, 2013; Sharma, 2017). According to Sharma (2017), purposive sampling provides the ability to make generalizations from samples studied, across theoretical, logical and analytic types of

conclusions. Qualitative research designs utilizing purposive sampling offer the researcher the ability to exercise his judgement while selecting the sample. Therefore, purposive sampling is also referred to as subjective/judgmental or selective sampling as a result of this (Etikan and Bala, 2017; Sharma, 2017). This form of sampling requires a selection of subjects using an inclusion criteria and given the convenience and parsimony it offers, the research sampling method is widely used in educational research (Arafat and Mulyadi, 2020; Esia-Donkoh, 2019; Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016; Kitur, Choge, and Tanui, 2020; Klar and Leeper, 2019; Tjabolo and Otaya, 2019)

Inclusion criteria for teachers selected for the study were as follows: teachers selected for the observational research must have had 3-5 years of work experience, worked in the same school for a minimum of 3 years and been actively involved in extra-curricular activities as well as lesson planning, pedagogy and academic duties and responsibilities as mandated by the school. Inclusion criteria for students was as follows: students selected for the research should have studied in the school for at least three years.

Observation is used to study behavior in a natural environment, carried out by the researcher who records perceptible or sensory information through record-collection, which serves as a means of collecting evidence (Bell, Dobbelaer, Klette, and Visscher, 2019; Ryan, 2019). Consequently, classroom observation has frequently been utilized as a method of data collection, and is an essential means of assessing snapshots of classroom behaviors and provide the basis for making inferences about educational leadership in schools (O'Leary, 2020; Parra and Hernández, 2019; Vrikki et al., 2019). The observational method can be effectively utilized to specify criteria on the basis of which leadership behaviors, practices and skills in relation to students and principals can be assessed in a classroom context (Bell et al., 2019; Liu, Bell, Jones, and McCaffrey, 2019; Roegman and Woulfin, 2019). Consequently, observation has emerged as a pivotal tool for assuring, measuring and enhancing professional skills as well as knowledge bases regarding critical issues and topics being examined in educational research (O'Leary, 2020).

Parents, policy makers and teachers alike have emphasized how school leadership impacts student leadership styles and observational research can be a value-added measure of how the quality of school leadership and principal's leadership style influence student leadership (Daniëls,

Hondeghem, and Dochy, 2019; Farchi and Tubin, 2019; Leithwood, Sun, and Schumacker, 2020; Özdemir, 2020; Robinson and Gray, 2019; Uğur and Koç, 2019; Webb and Welsh, 2019). Observational methods of research hold value for the present study, specifically, and educational research, in general, because of the focus on observing students and teachers against the context of the classroom to infer valuable data about educational themes and topics under study.

3.4.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a qualitative method widely used alongside interviews and observations to offer a systematic method for eliciting meaning from documentation or evidence whereby the interpretation is reflexive, as well as recursive, as the researcher moves across the steps of research from concept evolution, to sampling, data collection and analysis, and interpretation (Mackieson, Shlonsky, and Connolly, 2019; Natow, 2020; Wood, Sebar, and Vecchio, 2020). Underlying meanings, themes and patterns can, therefore, be unearthed and document analysis serves as a basis for systematic process that involves reflective reasoning through methods of analysis such as thematic analysis (Natow, 2020; Wood et al., 2020). In this context, researchers' approach to document analysis is influenced by ontological and epistemological world views. This method contributes to credibility and coherence of the research study by establishing a congruence between researcher worldviews, research aims, the type and nature of documents under investigation and analysis undertaken. Document analysis technique, which is applicable and relevant for the present research study has advantages such as no requirement for interaction with external agents, easy access to relevant documents, wide time period for the study, easy access to large sample size, qualified resources, authentic resource sand low cost method of research, which comprises reaching and examining as well as understanding the originality of the documents and analyzing them (Koyuncu and Kılıç, 2019; Mackieson et al., 2019). Therefore, documents analysis is a common method for data collection in educational research (Mkandawire, 2019). As qualitative data covers an analysis of broad types of data across a spectrum utilizing the exploratory perspective, document analysis serves as a means of eliciting important elements in the research

process such as objectivity and serves as a value-added measure for analyzing and assessing the topics under consideration (Mihas, 2019).

The research study, therefore, utilized school leadership programs presented in the school development plan SDP, documents detailing aims, activities and methods of assessment used in the school in relation to Redmond and Dolan (2016) youth leadership model presented in table 2. It will also provide analysis to the UAE inspection framework that is adopted by the Sharjah Education Council against the model presented in table 2.

3.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was the data analysis method utilized for analyzing the data collected in the present research study. Qualitative design comprises various methods of data collection. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research approach commonly used by researchers which supports researchers to answer research questions and adhere to analytical requirements, while unearthing quality findings (Finkelstein, Sharma, and Furlonger, 2019; Glesne, 2011) Thematic analysis serves as a qualitative method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data corpuses and requires the researcher to answer various questions regarding the research topic under study whereby the theme captures a salient aspect of data in patterned ways, irrespective of whether the theme captures the experiences of most individuals(Braun and Clarke, 2019a, 2019b, 2020; Sundler, Lindberg, Nilsson, and Palmér, 2019). This thematic analysis was conducted through abductive reasoning. Abductive reasoning draws inferences to the most plausible explanations and offers new insights based on deductive as well as inductive reasoning combined to draw out useful data about the process of analyzing and understanding research results (Żelechowska, Żyluk, and Urbański, 2020). Abductive reasoning can be inferred as a means of analyzing data distinct from induction as well as deduction, in that it is a form of reasoning that represents a combination or synthesis of the two and can be a basis for developing educational research findings that hold theoretical and practical relevance (Blaikie, 2018). Consequently, abductive reasoning can serve as a basis of integrating research findings (Coghlan and Shani, 2020). This serves as a reason why abductive reasoning is valuable as a research approach in educational

research (Dolgopolovas, Dagienė, Jasutė, and Jevsikova, 2019; Hwang et al., 2019; Moscoso, 2019).

Research studies that have utilized thematic analysis in educational leadership research abound (Finkelstein et al., 2019; Krishna et al., 2019). Research studies have also examined the relationship between school principals and leadership identity and authentic educational leadership and its impact on student leadership (Aldulaimi and Abdeldayem, 2020; Cruz-Gonzalez, Domingo Segovia, and Lucena Rodriguez, 2019; Tian and Huber, 2019). In Arabian-Gulf scholarship, as well, leadership challenges in the educational sector have been mapped utilizing thematic analysis (Blaik and Litz, 2019; Hammad, Samier, and Mohammed, 2020; Howard, 2020), especially in the UAE (AlWahaibi, 2020; Baroudi and David, 2020; Litz, Hourani, and Scott, 2020; Nasab, 2020).

3.6 Reliability and Trustworthiness

Triangulation was utilized as a means of ensuring research reliability and trustworthiness. While triangulation refers to multiple and varied methodological resources, there are numerous ways triangulation is achieved, from drawing from multiple data sources to using multiple methodologies (Johnston et al., 2020; Natow, 2020). Primarily, the researcher improves the reliability of qualitative data by gathering sources from different time periods, locations or perspectives. The researcher in the present study, therefore, focused on drawing data from diverse categories of research participants and various data sources. Multiple data collection methods and methodologies ensure that researchers employ more than one form of qualitative data procedure such as gathering data through interviews, documents and observations (Johnston et al., 2020; Natow, 2020). Additionally, the use of triangulation also involves using multiple data analysis techniques. Qualitative researchers use multiple approaches for analyzing data in this context (Natow, 2020). Therefore, both thematic analysis and an abductive approach were utilized whereby both inductive and deductive methods were used. Inductive methods involve drawing out data findings and concepts (Natow, 2020). On the other hand, deductive reasoning involves using data to test existing theories and concepts. Researchers can commence with inductive analysis by understanding themes emerging from data and then perform deductive analysis to locate additional data entailing constant comparison and thematic analysis (Natow, 2020). Therefore, multiple

triangulation techniques were used to boost the trustworthiness and reliability of the present research study, enhancing the value of the study by using diverse methods, multiple data sources and various data analysis techniques, serving to check inaccuracies and biases against utilizing a single data source, methods or analysis protocol.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research methodology that will be used in understanding leadership practices that promotes students' leadership. It will use three data sources to provide triangulation of evidence. The site and participant selection are also explained in this chapter. It is anticipated that by using this research method, the data collected will be rich and will yield information that will assist in understanding the possible link between the principal's leadership and student's leadership development.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction:

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings of this research study. Results will be presented based on the data collection method. Additionally, emerging themes will be discussed within this chapter. Later, results of the research data will be discussed in relation to the literature review in chapter two. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the main findings and emerging themes.

4.2. In-depth Interview Results

In total, eight in-depth interviews were conducted and analyzed to draw out and isolate key themes in relation to exploring the influence of principal's leadership styles on student leadership in a private Sharjah school. Each of these themes is extensively discussed and key notions regarding student leadership and the influence of principal leadership styles are explored in detail.

4.2.1 School Leadership Policy

The school leadership policy currently prevailing at the school is supportive of student leadership. In the interview, participants were asked about specific practices that the school has in place to support student's leadership. According to Student 1, the "current leadership policy in the school is completely supportive of the students" whereby "enough chances to show our skills and lead teams" are provided to the students. Student 2 surmised "our principal and school encourage us to grow as leaders. For example, I was nominated to coordinate and lead a festivity to celebrate the UAE National Day. I had a chance to lead a small team with my friend to organize and plan this event" Additionally, student 2 explains that they understand that the school's message is always communicated as 'excellence for all'. Therefore, they feel that the school's principal as well as management bring students to the point "where we are constantly striving for excellence". Student 3 reiterated that the current leadership policy at their school was "driven towards motivating student leaders" in that the students are "always motivated to think of team success as school leaders".

Likewise, during the teacher's interview, teachers explained that the principal always plans and promotes leadership opportunities for students. For example, according to Lead Teacher 1, teachers

are "encouraged to initiate student leadership in our classroom" and the "present school policy is to work towards nurturing and inculcating student leadership right from day one". Additionally, lead Teacher 2 supported this contention by talking about how "our principal and school management have always worked towards facilitating student leadership, through the current leadership policy in the school". According to Lead Teacher 2, "the focus has always been on catalyzing student leadership and giving the student body a chance to be heard in participative decision-making". Moreover, lead Teacher 3 focused on how "the current leadership policy in our school is geared towards nurturing student excellence and leadership". The Vice Principal also indicated the school is "constantly striving towards nurturing strong student leaders who are able to voice their opinions independently and express their emotions". The Principal stated that the focus of his role as a school management head has always been "to encourage and nurture student leadership" wherein "students are meant to be encouraged to display leadership skills and accelerate their capabilities in light of new challenges and opportunities for growth". The Principal also concurred that "in line with the Sharjah Education Council's emphasis on student leadership, the focus of the school policy is on building strong student leaders who can face diversity effectively through resilience building". These findings link to the foundation of youth leadership model presented by Redmond and Dolan (2016) as they explain that through successful implementation of the policy student's leadership is enhanced through 'learning by doing' where leadership skills are practiced in meaningful ways to influence the school (Kolb et al. 1971 as cited in Redmond and Dolan, 2016; Northouse, 2018).

4.2.2 School Leadership Culture

During the interview, participants were asked questions about support systems that they have in the school to promote students' leadership practices. Based on their responses it can be assumed that the school promotes active student leadership. According to Student 1,

> My school promotes student leaders actively" in that we are "always given a chance to express our thoughts and share our ideas.

Student explains:

Our school gives us a chance to thrive and succeed by building on student leadership skills. For example, it is a custom in our school to plan and organize TED-talks events, where we are divided into teams and we debate different topics. Each team will have a leader to mediate the discussion. The present school culture is associated with promotion of confidence-boosting and development. We're always encouraged to think ahead and face all our challenges through a school culture that promotes active collaboration with our partners. We feel that at the school we have a culture the promotes "openness and deeper understanding of student conflicts and issues. We follow the leadership opportunities given to us. We feel confident to raise our issues with any teacher to resolve any conflict.

Likewise, teachers reported on the positive school's culture. According to Lead Teacher 1

The School does promote student leadership, encouraging students to explore their leadership skills in the face of academic challenges, or out on the sports field or even in co-curricular activities. Or school's culture is deeply appreciative of student leaders and draws on an open, and accepting culture for students to share their thoughts and opinions

Lead Teacher 2 stated

The school promotes deep bonds of student leadership and builds on student creativity, innovation and capacity for in-depth thinking".

As per Lead Teacher 3

Our school focuses on building student leaders right from an early stage, whereby students are encouraged to think creatively and solve problems on their own, independently. The school's culture values student leadership practices, programs and strategies for empowering and equipping student leaders to thrive.

The Vice Principal also explains:

Our school plans for leadership opportunities at the beginning of the year. Events such as TED-talks, mini versions of United Nation talks and extra-curricular activity coordination. These programs, promote early stages of leadership as students practice decision making where they can approach problem-solving and independent thinking scenarios with self-confidence and the ability to partner teams effectively.

Furthermore, the principal explained that the school and his approach

We have always been oriented towards enabling our students to thrive as leaders, drawing on knowledge and practical experiences to solve key problems, come up with innovative solutions and think outside the box. We have many co-curricular activities and programs to nurture student leadership. Our approach is rooted in the value of an accepting school culture that encourages the individual students to thrive and develop into confident and capable leaders

The above indicates that the school's culture encourages student's leadership by providing opportunities to foster and practice small scale versions of international events that assist students in building and nurturing their leadership skills. Similar approaches of supportive school cultures were presented in the literature review (see Hitt and Tucker, 2015; Blaik Hourani and Litz, 2018).

4.2.3 Link Between Principal's Leadership Style and Student Leadership

When participants were asked how the principal supported their leadership practice, students explained that the principal has a unique style and that they feel they are learning a lot from him. Students have expressed that they feel that the principal is always pushing them to be outstanding and that they feel he is companionate. For example, Student 2 said,

Our principal shows us a good role model. He is kind, caring, compassionate and skilled. I feel I am personally learning a lot from our principal when I am organizing an event at the school, I make sure to include everyone in my committee. I feel like if all is on board, they will feel that they are special and cared for.

Likewise, teachers explained that the principal encourages them to be leaders, thinking out-side of the box and how he motivates them to be role-models for students. For example, lead Teacher 1 described:

> The principal encourages us to be creative teachers, approaching the issue of leadership from a student's perspective. He always encourages us to design and lead activities with students to ensure that we monitor their leadership and negotiation skills.

Similarly, lead Teacher 2 indicates:

> Our principal has a strong leadership style, seeking to influence student leadership through dynamism, serving as a catalyst for nurturing school and student leaders. He is a mon with a vision. We all know that he does not settle for less than excellence. He appreciates our efforts and always encourages us to push our limits to excel.

When asked about his leadership style, the principal explained:

> I like to encourage students to think for themselves. As a leader, I want our students to think rationally, cope with challenges and emerge stronger. Consequently, I focus on inculcating a spirit of dynamism and resilience in our students. I always tell my students that I care more about how they reach to the solution more than the task itself. I want them to work together to come resolve conflicts, think, design and take risks. We grow stronger every day.

In response to what extent a principal's leadership style should promote student leadership in a school, lead Teacher 2 explains

> Principal's leadership style should influence student leadership in distinct ways. Students can only be leaders with the right skills if they have a principal and school management that deals with problems effectively and models efficacious leadership behavior".

Lead Teacher 3 held that

> Dynamic, inspirational and charismatic principal leadership styles can bring out the best in students, enabling them to learn how to manage life's obstacles and benefit from each learning experience.

The Vice Principal stated,

> To me, educational leadership has always been about nurturing a school leadership team led by a dynamic and strong principal. Leadership traits of a principal can transform an entire school and help student leaders to find their voice. To stay focused on the school's vision and to be ambassadors of change in the school and the community.

The Principal also said that he considers

> To me. student leadership to be a foundation for the growth of the school as an organization that promotes academic and organizational excellence. Principal leadership styles can promote effective student leadership in diverse ways, from serving as a role model to promoting efficient leadership. Academics are important; however, leadership skills are life skills that prepare students and assists them in any situation in life. The school must foster opportunities to promote these skills in students.

Student 1 also indicated the school principal promotes collaboration of student leaders with teachers and parents:

> When changes are happening in the school, the principal holds a meeting with us as students' representatives. We also have parents' representatives. Together with teachers we brainstorm ideas on how to best apply a policy or a procedure or how to bring about a change to our schools' community. This way, we feel that we are heard and our voice actually matter.

The Lead Teacher 1 also indicated the principal

> We work towards collaboration with the students and teachers, and we are encouraged to form open partnerships with school leaders to express our thoughts and impact school policies. During the implementation of school policies, programs and practices are focused on creating dynamic

opportunities for student development and growth. Student leaders are encouraged to think and partner with teachers and parents for effective application of school.

The Vice Principal explained,

> Teachers, parents and student leaders are encouraged to work together at our school for ensuring fruitful and productive outcomes. We are always determined to foster student leadership to promote excellence in all spheres and are devoted to inculcating confidence in our students.

These findings correspond with the early review conducted in this study where researchers emphasized on the importance of modeling desired behaviors and promoting effective goals to support students' leadership (Arokiasamy et al., 2016; Nisar, Shahzad, and Rabica, 2020; Prelli, 2016; Tengi, Mansor, and Hashim, 2017).

4.2.4 Student Leadership Practices

During interviews, a strong theme emerged that talks about student leadership practices. For example, when asked about how daily classes go, students agreed that in every class they have the opportunity to collaborate, participate in peer feedback and engage in project-based learning. Students also explained that they have a mentoring program where they work to support one another in achieving classwork and homework. Student 2 indicated:

> The school has a system of student body and class monitors. Apart from that, students are encouraged to engage with the school teachers and promote skilled leadership.

Teachers agreed that the focus of their professional development has always been towards promoting students' leadership. Participants agreed that the school's pedagogy and practices revolve around systems such as prefects and class monitors, class presidents, student body representatives. and to provide students with the right to take decisions impacting their studies by choosing from different activities to match their styles of learning and by owning their classwork and homework. For example, lead Teacher 2 stated:

The school is oriented towards building strong student leadership skills that foster efficient problem solving in our students. We have a system of class and student body representatives as well. Mentoring activities, participation in academic, sports and extra-curricular activities form the core of an engaged student leader.

Additionally, the school's leaders stated that student leadership practices are deeply valued and embedded in the culture and traditions of our school. From knowledge acquisition to application, development of educational skills and management of school activities form the core of student leadership practices promoting responsible prefects and student body leaders. The principal stated:

Student leadership practices are centered around the multifaceted inculcation of leadership skills and capabilities, promoting self-confidence, initiative building and promotion of student capabilities such as intelligence, innovation and discipline.

The above argument suggests that some elements of the youth leadership model proposed by (Redmond and Dolan, 2016) is being practiced at the school, such as problem solving, critical thinking, raising self-confidence and innovation skills. It could be argued that both the principal's leadership style and the school's culture play a significant role on promoting student's leadership.

4.2.5 Barriers and Facilitators for Promoting Student Leadership

In regards to student leadership challenges, student participants reported that they sometimes feel that rules and regulations may hinder their leadership practices. Additionally, students felt that sometimes peer pressure may stress their ability to fully take an initiative in leadership. For example, student 3 said,

I personally face challenge as a school prefect. Sometimes I feel like my friends tend to speak things when I am not around as I was told I might tell the teachers more information than I should. This sometimes may prevent me from sharing ideas in meeting with senior leaders.

Additionally, teachers reported that sometimes the balance between academics and extracurricular activities might put extra load and pressure on teachers that would like to suggest and organize

more opportunities to promote leadership programs. due to peer pressure and inability to overcome challenges in the classroom. As a school student leader, it is hard to adjust to cultural differences and disparities in the classroom as well". Lead Teacher 1 Moreover, teachers expressed that while students have amble chances to take on leadership roles at the school, there are limited venues for students to take on leadership opportunities across different schools nationally because of policy restrictions that requires multiple approvals before organizing events. For example, lead teacher 3 explains,

> Barriers inherent in promoting student leadership stem from too many regulations and a focus on systemic constraints. There are limited avenues for leadership for regular students and we tend to focus on school leaders and educational regulations excessively. Too many restrictions and limitations placed on scope for student development. Programs for student leadership are limited in their coverage and intent. The focus is on inculcation of only basic leadership skills, without focusing on development of innate capabilities and the student leadership program offers limited avenues for student development".

School leaders explained that issues inhabiting students' leadership programs stems from lack of initiative building right at early stages of the leadership program. They elaborate that there is a need to work on more effective ways to equip and empower our students. In his interview the Principal said,

> I feel there should be no barriers to promoting student leaders in the school. If policies can be reviewed on a national level, we could eliminate student leadership barriers.

Moreover, student participants explained that sometimes they feel they are very stressed to manage their study, classwork and home work with managing and leading extracurricular activities. This is, in their opinion, is intensified during national examination period. They expressed that these examinations use up a lot of their time in preparation that they miss on their leadership programs. Additionally, teachers explained that the curriculum pace and demands may sometimes hinder the quality of leadership initiatives that they try to create in the class as team building activities, collaboration and critical thinking questions. Teachers expressed that they feel stressed when they need to finish the syllabus. School leaders also expressed that there is a demand from central

authorities to meet curriculum delivery deadlines which may overcome any school initiative that they have planned. The school principal explained,

> In our leadership at the school, we plan all of our events carefully to meet all the national agenda deadlines. However, on occasions, we get surprises that we have to address like a new test or a national test that the school has to take to align with the national agenda. This may hinder our leadership programs as we have to delay it and/or sometimes cancel them. We strive to re-create these opportunities because we want our students to succeed.

These findings are supported by the literature review provided in chapter two of this study where Fulton, Greene, Hartwigh, Blalock and Haiyasoso (2019) and Fulton (2017) argued that students' leadership is affected by bias perceptions and understanding about leadership practices as well as peer pressure from the same student cohort towards students' leadership (Vega, Moore and Miranda, 2015).

4.3 Observational Analysis

Based on observational field notes, students appeared to be taking initiative and demonstrating ample leadership skills, traits and abilities. Elements of critical thinking and problem solving were also evident through classroom discussions and event coordination. During the TED-talk initiative, students were divided to teams and they were collaborating in the talk. Each team had a leader and each team member had a specific role to take in the debate. Teams were taking turns and supporting their discussions with evidence while making their points clear. These practices suggest high levels of critical thinking abilities. Presentation, communication and oral skills were clearly advanced during the talk. Students spoke using proper English almost through all of this event. Moreover, teachers co-organizing the initiative were facilitating the discussion redirecting students and offering suggestions to support their discussions. Teachers were also providing students with the proper tools to strengthen their debates by guiding students to their proper search engines. It is important to note that teachers were only facilitators in this event, while students took the full lead to organize, mediate and conduct the event. Senior leaders were also in attendance offering support for both students and leaders. Ensuring that students are fully participating in the event. Teams

were taking turns being very respectful to each other's point of view. During the event, there was a high sense of excitement and enthusiasm which was redirected and corrected when and if needed by both teachers and senior leaders to ensure the integrity and high ethics of the discussion. The principal's presence was observed and appreciated as both facilitator and mediator of the event. Towards inculcation at the end of the event, the principal addressed all participants contemplating their efforts and high level of professionalism while honoring the winning teams.

The observational analysis yielded important insights about student leadership practices, student leadership policies, school leadership culture and the association between teaching and learning styles, when it came to inculcation of student leadership skills. The individual students acquired deeper insights into how to apply leadership principles and concepts in practice, taking on the challenge of building their confidence and self-esteem and responding to academic problems as well as co-curricular activity management with efficacy and effectiveness.

Similar to the in-depth interviews, the evidence from field observation suggests that the school's policy is supportive of students' leadership by providing opportunities to students to practice problem solving and critical thinking while forming teams to achieve an overall task. It is also evident that the principal's presence and support of this event models high expectations and extreme level of professionalism, evident by the end ceremony and end of event celebration. Moreover, having teachers as facilitators at the event suggests that the school's culture is supportive of students' leadership practices.

4.4 Document Analysis

The school uses the UAE inspection framework to set their school's leadership policy. The framework provides a comprehensive approach to support students' leadership. It aligns with Redmond and Dolan (2016) model for youth leadership. For example, the document explains that for a school to be marked as 'outstanding' on this framework, students should:

Show consistently that they are innovative. They should be independent learners that can find things for their own using a variety of resources. They are able to use technologies independently and very effectively. Critical thinking and problem solving should be evident as intrinsic feature of learning.

Additionally, when assessing students' relationships and attitude, the framework explains that 'outstanding schools' develop a culture where students 'have positive and responsible attitude', are able to show empathy and always help each other.

While analyzing the schools' development plan 'SDP' it can be inferred that the action planning for developing students' leadership within the school started with reflecting on the inspection framework. The school development plan (SDP) is a comprehensive document that details very clearly each of the leadership programs that the school is planning to conduct every year. It has very clear SMART goals with measurable criteria to gauge the growth in leadership skills. For example, it mentioned in the SDP the aims of the TED-talk initiative detailing tasks and targets that teachers will take daily to promote and support students to take an active part in this initiative. Additionally, the SDP references and explains professional development support that the schools' leaders will lead to support teachers in planning for critical thinking and higher order thinking questions across all subject areas to promote students' leadership. Moreover, teachers' assessments also provided an important aspect of how students were encouraged to take initiative, build confidence and demonstrate leadership behaviors in academic settings. For example, assessments often included a section on what students could do in order to improve. Student report cards, for instance, carried a detailed description of student leadership practices that were followed by the individual pupils, and this directly impacted the avenues for student development and leadership skills building. School memos also contained an important set of instructions for student leaders, class monitors and class prefects, and established a clear reporting structure for student leaders in the school, as well as set the foundation for student leadership networks.

In comparing the above analysis of the action planning in the school and the UAE inspection framework with Redmond and Dolan (2016) model for youth leadership, it can be strongly inferred that the school leaders have a very clear perspective on how to develop students' leadership. These

actions are reviewed on a termly basis to reflect and adjust when/and if needed to ensure excellence for all.

4.5 Discussion

The key objectives of the present study were examined in light of the key themes isolated based on thematic analysis of the data. With respect to the current leadership policy in the subject school, it emerged that the school is largely supportive of student leadership through its policies and programs in line with the Sharjah Education Council and the broader subset of educational reforms initiated in the UAE (Akudo, 2020; Al Naqbi and Samier, 2020; Albugami, 2020; Alhosani et al., 2017; Alkutich, 2017; Alnajjar et al, 2020). In line with the UAE school reform that supports policies and initiatives for promoting student leadership, the Youth Leadership Development Conceptual Model (Redmond and Dolan, 2016) is especially relevant. Cultivation of youth leadership skills involves skills development, commitment to action and environmental considerations (Osmane and Brennan, 2018). The model holds that authentic opportunities need to be created for inculcating student leadership including collaboration and development of leadership competencies. Participation in youth leadership initiatives should be beyond tokenism and in this context, the model describes how authentic opportunity, participation and giving mentor access as well as receipt of guidance are the core environmental facilitators of leadership development (Redmond and Dolan, 2016). Policies that promote mastery and motivation are critical to the inculcation of leadership skills. The value ascribed to school leadership is effectively documented in the school memos and programs, besides observations of student-teacher interactions. Policies valuing school leadership can be an effective expression of how student leaders can be nurtured (Litz et al., 2016). Policies centered around student development focused on leadership training, seminars, co-curricular activities and skills building at the school, engaging youth leaders through mentors (Attard and Holmes, 2019; Cansoy, 2017).

The second objective, understanding the practices that facilitate student leadership in the school pupils and the role of principal's leadership style in impacting student leadership, was examined in light of the research findings. Data from the relevant themes established an association between principal's leadership style and student leadership. Student responses indicated the principal

affects students by being a role model, having a shared vision and high expectations all of which indicate an elevating effect as an important element of transformational leadership style, displaying dynamism and influencing leadership in students. Transformational leadership theory proposed by Burns in (1978) serves as a useful framework for interpreting the research results. The principal as a transformative leader demonstrated the capacity to meet follower requirements and motivate students to innovate and find novel solutions (Alase, 2019; Ghasabeh et al., 2015; Minai et al., 2020; Sinangchokyoo et al., 2020; Yadav et al, 2019; Zaman et al., 2019). As opposed to transactional leadership, leaders are responsible for enduring transformation and change among followers (Northouse, 2018). The students reported greater innovation within the educational setting, demonstrating the inculcation of leadership styles in enhancing opportunities for student achievement (Anderson, 2017; Bush, 2019; Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou, 2016). In line with existing research, the school principal demonstrated effective leadership skills playing a critical part in supporting student leadership practices (AlShehi and Alzouebi, 2020; Elsayed et al., 2020). Educational leadership on the part of principals transforms the capacity of students to access educational goals and display appropriate leadership attributes (Al-Kutich and Abukari, 2018). Among the research participants, teacher responses indicated elements of emotional intelligence was important components of the leadership practices adopted by the school principal. In the 90s, Salovey and Meyer presented an emotional intelligence framework, and the ability model presented by these researchers define emotional intelligence in terms of emotional perception, emotional use, comprehension of emotion and management of emotions and the concept has been applied in diverse educational settings (Chen and Guo, 2020; Setyowati et al. 2019, Singh, 2020). EI theory has utilized linkages between school leadership and student leaders, maximizing effective change management (Kareem and Kin, 2018).

The next objective of the study was to explore barriers and hurdles to effective student leadership. Barriers to school leadership and the emergence of student leaders were found to be in line with previous studies. An excessive focus on rules and regulations, formal appointments of leadership positions and peer pressure as well as cultural differences were identified as barriers to effective leadership. Restrictions and limitations on student development programs and lack of initiative building were also identified as challenges. Similarly, student leadership development issues identified in research include socialization, role expectations, self-confidence, governance

structures and centralized decision making as well as lack of inclusive leadership development initiatives (Fulton et al., 2019; Fulton, 2017; Haber-Curran and Sulpizo, 2017; Lyons and Brasof, 2020; Mitra, 2018: Shapiro et al., 2015). Lack of value of student inputs and poor engagement levels have also been identified as barriers, as have policy constraints and delivery of as well as follow-up in progress management (Litz et al., 2020). Absence of strategic educational management is the key barrier to effective leadership (Van Vuuren and Sayed, 2017).

School culture and leadership practices were also a focus and a key objective of the present research study. The Sharjah private school explored for this purpose perpetuated the atmosphere of active student leadership, building on student capabilities and innovation as well as critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The school promoted extracurricular activities and programs to nurture student leaders, as well. An open, participatory approach to school culture also prevailed, prizing student engagement and leadership development. Emirati studies have documented how private schools in the UAE share a decentralized system of decision-making and open learning cultures (Badri et al., 2019). Student interest and motivation are also encouraged to support student leadership (Badri et al., 2016). Furthermore, perceptions of leadership practices by students themselves were also explored, wherein school culture in the UAE schools fostered student leadership development. Based on themes analyzed via the interview, the need for innovative learning as indicated by UAE school reform movement, served as basis for understanding the emphasis on inculcation of effective student leadership practice (Hitt and Tucker, 2015; Blaik Hourani and Litz, 2018; Cochran Smith et al., 2018; Kippels and Ridge, 2019; Madden, 2019; Taha-Thomure,, 2019).

4.6 Conclusion

In this research study, data was collected based on interviews with students, lead teachers, the vice principal and the principal. Additional data was also collected from observations and document analysis. The emerging themes from this qualitative data suggest that the school's principal exhibits elements of transformative leaders. It reflected that students feel supported and are given the chance to practice simple versions of leadership. Teachers reported that the schools' policies and practices focus on youth leadership. It was evident from the observations that students are

presenting emerging characteristics of team building, leadership, critical thinking, and problem solving. The following chapter will discuss in detail future research opportunities to expand on this research initial findings with the aim of contributing to the national research data on similar topics.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the conclusion, recommendations and further research studies on the principal leadership style that promotes students' leadership practices. This research study explored possible connections between the principal's leadership style and students' leadership practices. It also examined the school's culture, policy implementation and possible barriers to students' leadership. This study demonstrated that by modelling high expectations, promoting positive school culture and policy adaptation, principals are likely to be more able to foster leadership practices for students. It is anticipated that the findings of this study are further examined in light of the recommendation parented in this chapter when similar studies are conducted in UAE in general and countries with similar context.

5.2 Recommendations

The present findings of the study, with respect to exploring the link between principal's leadership style and student leadership practices, highlight the need for spurring educational reform by promoting leadership and student development initiatives. As students in UAE schools are being encouraged to display mastery and motivation of leadership skills, the focus is on building on the capacities of the students for acquisition of leadership competencies. However, in line with the Youth Development Conceptual Model, the student leadership initiatives must focus on building collaborative partnerships between educational leaders, such as principals, teachers and administrators and the pupils of the school. The current focus of the Sharjah private school, in particular, and educational institutions, in general should focus on fruitful leadership partnerships between policy makers, school principals and researchers alike to promote a better understanding of how to facilitate student leadership.

5.2.1   Recommendations for Policy Makers

One of the biggest barriers to effective student leadership in UAE schools has been identified as policy constraints. Strong and robust student leadership is needed to reform the educational school

system in the UAE, when it comes to student leadership. Therefore, the first recommendation for policy makers is that student leadership initiatives should be built into the curriculum and reform efforts in the UAE school system should continue (Iskander et al., 2016; Zahran et al., 2016).

Secondly, the students must be encouraged to develop leadership skills for navigating a multicultural global learning environment and world (Pettaway et al; 2015). Al Suwaidi and Schoepp (2015) have reiterated how educational reform in the UAE is aimed at putting students first. Policy makers should therefore focus on active inculcation of student leadership practices by emphasizing a curriculum development strategy that builds confidence and empowers students.

The SEC, post its restructuring under Saaed Al Kaabi, its chairman, has mandated the operation of the Sharjah Education Zone code, driven by the need to improve leadership development skills in students in Sharjah schools (Oxford Business Group, 2017). Policy initiatives and programs must therefore focus on building a sense of citizenship in students and for this, leadership training should be included in school student development programs.

5.2.2 Recommendations for School Principals

The first recommendation for school principals is the need to build a powerful role model for students to follow, utilizing principles of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, principals need to work on incorporating positive role modeling practices to equip and empower student leadership to thrive.

Secondly, school principals should also identify organizational barriers and administrative obstacles coming in the way of successful student engagement and participation in student leadership initiatives and training programs. Seminars, conferences, workshops and training programs should be utilized to inculcate critical leadership competencies and skills in students. Principals should also work hand-in-hand with policy makers and teachers to create a positive learning environment that actively encourages students to build on their leadership skills.

Identifying constraints and barriers as well as facilitators of student leadership and prompting a school culture that values critical and independent thinking are also some other recommendations for school principals. The key recommendation is to work on infusing curriculum development initiatives that value student leadership and foster effective transformation and strategic development of leadership skills by prioritizing teaching goals that foster student leadership, creativity and innovation (Lee et al., 2019). Promoting a school climate and culture that values learning and student input is also critical to inculcating and nurturing student leadership. Principals should actively understand how their leadership practices impact student leadership programs in the school. The fundamental orientation of the programs and policies at school should also be geared towards meeting and overcoming student leadership challenges.

5.1.3 Recommendations for Researchers

The need for more in-depth and instructive research on the link between principal's leadership style and student leadership practices is critical. It is recommended researchers explore the research question using quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods designs that examine the problem from different perspectives and angles, including those of the students themselves. Student perspectives and voices deserve to be heard in educational research, if the mechanisms of leadership inculcation in pupils must be more comprehensively investigated and more thoroughly understood.

Researchers should also focus on future research directions that incorporate educational interventions to foster effective student leadership. Drawing inferences and conclusions from studies is not as effective as promoting real-world interventions that bring about lasting and positive student leadership practices in schools and educational institutions in Sharjah, the UAE and worldwide.

5.3   Limitations of the Study

The present study, although beneficial for exploring the role played by principal's leadership style on student leadership, has certain shortcomings. The sample size was small and relatively

homogenous, limiting generalizability and transferability of research findings. Although document analysis and observational records were utilized to support data from in-depth interviews, interviews are essentially open to social desirability concerns, as they are self-report methods of investigation. Besides methodological constraints, the scope of the research was narrow in that no interventions were designed, although theoretical frameworks were examined in light of research findings and themes were isolated.

However, research utilizing qualitative data provides rich, versatile, in-depth insights and to this end the present study was effective in exploring the research question from the perspective of the principal, vice principal, teachers and students themselves, offering a 360-degree view of the processes and factors impacting student leadership practices, as well as the association between principal's leadership style and student leadership.

5.4 Conclusion

The present study explored the link between principal's leadership style and student leadership from multiple and diverse perspectives, utilizing in-depth interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis to harness triangulation and make conclusive inferences regarding the research questions. The study explored the relationship between student leaders and principal leadership style, besides examining school culture, student leadership perceptions, role of school policy and barrier sand facilitators with respect to student leadership. Utilizing the Youth Development Conceptual Model, the theory of transformational leadership and the EI-Ability Model, the research study effectively demonstrated the association between student leaders and principal's leadership style at a private school in Sharjah.

The key themes derived from a content analysis of the interview transcripts, along with findings from observational records and document analysis comprised: the role of school policy, the impact of school culture, the link between principal's leadership style and student leadership, student leadership practices, and barriers or facilitators for inculcating effective student leadership. Student leadership practices play a vital role in nurturing effective student development and building pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. Student leadership skills are key drivers for bolstering student

success by reducing dropouts and absenteeism, increasing academic success, enhancing student achievement, promoting socio-emotional development, and lowering chances of educational failure. Student leadership remains a critical concern for educational reform and this exploratory research study fills an important gap in contemporary scholarship on the subject. It is hoped that the present research study serves as useful building ground and a practical guide for policymakers, researchers, educationists, academicians, teachers, principals and school administrators alike.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview guide for Principals and Vice-Principals:

Principals and Vice-principals will participate in in-depth interviews, designed to be as unstructured as possible to be able to capture their understanding of their leadership experience

1) ***Principal's leadership characteristics?***

    a. *What is your drive for leadership? How do you do it?*
    b. *Who was your role model?*
    c. *How do you describe your leadership style? Can you give examples? How did you develop your style?*
    d. *Describe an incident that best demonstrates your leadership style?*

2) ***Students' leadership?***

    a. *How do you define students' leadership? Examples?*
    b. *What are your views on students' leadership?*
    c. *How do you foster students' leadership? Examples?*
    d. *How do you motivate teachers to foster student's leadership?*

3) ***School Policy and Procedures***

    a. *How do you set your school's policy regarding to fostering student's personal development? Can you give examples?*
    b. *What would you say your biggest challenge is when you try to foster students' leadership? Why do you think that? What are you doing to overcome these challenges?*
    c. *What are your principals when it comes to student's social development? Why do you think this? Can you give me an example?*

4) ***School's culture?***

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?*

5) **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 2

Interview guide for students:

Students will participate in 30 minutes in-depth interviews designed to understand their perception about student's leadership. They will be asked general questions providing examples and sharing stories to reveal the true meaning and perception about their leadership experience. The following is a guide to this interview; however, it is used freely to assist in providing rich information.

a. *Do you think the principal is helping you grow as a student? How? Can you give examples?*
b. *Do you think that the principal is available for you and your colleagues? How do you know that? What kind of support does he provide for you?*
c. *Do you feel comfortable at the school? Why do you think that you feel this way? Have you always felt like this?*
d. *Do you think you are able to thrive in this school? How do you know? Can you give examples.*
e. *How often do you meet with the principal? What do you discuss? Do you think your voice is heard during these meetings? How do you know?*
f. *Can you tell me about your team? Roles? Responsibilities? How do you divide the work and how do you follow up with one another?*
g. *Would you rather work alone? Why?*
h. *Can you give me an example where you thought that you were able to envision an event in the school? Can you describe the event? Did you manage to create a plan for it? Do you think it was successful or not? Why do you think that?*
i. *Do you get frustrated at the school? Why? What do you think makes you feel like this? How can you overcome this? Can you give me an example?*
j. *What is your next step after school? What do you want to achieve? Why? What are your plans to achieve this goal? Do you think that the school is supporting you to reach your goal?*

Appendix 3

Observation Schedule:

Event	Timeframe	Student skills	Teachers skills
Event announcement	December – January	-	Guiding team Building Explaining presentation skills Detailing ethics for presentation
Team building – choosing teams	January – February	Team Building Conflict resolution Problem solving Critical thinking Ethics Communication Decision making	Guiding team Building Explaining presentation skills Detailing ethics for presentation Guiding problem solving Facilitating communication Facilitating critical thinking
Students Rehearsal	February – March	Conflict resolution Problem solving Critical thinking Ethics Communication Confidence Oral skills Presentation skills Decision making	Facilitating and guidance
TED – Talk main event	April	Conflict resolution Problem solving Critical thinking Ethics Communication Confidence Oral skills Presentation skills Decision making	Facilitating and guidance