

Evaluation of School Principals: Responses from Education Leaders in Saudi Arabia

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

in the
Educational Leadership Program
Faculty of Education

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Spring 2018

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Abstract

The Saudi Arabian education system has experienced several significant restructurings since its creation in 1953. The 2011, administrative reform increased school principals' responsibilities and their roles became more complex. These changes have increased the need for understanding the principal evaluation process in order to ensure long-term success for all in education. The aim of this study was to identify and examine the current evaluation process as experienced by Saudi high school principals and to present their opinions about how to improve the current criteria and methods used by the Ministry of Education. Two questions were used: *What are high school principals' perceptions of the process and criteria for their evaluation?* and *What are principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature?* A comparison of principals' opinions and ideas and the recommendations advocated in the literature was completed. A qualitative research design was used to gather data from 14 high school principals working for the General Department of Education in the Eastern Region within the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. Using a priori themes from the literature related to the research questions, this study presents the processes and procedures used in current principal evaluation. Results show that respondents believe the current principal evaluation processes and methods in Saudi Arabia are ineffective and of little value. Further findings provide suggestions regarding improving the evaluation criteria and procedures to support principals' development. Study results support the need for change to the principal evaluation system in Saudi Arabia and highlight improving evaluation quality, ensuring purposeful professional development, and including clear performance expectations. Results further suggest the MoE must focus on building a new evaluation by taking into account the opinions of stakeholders, the characteristics of schools, and the need for a sufficient number of qualified evaluators. If education in Saudi Arabia is going to continue moving forward, and if principals are to become the strongest tools for education advancement, then accurate and meaningful evaluation is necessary.

Keywords: evaluation; assessment; principals; high school; Saudi Arabia.

Dedication

To my mother's soul, Latifah Abalkhail, my first teacher. You were always there to help and encourage me in my pursuit of education.

Acknowledgements

Completing my dissertation has been one of my biggest life challenges. I would not have been able to succeed without the guidance of the committee members and the support of my colleagues, family, and friends.

First, I would like to express my special gratitude and thanks to my advisor Dr. Daniel Laitsch and my co- advisor Dr. Rebecca D. Cox. Without the time and help you both provided, I would not have reached the end of my dissertation. I am extremely thankful for your valuable expertise, sincere guidance, and continuous encouragement. I would also like to express gratitude to the faculty members in the Department of Education for their help and support.

Second, words cannot express my appreciation to my family. I would like to thank my best friend and life partner, my wife Layla Alsalim, for helping me survive the stress all these years. You have been my biggest cheerleader and advocate. I would like to thank my delightful children, Juree, Nawaf, Layal and Faisal. Your love, patience, support, and understanding while I was working as a doctoral student was essential to my success.

Third, thank you to all of my friends in Canada. A special mention goes to my dear friend Karen Mushing. You have been one of my biggest supporters, providing consistent encouragement to keep going. I greatly appreciate your support. Also, to Luigi DeMarzo, thank you for helping and supporting as I made Vancouver my second home. I am truly grateful.

I would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education for allowing me the opportunity to pursue my education. Finally, thank you to the 14 school principals in the Eastern Province who took time out of their schedule to share with me their experiences, visions, and reflections that formed the data for this dissertation.

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|
| SFU | Simon Fraser University |
| SDL | Saudi Digital Library |
| MoE | Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia |
| SA | Saudi Arabia |

Chapter 1.

Introduction

Nations across the world, and particularly developing countries, have come to see quality education as the foundation for building a strong homeland. Saudi Arabia is one nation that has turned to education excellence as a way to move the country into new economic arenas and improve the quality of life for its citizens in the face of an increasingly young population. The government has demonstrated its goal for change through numerous initiatives intended to increase education opportunities, as well as improve the quality of the education available to Saudi residents.

Since the creation of the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 1953, the education system in Saudi Arabia has experienced many reforms aimed at setting higher educational standards (1962, 1975, 2003, 2007, and 2011). The restructurings have addressed issues related to teacher qualifications, leadership, the administrative structure, education equipment, and curricula. Moreover, much of the focus from the reforms has been on developing educational leadership to improve schools through changes to the distribution of authority, professional development, and the hiring process of school principals (Rumi, 2013). However, an MoE report (2008) examining the relationship between education leadership and organizational outcomes found the abundance of financial support for reform from the Ministry does not appear to be producing quality results (Mashaan, 2015). Thus, despite the education reforms and the large monetary investment, the MoE has not achieved the results it has been pursuing.

The road to achieving education excellence has not been easy. Current challenges for the Saudi education system include a growing population, cultural diversity, and a centralized system that extends over a large geographical area (Essa, 2012). Moreover, problems within the MoE itself exist, the main ones being the bureaucratic methods of leadership and the leaders' lack of skills (Hakem, 2012).

After acknowledging many of the shortcomings of past reforms, the MoE began to make additional changes. Saudi government policy makers suggested the government implement changes to its education services to increase its quality and

applicability. In response, the Government introduced The King Abdullah Public Education Development Project in 2007 with the sizeable goal of introducing a more modern and better-quality education system. In order for the MoE to achieve the government's education goals, it has had to make major shifts in focus in several areas. One of their new leading priorities was providing professional development for school leaders (Habib, 2005).

In addition, in 2011, the MoE started taking steps to decentralize Saudi school districts and gave principals more flexibility in their work (MoE, 2011). These changes focused on understanding, analyzing, and reviewing the existing educational structure in order to make major strategic changes.

In April 2016, the Saudi government announced its new plan, Saudi Vision 2030. The goal is of Saudi Vision 2030 is to reduce Saudi Arabia's economic reliance on oil by creating a diverse economy that relies more on health, education, construction, and other service sectors for economic independence. The Ministry of Education is one of the focus organizations included in the Saudi Vision 2030; educational administration will play a critical role in achieving the goals of the new Saudi vision.

The government outlined the Saudi Vision 2030 mandate for the education related organizations as,

In the year 2030, we aim to have at least five Saudi universities among the top 200 universities in international rankings. We shall help our students achieve results above international averages in global education indicators. To this end, we will prepare a modern curriculum focused on rigorous standards in literacy, numeracy, skills, and character development. We will track progress and publish a sophisticated range of education outcomes, showing year-on-year improvements. We will work closely with the private sector to ensure higher education outcomes are in line with the requirements of the job market. We will invest in strategic partnerships with apprenticeship providers, new skills councils from industry, and large private companies. We will also work towards developing the job specifications of every education field. Furthermore, we will build a centralized student database tracking students from early childhood through to K-12 and beyond into tertiary education (higher and vocational) in order to improve education planning, monitoring, evaluation, and outcomes. (Saudi Vision, 2016, para. 5)

As described in the mandate, there will be a strong focus on accurately measuring performance in education. The aim is to achieve higher educational standards that the MoE can measure and authenticate.

In order to achieve the higher educational standards it is pursuing, it is important that the MoE measure the performance of students and employees. Moreover, the performance of educational leaders, such as principals, must be considered when looking at how well reform changes are working.

Currently, there is no scientifically studied instrument that the MoE uses for evaluating principals under the new structure. Studying the current evaluation tool is essential because the reform changes have had a significant effect on the role of principals. Moreover, both principals and their evaluators need a comprehensive understanding of the current assessment process to understand how it relates to the role of principals since the new reforms.

1.1. Education Reform in Saudi Arabia

When major education reform began in the 1950s, the focus was on increasing the number of schools and teachers because of an increasing population, a trend that continues today. Saudi Arabia's population doubled nine times between 1950 and 2013; 3.86 million in 1950 to 33.4 million in 2013 ("National Center of Educational Statistic," 2015). The number of schools also increased significantly, from 341 schools for boys only in 1953 (Salloum, 1991) to 36949 schools, educating boys and girls, by 2015 ("National Center of Educational Statistic," 2015).

Additional reforms that occurred before 2007, focused on improving the quality of the education through a series of quick fixes such as small changes to textbooks, curricula, employment opportunities for teachers, and school supplies. Minor modifications included limited in-service training; however, these changes have not reached enough people involved with the education system (Sobeia, 2010).

In 2007, there was a major change in the Ministry of Education when the government announced The King Abdullah Project for the Development of Education (Tatweer). The main aim of Tatweer was to transform the Saudi education system so that it would become a modern education model; one that empowers school districts, as

well as school leadership and management, to implement MoE policies that would sustain change to achieve a better-quality education system (Tatweer, 2012).

In 2011, the government of Saudi Arabia introduced additional reform in response to their acknowledgement of past deficiencies. The goal was to find a better way to make major changes by improving its understanding of the education system. The government began by analyzing and critiquing the system as it existed with the hope of reducing the centralized, bureaucratic system of the MoE and increasing focus on the improvement of the administration and leadership of the K-12 system, which in turn would improve the overall education system (Rumi, 2013).

The government considers the education reform of 2011 to be the largest administrative reform in Saudi Arabia's education system since 1962 (MoE, 2011). When the MoE began making structural changes, the modifications greatly affected school principals. The reform included changes to principals' responsibilities; they are now responsible for a greater number of tasks that cover a broad range of educational practice. Principals are responsible for identifying issues within their school and communicating them directly to the board. The areas that principals must consider include consideration of present and future needs, resolution options to complex situations, relationship issues, meeting the needs of the community, understanding education programs, and staffing issues. Furthermore, the decisions principals are now involved with include determining and evaluating the procedures and practices that enable schools to function efficiently and progressively, as well as identifying areas that require modifications.

It is clear that the Saudi education system has experienced significant expansion with an extraordinary emphasis on student access since 1953, and that the government has almost achieved its goal of spreading education throughout the Kingdom. However, it has not achieved the quality education it has been pursuing. Many of the reforms and restructuring efforts were ineffective due to poor implementation and a lack of focus (Sobeia, 2010). For example, none of the education reforms solved issues related to Saudi Arabia's highly bureaucratic education system where decision-making is difficult and time consuming because the distribution of power is from the top down (Rumi, 2013).

1.2. Why Study Saudi's Principal Evaluation?

The evaluation system for principals and other staff at the MoE has not changed in the last 25 years despite the many reforms to the education system ("Ministry of Civil Service," 2014). Many of the amendments from the reforms have affected the role of principal; consequently, the current principal evaluation, created prior to the changes, does not necessarily fit with the requirements of the current education era.

However, researchers have highlighted the importance of having quality evaluation and assessment methods and leadership standards linked to the real performance of principals (Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Gullickson & Howard, 2009; Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, & Cravens, 2009; Miqdadi, Obeidat, Zaboony, & Beni Amer, 2014). Given that the performance expectations for Saudi principals have changed but not the evaluation system, it is fair to infer that the MoE does not have quality evaluation methods at this time.

Alhumaidhi (2013) noted a lack of change and improvement in one area of a system results in a lack of change and progress in all areas. As this relates to the Saudi education system, the effectiveness of the principal evaluation in identifying principals' success in implementing change and ensuring that reform is advancing the education system is ineffectual or delayed. As such, research about principal evaluation and its effectiveness is essential to improve further Saudi Arabia's education system.

Researchers have highlighted the importance of school principals. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) stated, "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 5). In addition, many researchers have noted education leaders are responsible for the success or failure of the school system they administer and guide (Brooks & Voss, 2008; Goldring et al., 2009; Khalil & Karim, 2016; Kimball, Milanowski, & McKinney, 2009; Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008). Moreover, Sousa (2003) stated,

in the real world, it turns out that the instrument of meaningful change is the classroom teacher and that the unit of change is the individual school. This reality places building principals in an extremely important position. By their actions, they can be the true catalysts or obstacles to change (p. 2).

The research conclusions clearly demonstrate the importance of principals and evaluation. As such, the Saudi Arabian government must invest in ensuring there is a relevant principal evaluation that matches the changes from reform.

The government of Saudi Arabia has recognised that past reforms have had many weaknesses. In 2011, the MoE took action to reduce these weaknesses by introducing additional changes that deal specifically with understanding the development of administrative strategies, rules, and regulations. The goals of these changes were to empower school districts and their school principals as well as improve the current infrastructure to accomplish vital education improvements.

One of the initiatives from the MoE was granting school principals more power to make decisions; the hope was to decrease bureaucracy and enable decentralization within education in Saudi Arabia (“Organizational Manual”, 2015). Yet, at this time, it is still unclear how these new authorities help principals create positive change that benefits the Saudi education system.

This research focuses specifically on gaining an understanding of the evaluation process for high school principals in Saudi Arabia and identifying fundamental problems in the current evaluation process. This research also addresses effective practices for principal evaluation by comparing the results from previous researchers with Saudi principals’ opinions on to improve the criteria and methods used in the Saudi principal evaluation.

I chose the topic for this study based on three elements: the complexity and importance of the role of principals, suggestions by researchers in the existing literature, and the lack of information directly related to the principals’ evaluation in Saudi Arabia.

The complexity a principal’s role since the 2011 reform highlights the importance of studying principal evaluation. A principal’s role is now more complex and demanding than ever before. They are responsible for a greater number of tasks covering a broad range of educational practice. As leaders, they have become more liable and accountability for school performance (Harper, 2015; Khalil & Karim, 2016). The need to understand the effects of the reforms on school principals is crucial.

As part of the 2011 education reforms, the Ministry of Education modified the position of school principal to include more power and autonomy for schools across Saudi Arabia. For example, school principals became authorized for expenditures up to 60% of the total school budget as decided by the school district (Hwaimel, Qahtani, Bishi, & Khalif, 2003). This was a large increase from the 5 Saudi Riyal (about \$1.50 US) allowed up until the late 1990's (Roy, 1992). Moreover, principals were given authority to make changes within the existing regulations with regard to transferring teachers and students. Prior to the 2011 reform, only the district supervisors could remove a teacher or student from a school; now principals can transfer a teacher who is not meeting expectations to another school as well as transfer a student with behavioural issues to a different school. The expectation was that these changes would improve the educational process and quality for future generations ("Organizational Manual," 2015).

Principals are responsible for identifying and communicating everything related to the school they lead to the board. These elements include consideration of present and future needs, resolution options to complex situations, relationship issues, needs of the community, understanding educational programs and staffing issues. The decisions principals are involved with include ascertaining and evaluating the procedures and practices that enable schools to function efficiently and progressively as well as identifying areas that require modifications. In order to ensure that school principals have long-term success and are meeting these requirements, there is a need to understand how the current evaluation system assesses these elements.

Moreover, principals took on a critical role in developing education initiatives; the result of this change is they must exercise an abundance of leadership skills. The reform planners assume that principals will work to meet the internal demands in a changing school environment to enrich leadership and facilitate tasks to all educational stakeholders ("Organizational Manual," 2015). Ensuring that principal evaluation assesses principals' effectiveness in meeting these demands will ensure the successful advancement of education.

With the important changes that have occurred in the Saudi education system since 2011, including Saudi Vision 2030, there is a need to explore implementation and success of those changes. Thomas, Holdaway, and Ward (2000) noted a poorly

designed evaluation might increase the likelihood of lesser quality in educational programs and affect school outcomes. Without a well-built principal evaluation and assessment that truly measures principals' effectiveness, there might not be the positive changes in the educational process that should be happening (Gullickson & Howard, 2009; Miqdadi et al., 2014; Moore, 2009; Reeves, 2009). A good starting point is to gain a better understanding through research of the current evaluation system in Saudi Arabia and learn how it compares to systems that researchers have already studied. The results may provide information about how the MoE can use the evaluation of principals as an effective tool for improving education in Saudi Arabia.

Secondly, this study is important because researchers who have looked at areas related to principal evaluation have shown that effective assessment and evaluation increases the probability of success within the educational process (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Gaziel, 2008; Goldring et al., 2009; Harper, 2015; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Louis et al., 2010; Reeves, 2009). Research on principal evaluation and assessment will help uncover the areas principals need to understand, such as what best practice is and how to improve it in order to advance education.

Researchers, and those within the education field, generally accept that a principal affects a school's achievement through their actions; however, there is a lack of research on how to truly quantify, evaluate, and assess a principal's job performance. (Clifford & Ross, 2012; Davis et al., 2011; Fuller et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2009; Kimball et al., 2009; Marzano et al., 2005; Miqdadi et al., 2014; Muenich, 2014). Many studies have confirmed that the assessment process may obtain essential feedback that can support and assist principals with improving their performance (Aloathyane, 2014; Kimball et al., 2009; Lashway, 1998; Reeves, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000). Researchers must continue examining principal evaluation and assessment (Miqdadi et al., 2014; Muenich, 2014) because of the significant impact principals have on the successes and failures of schools.

The evaluation process and the feedback it can provide are key resources available to the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia for accomplishing its reform goals. However, as Reeves (2009) noted, principals are less likely to reach their full potential when supervisors and other leaders overlook existing research about the evaluation

process; the result is a lack of guidance about the importance and benefit of feedback. Researchers have also noted that feedback would support and assist principals in improving their performance (Aloathyanee, 2014; Brooks & Voss, 2008; Davis et al., 2011; Hvidston, Range, & McKim, 2015; Lashway, 1998; Reeves, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000).

Current research on principals' authority focuses primarily on examining principals' perceptions and experiences of their authority. For example, Allheaniy (2012) found that it is essential to support and help school principals learn how to implement their power effectively. Alhumaidhi (2013) observed that new principals face difficulties when asserting new authority. Moreover, Alotaibi (2013) noted the amount of authority a principal has influences their practice, where the range of influence spanned from low to high depending on the type of authority while Meemar (2014) found that principals have a low ability to implement new powers. Finally, Karim (2014) observed there is an absence of guidelines from the school districts to implement new powers. These findings confirm that there are problems with the application of the new powers held by principals, including a shortage of viable training and professional development.

The third reason this study is important is the lack of direct information on principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia (Al-Ghamdi, 2007; Ahmari, 2013; Hamdan, 2013; Khalil & Karim, 2016; Miqdadi et al., 2014; Nassar, 1997). A review of the research on educational leadership revealed few studies related to the topic of principal evaluation and its effect on principals in Saudi Arabia. The evaluation of Saudi school principals has yet to receive the attention required to provide measuring tools that leaders can use to develop, rework, and improve the job performance of principals. However, understanding the effectiveness of evaluation can provide knowledge about the implications of inaccurate reporting of principals' performance.

With the changes that came from the 2011 education reform, it is important to improve the measurement tools used in Saudi Arabia to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of principals as they affect such a large population. Moreover, because Saudi culture has many unique elements, it would not be appropriate to use only research from other countries to try to understand Saudi school principals.

A lack of attention to the evaluation and assessment of principals may be one of the barriers to raising the quality of education in Saudi Arabia. Principals' evaluations and assessments are not currently associated with professional standards nor are they rigorously tested for reliability and consistency (Miqdadi et al., 2014; Yarrow, 2008). Additionally, very little is known about how the MoE evaluates principals; the outcomes, the quality, and the kinds of feedback received from the evaluations are not clear. It is not surprising that a search conducted in March 2015 of the Saudi Digital Library (SDL) yielded only six peer-reviewed articles during the search on "principal evaluation." This indicates an obvious gap in the research on principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia. Investigation in the area will contribute to achieving the objectives of the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia by providing information that may improve job performance of principals.

In order to address the issues discussed above, I examined and reported on the evaluation process of school principals in selected schools in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. My focus was on exploring and describing the evaluation process of school principals from the perspective of high school principals. As well, I compared the evaluation process of principals as it is currently set up in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia against findings within existing literature.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine the current evaluation process as experienced by high school principals in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, my goal was to describe principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods the MoE uses in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature. I used a qualitative research design to gather data from school principals. This study included a sample of 14 high school principals working for the General Department of Education in the Eastern Region within Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education at the time of the study.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The methods for evaluating school principals have not changed in the last 25 years in Saudi Arabia. Research about the evaluation system and its effectiveness is

essential to further improvements within education; if principals are not effective in changing the education process, enhancement to the system will be slower and in some cases delayed. A review of the research on educational leadership revealed few studies related to the topic of principal evaluation and its effect on principals in Saudi Arabia. However, understanding the effectiveness of assessments used on principals and knowledge about the implications of inaccurate reporting on principals' performance is imperative.

My study provides an important contribution to the body of research about the evaluation of Saudi high school principals as well as contributes to research regarding Saudi Arabia's education leaders. Furthermore, it begins to fill a gap in education leadership research by providing an understanding of the Saudi principal evaluation from the point of view of high school principals.

My examination of the literature and interviews with principals enabled me to establish suggestions for effective ways to provide feedback and information about principals' evaluation and assessment. In addition, the feedback from my research provides an understanding regarding how the MoE evaluates principals as well as, and more importantly, how to potentially improve principal evaluation.

The MoE can use the findings from my study to help with training and workshops for educational leaders. Moreover, the findings can help the MoE determine programs for future principals and their evaluators on how to deal with evaluations and assessments in the workplace. Finally, information from the study can help the MoE implement processes to support incoming. The study is a resource new leaders can refer to and use for the assessment feedback process. This investigation into the evaluation process as experienced by high school principals can improve leaders' knowledge about this process, which they can then apply to their own work. This study can help to assess strengths and weaknesses that may be apparent to principals in Saudi Arabia about the principal evaluation process, particularly in relation to evaluation instruments. Moreover, it allows administrators in the field of education leadership in Saudi Arabia to gain more awareness of the field of evaluation and assessment.

Finally, this research study sought to gather information policy makers and education practitioners can use about the current evaluation system of school principals

by seeking to understand the evaluation process as experienced by current high school principals. It provides more accurate and timely information regarding principal evaluation and assessment to help in understanding the actual process and system of evaluation in Saudi Arabia.

The growing expectations resulting from the 2011 reform as well as the Saudi Vision 2030 means it has become increasingly necessary for officials and supervisors at the Ministry of Education to systematically improve the performance levels of those employed in education, including school principals. Moreover, it requires that the MoE explore ways to improve the evaluation. Yet, the evaluation of principals has not received the attention required to provide measuring tools that the MoE can use to develop, rework, and improve the job performance of principals.

1.5. Research Questions

Based on the recent changes to the education system and a perceived gap between best practice in evaluation and the current principal evaluation system in Saudi Arabia, I developed two main research questions:

- What are high school principals' perceptions of the process and criteria for their evaluation?
- What are principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation and assessment compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature?

By going into the field to speak directly with principals regarding the current evaluation system, I am able to answer these questions and develop recommendations to strengthen the current system.

1.6. Chapters Preview

This dissertation includes five chapters, including this one. The first chapter covers the introduction to the research topic and rationale and purpose of this study. The second chapter contains the literature review sections, including an overview of the Saudi education system, a summary of the Saudi literature on evaluation, and a description of evaluation from a western context. Based on the information from the literature review, I conclude the second chapter with a discussion and analysis of a priori

themes related to my study. In Chapter 3, I explain the qualitative methodologies of this study and describe the research method design, as well as the participant selection, data collection and interview processes. I finish the chapter by explaining the data analysis procedures for this study. In the fourth chapter, I present the analysis results from the transcripts of the high school principals' interviews. The final chapter is a summary of the main findings. I discuss how the findings compare to the literature on principal evaluation. I end with a discussion on the implications for policy and practice, the limitations of my study, and suggestions for future research on principal evaluation.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

In order to gain a better understanding of the current education system, a look at the past is valuable. By reviewing what previous researchers have acknowledged as problems and issues, areas that require additional research become clearer. Findings from existing research on principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia and other research contexts clearly shows that there is a need for additional research.

I began looking for relevant articles on principal evaluation using the electronic resources at the Simon Fraser University (SFU) Library and the Saudi Digital Library (SDL). I conducted a search using the keywords “performance”, “principal”, and “evaluation”. The SFU Library database suggested 9,070 articles, whereas SDL suggested 380 articles. Next, I searched scholarly peer reviewed journals; there were 4,851 articles in the SFU Library database and 88 in SDL.

In order to narrow the focus, I added a database subject and year filter within scholarly peer reviewed journals. I decided to use a year filter to limit the research to articles published after 2000 because I felt it would identify the most recent information and therefore the most relevant in many areas. However, as my research evolved, I did not limit the use of articles from years prior to 2000. Furthermore, I chose eight research subjects, including principal quality, evaluation feedback, principal performance measurement, evaluation standard, evaluation model, evaluation characteristics, principal evaluation tools, and school leadership evaluation. By using these search criteria, I was able to narrow the search to 670 articles in SFU Library and 13 in SDL.

Electronic databases organize research results by listing articles most relevant to the search keywords at the top of the results page. Starting with the most relevant suggestions, I began reviewing articles from the SFU Library database list. As I moved through the list, I noticed that after about 50 articles, the topics were becoming unrelated to my own subject. However, when I saw references to a researcher dated prior to 2000, I did an additional search of the name to review more of his/her studies to see if they related to my topic. When I reviewed the SDL suggestions, I examined all 13 articles.

For the final phase of the literature search, I looked at ProQuest Digital Dissertations and some related books. I found few research articles dealing directly with principal evaluation. Of those I did, most were about principal assessment and recommendations for building an evaluation process.

Despite the topic of educational leadership being so vast, it is essential to consider principal evaluation as indispensable to organizational success. As explained in Chapter 1, researchers such as Gullickson and Howard (2009), Moore (2009), Miqdadi et al., (2014) and Reeves (2009) assert that positive changes in the educational process may not be possible without a well-built principal evaluation. Moreover, Thomas et al. (2000) stated there might be increased risk to having a lower quality education system when the design of the evaluation is ineffectual. For those reasons, I chose to investigate this topic in my study.

The first aim of this study is to examine the present evaluation instrument and process as experienced by high school principals in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. The second aim is to explore principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation and compare participants' recommendations with the recommendations advocated in the literature.

I present the literature review in nine sections, not including the conclusion: 1) Overview of the Saudi Education System, 2) Evaluation Overview, 3) Analysis of Principal Evaluation Instruments, 4) Saudi Literature on Evaluation, 5) Empirical Research on Evaluation from a Western Context, 6) Evaluation Models, 7) Challenges in Principal Evaluation, 8) Discussion Overview, and 9) Conceptual Framework for this study. While initially presented study-by-study, the literature is synthesised and discussed by theme in the final two sections. For example, in sections 4 Saudi Literature on Evaluation and 5 Empirical Research on Evaluation from a Western Context, I present individual studies. However, in section 8 Discussion Overview, I discuss evaluation research looking at the Saudi context, the Western context, and implications across contexts. In addition, in section 9 Conceptual Framework, I provide my analysis and a brief summary outlining the information about a priori themes from the literature related to the research goals of this study.

2.1. Overview of the Saudi Education System

Until the founding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, education was accessible to very few individuals. There was no formal education system and religious schools within mosques in urban areas provided all instruction. In 1932, the first formal education system in Saudi Arabia was born under the direction of the Directorate of Education. In 1953, it became the Ministry of Education and a new era in modern education began (Salloum, 1991).

The MoE is the government appointed agency that oversees K-12 education in Saudi Arabia. When the Saudi government established the Ministry of Education, there were 326 government schools and 15 private schools for boys; there were no girls' schools at that time (Salloum, 1991). Formal education for girls began in 1960, at which point the government created the General Administration of Girls' Education as a separate and independent organization (Salloum, 1991). While the MoE has always been responsible for boys' schools, it was in 2003 that it took over the supervision of girls' education from the General Administration of Girls' Education (Khalil & Karim, 2016). By the year 2015, the total number of schools had reached 36949 ("National Center of Educational Statistics," 2015).

The tremendous growth of the Saudi Arabian school system has led to great shifts in government funding. In 1982, the government spent less than 10 per cent of its budget on education. By 1992, this amount had increased to 17.5 percent; in 2003, it reached 24 percent (Bosbait & Wilson, 2005). For the 2015 fiscal year, the education budget was 26 percent of the approved expenditures budget ("Ministry of Finance," 2015). As a direct result of increases, the Saudi government is now providing access to higher levels of education to all citizens, male and female. The results of the changes in funding are highlighted in The World Economic Forum (2016) who reported literacy rates had reached 95 percent in Saudi Arabia in 2015, up from 60 percent in 1972 (Salloum, 1991).

Saudi Arabia's education system is deeply rooted in its national religion Islam, its social structures, the separation of men and women, and financial support from the state (Razik, 1992; Al-Sadan, 2000). Its organizational structure includes public and private schools; the education of boys and girls is separate at all levels (Razik, 1992). The

Ministry of Education manages all public and private schools in Saudi Arabia. Public schools are free to all residents while private schools can set their own tuition.

All children must begin attending primary school at age 6. The public and the private school systems consist of four school levels: kindergarten, primary (grades 1 to 6), intermediate (grades 7 to 9), and high school (grades 10 to 12) (Hakem, 2012). After completing six years of primary education, students must pass an examination in order to receive the Elementary School Certificate and move on to intermediate school. Students must take a similar exam at the end of each grade in intermediate and high school. The tests serve merely as exit exams. After the completion of grade 12, students have completed all compulsory education (Hakem, 2012).

The Ministry of Education considers private schools a supporting element to public education at all levels. As part of the Ministry of Education, there is the General Department for Private Education. This department supervises private schools and provides free textbooks and annual financial aid. Moreover, the MoE employs a qualified director in each private school.

While private schools are independent, they must still meet standards set by the provincial ministry or the department of education. For example, all schools must provide English language education; this is a standard set by MoE. However, public schools begin providing English in the upper elementary grades whereas private schools begin this part of education much earlier.

Increased independence from the MoE means principals in private schools have more opportunities for decision-making and developing programs and curriculum than public school principals; in addition, they provide more training to their teachers (Hakem, 2012).

The MoE's responsibilities in overseeing public schools include planning, policy-making, long-term strategic planning, and curriculum development. Moreover, it oversees training and scholarships for its employees and the provision of budgetary staff to provide physical and teaching materials and other supplies to all schools. Schools at all levels and in all regions operate in the same way with respect to the number of teachers, textbooks, instruction, curricula, and educational policy (Hakem, 2012);

Salloum, 1991). Decision-making flows through a highly bureaucratic system where power flows from the top down (Khalil & Karim, 2016).

2.1.1. Educational Leadership in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has a complex leadership system that includes many levels. There are two Deputy Ministers at the Ministry of Education; one responsible for girls' education and the other for boys'. Each province has a General Director of Education under the MoE with four deputy directors heading four separate departments. The titles for the four deputy directors are Assistant Director of School Affairs, Assistant Director of Educational Affairs (Boys), Assistant Director of Educational Affairs (Girls), and Assistant Director of Administration ("Education Portal," 2015).

Saudi Arabia includes thirteen areas or provinces. Each province has its own General Director of Education and consists of multiple municipalities or governorates. There are more than 188 governorates in the whole of Saudi Arabia. Each governorate has one school district ("Education Portal," 2015). For example, the Al-Khobar School District within the General Department of Education in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia includes 154 schools and more than 70000 students ("Khobar SD," 2015). Schools with more than 651 students have a principal and three assistant principals. However, if the number of students is between 401 and 650, the number of assistant principals drops to two; for school with less than 400 students there is only one assistant principal. Finally, schools with under 200 students do not have an assistant principal ("Education Portal," 2015).

Staffing and training

Until 2007, there were minimal criteria for the selection of Saudi school principals (Khalil & Karim, 2016). Any teacher with two years' experience simply needed to apply for the position. Teachers who became principals frequently struggled because they did not receive any formal training before or after beginning their new position (Aldarweesh, 2003).

After 2007, the MoE began requiring potential new principals to meet a set of qualifications: teachers needed to have a Bachelor's degree as well as 8 years in the position of teacher or administrator for the MoE to be considered for the position. The

MoE gave preference to assistant principals since they already had some training and experience with administrative matters (Mathis, 2010); however, the MoE faced new challenges with the introduction of these criteria.

The new criteria deterred many teachers from applying for the position. Moreover, teachers were aware of principals' low level of job satisfaction, the many responsibilities involved, and the low financial reward or appreciation from the MoE. They were also disheartened about having to take on issues such as a lack of quality buildings and a shortage of teachers for each school (Thumali, 2016). Teachers were reluctant to apply for the position.

In addition, few teachers had the necessary training for the job. As Karim (2014) pointed out, "They may not have studied educational leadership in school, since not all Saudi universities include educational leadership or professional administration in bachelor's programs" (p. 123). As a result, the MoE has been unable to fill principal positions with suitably qualified candidates (Karim, 2014; Mathis, 2010).

Principal role and authority

School principals hold an administrative position that has become more important within the MoE since gaining more power in 2011. Principals are accountable for all areas of the education system inside schools. According to the MoE (2015), school principals are responsible for reaching Ministry goals and principals' choices are perceived to directly influence the success or failure of a school. Principals make decisions daily about their school although the MoE's policies and directives regarding the principals' functions guide these decisions. There are 28 official functions:

- Follow up on the implementation of operational plans by the Ministry; implementation of rules and regulations in the school.
- Follow up on educational decisions and instructions in the school, preparation of the annual plan for the number of new teachers and classrooms, as well as follow up on the implementation of plans after adoption.
- Providing suggestions and supervising the opening, combining, moving, or separating classes in the school.
- Overseeing the preparation of the annual budget for the related subdivisions.
- Revising the curriculum based on comments received from teachers with the relevant authorities.

- Preparing periodic reports about school workflow and the most prominent difficulties of a school and its staff.
- Participating in educational meetings set by the Ministry within and outside administration.
- Submitting proposals and ideas to the competent authority in the administration to improve the administrative and educational working methods at the office and school after examination.
- Allocating tasks to all staff in the school at the beginning of the year.
- Leading school programs and learning practices that place students at the center of the learning process.
- Participating in the development and evaluation of the school's teachers and ensuring the implementation of proper evaluation and assessment of all existing employees.
- Overseeing the evaluation of instructional materials including textbooks, computer programs, and library/media acquisitions.
- Providing the necessary time and resources for professional development of school staff.
- Coordinating and cooperating with educational supervisors and others who visit the school. ("Organizational Manual," 2015).

So many responsibilities highlight the importance of qualified and expertly trained principals.

2.1.2. Education Evaluation System in Saudi Arabia

In this section, I provide a brief history of the development of leadership and supervision, along with a general description of the education evaluation system in Saudi Arabia.

Before 2010, the education system in Saudi Arabia passed through four general phases: Inspection (1925-1956), Inspection of the Ministry of Education (1956-1964), Technical Inspection (1964-1996) (Hwaimel et al., 2003), and Instructional Supervision (1997-ongoing) ("Educational Supervision," 2016).

When the Inspection phase began in the 1920s, the section of the government responsible for education was the General Directorate; the inspectors resided in and remained informed about the happenings in schools in the area for which they were

responsible. Inspectors' tasks included classroom observations, teacher evaluations, the preparation of a yearly report, and suggestions to the Education Directorate on the advancement of education. However, they often delegated these jobs to principals (Principal Resident Inspectors) because of a lack of individuals in the position. Yet, despite this handing over of tasks to the principal, the MoE did not hire additional inspectors. This system continued until 1956 when the MoE created a new inspector position, Division Inspector (Hwaimel et al., 2003).

During the second phase, Inspection of the Ministry of Education (1956-1964), the MoE concluded that separating technical and administrative inspections would be valuable. Administrative inspectors were supposed to visit each school three times every year. The specific goal was to inspect administrative and scholastic features and to enforce regulations set by the MoE. In many cases, the intension of supervisory visits was to find faults or weaknesses. During this phase, inspectors identified shortages in teachers and support staff in schools (Hwaimel et al., 2003).

As the education system continued to evolve, the system entered its third phase, Technical Inspection, in 1964. The MoE changed the title of Administrative Inspector to Education Director. The focus of inspection changed from academic to pedagogical; the MoE encouraged teachers and supervisors to have closer relationships and provided school administrators support in their supervisory duties. Though the name change suggested a shift from an administrative direction to a more scientific focus of inspection, the actual inspection system changed very little; however, one aspect of change that did occur was the creation of "inspectorate offices". These offices were responsible for ensuring equal distribution of schools among inspectors in an area, reviewing the inspectors' reports, and finding solutions to educational issues (Hwaimel et al., 2003).

In 1970, for the first time in Saudi Arabia's education history, the MoE assigned clear duties to principals. The responsibilities included monitoring administrative issues, observing students' learning progress, and supervising the work of teachers and the behaviour of students.

In the late 1970s, the MoE established a school administration section in all departments of education in the Kingdom. This step was to ensure that the MoE was

assigning specific and accurate administrative functions to principals and educational management supervisors.

By 1981, the MoE decided to establish a General Department of Educational Direction across Saudi Arabia. This new administrative reform aimed to change the nature of administrative work within the education departments. Each education area became a solitary unit. For example, the School Management Unit supervised principals and their assistants only. The management unit was responsible for the selection process of principals and the organization of administrative work and educational supervision within schools. Furthermore, it was responsible for principals' evaluations, which resulted in the introduction of a standardized evaluation for all education staff.

In 1991, a committee consisting of three government agencies issued an evaluation form that would only apply to education employees. The committee included the General Department of Planning and Development of Civil Service, the MoE, and Professors of Education from the University of Imam Muhammad bin Saud. The objectives of the new evaluation form included: ensuring that reform was functional so that there was improvement to the working environment within education; verifying that employees had the appropriate skills; guaranteeing equality among employees; encouraging professional development through additional education; and providing rewards for innovation and job dedication among employees (Hwaimel et al., 2003).

Starting in 1997, and still continuing today, is the fourth stage, Instructional Supervision. The MoE introduced a new practice for supervisors—an emphasis on academic supervision and staff development activities. The MoE wanted to move the educational supervision system away from its old supervisory style to a style that was more modern. This included reducing the centralized bureaucracy of the MoE, increasing principals' powers, and improving the quality of school supervision in order to improve the performance of educators and the educational process. As such, supervisors became responsible for visiting educators in their schools so they could observe them for evaluation purposes ("Educational Supervision," 2016; Hwaimel et al., 2003).

The MoE issued new regulations for mean public schools in 2000, followed by principals receiving greater power in 2001. The MoE transferred 31 responsibilities to

school principals as a first step toward improving education. Many in the field of education noticed tasks were often no longer relevant to the position of principal and more than one department was often completing the same task (“Organizational Manual,” 2015).

Two years later, in 2003, an enormous shift in the hierarchy within the MoE emerged. The MoE merged boys and girls school administration offices in an effort to reduce the amount of bureaucracy and lower costs within education across Saudi Arabia. Each region also assumed full responsibility for the education within its borders (“Organizational Manual,” 2015).

In 2011, the management process for overseeing schools changed. There was the implementation of new powers for district office administrators, as well as an increase in authority and control for superintendents and school principals. The hope was that these changes would eliminate bureaucracy and improve the educational process over the coming years. The 2011 reform assumed that principals would work to meet the internal demands in a changing environment within education in order to facilitate tasks and reduce the workload of the General Department of Education (“Organizational Manual,” 2015).

Most recently, at the end of January 2015, the Saudi government enacted a new policy integrating the Ministry of Higher Education, which was responsible for post-secondary education, and the Ministry of Education, which oversaw K through 12. The government decided the new ministry, which went into effect immediately after its announcement, would continue to use the name Ministry of Education (“Saudi Press Agency,” 2015).

2.2. Evaluation Introduction

When researching the definition of evaluation, several meanings and purposes emerged. Some of the definitions shared common characteristics including, "the making of a judgment about the amount, number, or value of something" (“Evaluation,” 2017). Other definitions went further to explain that it is a process for making judgements using clearly stated objectives about situations, responsibilities, or behaviours. Gullo (2005) added that within the field of education, evaluation is “the process of making judgments

about the merit, value, or worth of educational programs, projects, materials, or techniques” (p. 7).

The word evaluation is often seen as similar to assessment; however, there are clear differences in their meanings. Gardner (1992) defined assessment as, “The obtaining of information about the skills and potentials of individuals, with the dual goals of providing useful feedback to the individuals and useful data to the surrounding community” (p. 90). Gullo (2005) noted, “Assessments may be used during the process of educational evaluation in order to make these judgments” (p. 7).

When researchers discuss evaluation and assessment, the terminology can sometimes be confusing. However, both terms are a method for obtaining a reference point regarding the performance outcomes of individuals, organizations, or other subjects (Williams, Persaud, & Turner, 2007). The confusion of these terms is understandable as they may be used differently within different contexts.

Principals’ evaluation and assessment have two important purposes, formative and summative. Condon and Clifford (2012) stated,

An assessment used for summative purposes tends to inform a decision about the test taker’s competence, and there is no opportunity for remediation or development after completion. An assessment used for formative purposes is also a measure of competence, but results are used to inform future actions. (p. 1)

However, while summative evaluation provides knowledge about general competencies, they do not offer information for development once completed. Formative assessments gauge competency in a way that provides individuals results they can use for future decisions, including those related to professional development (Condon & Clifford, 2012; Clifford, Hansen, & Wraight, 2014).

The literature in educational leadership highlights that both formative and summative processes play an important role in evaluation when developing goals and objective for principals (Matarazzo, 2014; Parylo, Zepeda, & Bengtson, 2012). Davis and Hensley (1999) stated, “A combination of formative and summative evaluation procedures is critical to the development of successful principals” (p. 389). Cullen (1995) explained:

The term formative may be applied to an evaluation system that seeks to continue the development of or to improve the subject of the evaluation; . . . Summative evaluation, on the other hand, refers to an evaluation system that seeks to provide a statement or summation of the evaluatee's performance, usually as an aid to decision making, but also possibly to fulfill legal or bureaucratic requirements. (p. 354)

Parylo et al. (2012) noted that the feedback provided from a formative design “allowed for constant reflection and professional growth” (p. 231). Other researchers are in agreement with Parylo et al. (2012) - including professional development in an evaluation process is essential for improving the effectiveness of principal evaluation (Anderson, 1991; Brown-Sims, 2010; Portin, 2009; Lashway, 2003). Furthermore, Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon (2014) noted that recent evaluation systems lean towards using formative methods as a way to blend assessment of principal practice with advancing their professional development.

Though the circumstances and contexts for evaluation vary from one organization to another, researchers have identified specific target areas that all evaluations should include. Normore (2004) noted, “One of the necessary steps in developing an evaluation system is to clarify the objects, purposes, and standards that will be used” (286–87). Goldring et al. (2009) noted that evaluation must be able to identify a principal’s true practice through reliable data gained through assessment. Moreover, researchers have suggested that evaluation should help principals improve their work performance and allow evaluators to confirm principals are meeting their performance expectations (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Clifford & Ross, 2012; Davis et al., 2011; Fuller & Hollingworth, 2014; Sun & Young, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000).

According to Catano & Stronge (2007), principal evaluation should identify beforehand the performance expectations for principals. The authors stated that all expectations included in an evaluation process need to be well defined and standards-based. Moreover, evaluation designers must be cautious when creating evaluation instruments; “Evaluation instruments are powerful communication tools that serve to articulate the responsibilities deemed important for principals to execute” (Catano & Stronge, 2007, p. 394). They reasoned when a principal is knowledgeable about his/her job expectations, it is more likely he/she will seek to achieve them (Catano & Stronge, 2007).

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation defined evaluation as "the systematic assessment of a person's performance and/or qualifications in relation to a professional role and some specified and defensible institutional purpose" (Gullickson & Howard, 2009, p. 3). For the purposes of this research, the definition of principal evaluation is a procedure school districts use, which includes specific criteria, to assess principals' performance in Saudi Arabia with the objective of improving principals' practice and/or supporting professional development. Furthermore, the purpose of evaluation includes, at times, addressing administrative priorities such as the promotion, dismissal, or transferring of principals.

The work of a principal is incredibly complex; a principal accepts responsibility for a wide range of areas. Consequently, principal evaluation is complex and faces significant challenges. Along with the reasons stated above for the purposes of evaluation, researchers have suggested for example, school culture (Deal & Peterson, 2016; McEwan, 2003) and student achievement (Dhuey & Smith, 2014; Marzano et al., 2005) should receive a strong focus.

First, school culture is an important part of an education environment because it greatly affects the teachers and students in a school. A school's culture is "founded upon the assumptions, beliefs, values, and habits that constitute the norms for that organization - norms that shape how its people think, feel, and act" (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 131). According to MacNeil, Prater, & Busch (2009), positive school culture emphasizes the capacity for which individuals remain unambiguous, while also having support and acceptance. For the organization, proficiency for tolerating stress while maintaining constancy and responding to the outside demands are part of school culture. Similarly, a principal must act in a way that creates such an environment while also coping effectively with the demands of the school culture. When this has been achieved, the school culture will be more able to adapt to change, which can result in improved learning for students (MacNeil et al., 2009).

Moreover, other researchers have noted that school culture includes school safety, attitudes of students and staff, and a sense of community as well as the atmosphere of a school. Carpenter (2015) pointed out that instruction and school culture are both essential and must occur concurrently so that one can support the other.

According to Deal & Peterson (2016), principals who accept challenges in a positive way will have more success building a strong school culture. In order to build positive school culture, several researchers have suggested that principals must ensure that collaboration exists within a school. For example, when a principal encourages the staff in a school to work collaboratively in solving instructional problems, it becomes easier to address learning issues within a school (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). Waters et al. (2004) also noted for a principal to be successful at fostering a positive school culture, the principal will need to have a clear plan to improve a negative situation. When a principal is successful in this area, the changes he/she implements are more likely to have a positive effect and result in successful schools (Dhuey & Smith, 2014; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Marzano, et al., 2005; Stronge, 2013). As a result, it is important that the effectiveness of a principal's ability to foster a strong and positive school culture be assessed. If they are lagging in the skills for shaping a school's culture, intervention to provide support and learning opportunities to those principals will help support improvement in the school overall.

The second focus for evaluation researchers have pointed to is student achievement; principals who are working as a facilitator for positive transformation can influence student achievement (Dhuey & Smith, 2014; Gaziel, 2008; Goldring, et al., 2009; Louis, et al., 2010; Marzano et al., 2005). Elliott and Clifford (2014) noted that it is possible to sustain systemic performance accountability by monitoring student achievement. As such, many modern principal evaluations models focus on school leadership actions that influence student achievement. I explain more about the different models later in this chapter (see section 2.6 Evaluation and Assessment Models).

In summary, fields across the board require the assessment and/or evaluation of individuals for a variety of reasons. With respect to the assessment and evaluation of principals, reasons for these processes in the literature include reaching school goals, ensuring continued advancement, identifying strengths and weaknesses, supporting professional growth, and making decisions regarding staff. However, in Saudi Arabia, the evaluation does not include most of these objectives. Based on the definitions of formative assessment and summative evaluation, principals in Saudi Arabia experience a summative evaluation only. The purpose of evaluating principals is to determine success or failure of a principal at the end of each year.

Moreover, the objectives of evaluating school principals in Saudi Arabia are vague and poorly designed. In general, the evaluation system does not reflect what a principal does or how they are doing because its purpose is to evaluate everyone in the system and covers many areas at the same time. More details about this are in the next section Evaluation and Assessment in the Saudi Context.

2.3. Evaluation and Assessment in the Saudi Context

The Ministry of Civil Service in Saudi Arabia is responsible for creating the processes and methods for evaluation; however, it created the current evaluation more than 25 years ago. Furthermore, the evaluation instrument for all education employees is the same across Saudi Arabia—resulting in an assessment that is not necessarily tailored to the needs of the specific positions.

The MoE is in charge of all legislation, decision-making, and planning related to education in Saudi Arabia. According to Rugh (2002), “The national government in [Arab countries] plays a dominant role in education, for most schools and universities. It typically controls curricula even at private schools. Most teachers are government employees. And most education is publicly financed” (p. 399). The local superintendents, however, have no control or say in the decisions the MoE makes, despite the fact that they are the ones implementing the MoE’s instructions. Moreover, despite the differences in geographical and cultural settings in Saudi Arabia, all education districts and organizations are set up to be organizationally the same (Sonbol, 2004).

The Ministry of Education uses the Ministry of Civil Service’s standard evaluation instruments and format. Furthermore, all school districts within Saudi Arabia use the same form (see Appendix A) to evaluate teachers, principals, and supervisors at all grades levels (elementary, intermediate, and high school) (“Ministry of Civil Service,” 2014). This arrangement is a clear example of how highly centralized the Saudi education system is.

There are four sections in the standard Saudi evaluation form. The first section, preliminary information, includes general information about an employee including the name and address of the school where they work, employee name, qualifications, and years of experience. The second section includes the evaluation elements; I have

included additional information about section two's evaluation elements in the following section. The third section includes the evaluation instrument scores from section two that evaluators use to calculate a final overall score. The final section includes the evaluators' notes about the employee.

2.3.1. Educational Assessment: Evaluation Elements

Section two includes most of the summative evaluation instrument elements. This section measures 20 criteria that cover three standards: functionality, personal qualities, and relationships in the workplace.

The functionality standard has 12 sub-criteria, which evaluators use to measure an employee's job performance. The sub-criteria are: commitment to using traditional Arabic, ability to make decisions, cognitive growth, ability to develop and implement school initiatives, work attendance, organization skills, knowledge of educational foundations, ability to organize school activities, ability to monitor staff, understanding of the integration of education, respect for the school environment, and knowledge of lesson preparation. All criteria within the functionality section focus on the general performance of an employee; there are no specific criteria for principals. The section for personal qualities focuses on assessing the employee's behaviour, such as respect for responsibility and accepting supervisor guidance. The final section, relationships within the workplace, evaluates principals' relationships with their superiors, coworkers, students, and parents.

The 12 functionality criteria constitute 68% of the total evaluation score. The personal qualities criteria have a total grade of 20 out of 100 and relationships within the workplace criteria have a total grade of 12 out of 100. Employee ratings from the scores are 90 to 100, excellent; 80 to 89, very good; 70 to 70, good; 60 to 69 satisfactory; and less than 60, unsatisfactory.

The education system in Saudi Arabia has gone through great change since its creation in 1932, but the evaluation system has not seen any changes in the past 25 years. The MoE uses the same evaluation model and standards for all education districts, organizations, and employees. However, because of the recent changes to the education system, these standards may no longer be sufficient for effective evaluation of

principals and require review to see if the MoE needs to make adjustments so that its evaluation system is relevant in the current education era.

2.4. Empirical Research on Leadership and Leadership Evaluation in Saudi Arabia

During the last 50 years, countries around the world have given education evaluation much attention, and yet, it was during this time that Saudi Arabia was introducing formal education. As a result, existing Saudi literature on practical evaluation issues in education is limited to very few articles. In order to provide context about the existing research and trends, I have reviewed Saudi based research studies about leadership and principals.

2.4.1. Leadership and Management Research on Saudi Arabia

While searching existing research literature, I found many articles related to education leadership and management in Saudi Arabia but little directly about principal evaluation. For example, Aseri (2016), Ayaserah and AL-Harthy (2015), and Otaibi (2009) conducted studies about education management skills; Badrani (2011) looked at the barriers to administrative creativity for principals; Abu-Nasser (2010) researched strategic planning; and Aloathyanee (2014) and Al-Shatwey (2016) examined job satisfaction of principals. Other areas of educational leadership research also covered professional competencies of school principals (Mjnonay, 2011; Twairqi, 2015) and the system for selecting principals (Al-Wthinany, 1998; Al-Khessaiban, 2002). Furthermore, several studies examined principals' perceptions of the new 2011 reform authorities (Allheaniy, 2012; Alhumaidhi, 2013; Alotaibi, 2013; Meemar 2014). Finally, a number of studies examined educational leadership behaviour in Saudi schools (Aldarweesh 2003; Alsufyan 2002; Badawood, 2003; Khalil & Karim, 2016). In order to understand the existing research, I provide a detailed description of some of the research below.

Within the Saudi education system, a large portion of the formal work of principals is managerial. Ironically, this is the result of its centralized education system (Hakem, 2012). The Saudi Arabian government controls and operates the Ministry of Education. The General Education Department operates within the Ministry of Education's centralized hierarchy. District offices work directly within the General

Education Department, and schools operate within the district. Researchers have concluded the failures of the Ministry of Education's management are the result of holding on to old routines, remaining inflexible, possessing an inability to make decisions, and hesitating to exercise their powers (Aleem, 2009; Ahamed, Abo Alwafa, & Hajrey, 2011).

The above-mentioned information, specifically that Saudi principals manage more than lead, highlights the importance of managerial skills for education leaders in Saudi Arabia. Understanding and improving principals' management skills is necessary for developing the educational system (Aseri, 2016).

In his study at the General Department of Educational in Jedah, Aseri (2016) found leaders faced several issues and challenges in their management role. The challenges include fear of decision-making, an inability to identify the optimal solution, anxiety from decision-making pressure from senior management, and the interests of the community.

Otaibi (2009) has also explored the challenges principals faced in their work. He conducted a study to examine the decision-making process at the MoE in the Saudi capital of Riyadh. The study included 11 educational leaders from various sections of the General Directorate of Education. Otaibi (2009) found that the decision-making process of the MoE creates difficulties for principals. Principals struggle to determine priorities for achieving goals.

Researchers have identified that principals encounter challenges and barriers in their job. For example, Alsufyan (2002) studied the factors that affect Saudi principals in secondary schools. He interviewed 50 principals in Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh. He explored the perceptions of principals about the key difficulties and barriers to identifying and solving problems, as well as implementing effective initiatives. Alsufyan (2002) found Saudi principals believe the centralized bureaucratic process of the MoE is a major issue; principals are not capable of resolving issues in their schools because of a lack of power to influence change, insufficient resources, a shortage of schools, and a lack of training. It is important to note principals did not control the hiring and training of teachers at the time of the study.

Several researchers have looked at how principals, and others involved in education, perceive a principal's role, responsibilities, and authorities. In one study, Aldarweesh (2003) investigated the leadership behaviour of elementary school principals in the Eastern Province in Saudi Arabia. For her study, 28 female principals and 268 female teachers in the region of Al-asha completed a survey. The goal of the study was to identify teachers and principals' observations of leadership behaviour. Her findings indicated teachers and principals perceive principals' leadership similarly. In her study, approximately 67 percent of respondents believed that principals had a low level of training and instruction for holding the position. Accordingly, Aldarweesh (2003) suggested organizations hire principals that have more advanced training and leadership preparation.

A second study also looked at participants' beliefs about leadership. Badawood (2003) studied the perceptions of 31 principals and 5 core teachers regarding principals' beliefs about leadership at private boys' high schools in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The results from his study showed that principals felt learning leadership skills are both important and valuable. Badawood (2003) suggested that the MoE accept the importance of leadership programs for increasing principals' leadership skills and the importance of inviting teachers to take part in assessing principals' performance.

Additionally, Mathis (2010) conducted a qualitative study that focused on the perspectives of principals regarding their role in the Eastern Province in Saudi Arabia. Her goal was to describe female principals' leadership roles. Her sample included twelve female public school principals. Mathis (2010) found that principals saw their role as being managerial, not as educational leaders. Furthermore, she noted principals perceived a lack of power and training within their position. The principals explained that they, especially when they were new principals, relied on other principals and the internet to gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Mathis (2010) noted the cultural beliefs of the 12 participating principals strongly influenced results.

Finally, in 2015, Al-Ayaserah and AL-Harthy conducted a study entitled School principals' duties in Saudi Arabia. They found that most school principals spend up to 80% of their day focused on managerial tasks instead of instructional matters. Management tasks identified in the study were organization administration, personnel

management, student and teacher management, services, and facilities management as well as financial management (Al-Ayaserah & AL-Harthy, 2015).

As noted by Kotter (1996), “the essence of management ... is controlling the process to keep it on track” (p. 105), showing leaders need to balance leadership and managerial skills. Yet, according to the literature regarding the challenges that principals face in management skills in Saudi Arabia, the MoE fails to provide guidance to current principals about this issue (Aseri, 2016; Ayaserah & AL-Harthy, 2015; Otaibi, 2009). In addition, the MoE fails to help principals improve their management abilities, as there is no effective system for monitoring and developing school principals (Habib, 2005). For example, a healthy evaluation process can assure that the administrator has goals appropriate to his level of responsibility and in line with overall school system goals. The process may aid the administrator in the improvement of his performance and provide a basis for merit pay adjustment (Miqdadi et al., 2014).

2.4.2. Modern Context

The 2011 a new wave of education administration reform in Saudi Arabia greatly affected principals. While past concerns remain, researchers have identified new challenges, including how principals deal with substantia new authority.

In reviewing literature about the 2011 reform, I found four studies dealing with principals' present authority (Allheaniy, 2012; Alhumaidhi, 2013; Alotaibi, 2013; Meemar, 2014). These four studies identify principals' concerns and perceptions of their new responsibilities.

In the first of these studies, Allheaniy (2012) looked at three areas of principals' new responsibilities and powers - administrative, technical, and financial. Results demonstrated that school principals had strong opinions on the issue of administrative and technical authorities, but their views regarding financial authorities were quite low. The overall findings from this study suggested that school principals require more financial responsibilities.

Alhumaidhi (2013) conducted the second study; he evaluated the kinds of obstacles facing secondary school principals when exercising their new powers. The study's objectives were to identify the specific administrative and technical barriers

hindering school principals from exercising the authority delegated to them. The study included 122 secondary school principals and 33 supervisors from the city of Riyadh. The conclusions were quite distinctive. The principals, in general, claimed their authority lacked flexibility, coupled with the fact that there were many administrative tasks confronting them. Furthermore, they believed there is a lack of good administrative staff, and school staff was ill prepared for their tasks. In addition, the school principals complained of inadequate facilities and equipment, insufficient funding for improvements and a lack of financial resources for principals. The principals' suggestions included updating school facilities, making more technical equipment available, increasing schools' financial resources, and providing school principals with more financial allowances so that they could meet the school's needs when required.

In the third study, Alotaibi (2013) assessed the level of which principals use their new administrative and technical powers. He also measured the impact of the authorities on improving school administration's functioning. The participants included 110 secondary school principals from the city of Taif. The extent to which principals exercised their administrative authorities, based on the results of the study, ranged from low and high, and depended on the specific issues involved. For example, the principals reported they exercised high authority on issues such as granting sick leave to their employees. On the issue of exercising other technical authorities, the principals reported a high to moderate degree range. Furthermore, they reported a high degree of authority for accepting students from schools located outside their district. Principals expressed they exercised their authority quite moderately when it came to the issue of contingency plan preparations. A good example of these authorities would be schools adopting programs to solve specific problems. Areas where principals exercised their authority to a low degree were in relation to cooperation with the private sector concerning the sponsoring of school programs and in the selection of assistant principals. The conclusions demonstrate that principals view their ability to use the new authorities as restricted in some areas.

Finally, Meemar (2014) conducted a study with principals who were part of the initial phase of the King Abdullah Public Education Development Project. The focus was on principals' perceptions of the new administrative and technical authorities. Specifically, this study explored: (a) the extent to which principals perceive they have the ability to implement the new authorities, (b) the level of support they perceive in

implementing the new authorities, (c) their beliefs on the effectiveness of the new authorities for achieving MOE outcomes, and (d) additions they would like to their current authorities (Meemar, 2014, p. 1). For the study, 173 school principals completed an online survey. The general findings confirm the idea that Saudi principals perceive their abilities as limited. Moreover, principals perceived having low to moderate backing when it came to exercising their new authorities. However, of those who participated, a small number believed that the authorities might possibly accomplish the goals of the MoE. From the multiple regression analysis, the duration in the position of principal, the perception of their ability to apply administrative changes, and their perceptions of support to implement technical authorities were the cornerstone to principals' beliefs about the effectiveness of the authorities for accomplishing the goals of the MoE.

The four research studies above give a general idea of how school principals see their new authorities. Principals perceive the level of support to use the authorities as low and thus, many feel the new authorities are not truly influencing their role or improving the education system.

2.4.3. The Saudi literature on evaluation

There are shortcomings in the current Saudi evaluation model for educational employees, including the fact that it is a unified evaluation model for all MoE staff. Research to date in Saudi Arabia about the work of school principals has focused primarily on administrative skills. The MoE has rarely taken into account the perspectives of researchers, principals, students, parents, and teachers with respect to the school system. The findings from previous evaluation studies regarding the evaluation instrument from more than 20 years ago (Qazi & Mubarak, 1993), as well as more recent studies (Ahmari, 2013; Al-Ghamdi, 2007), found the evaluation instruments are in need of transformation. The MoE has not clearly outlined the roles and responsibilities for principals in Saudi Arabia, and therefore, accurate evaluation is not possible.

One of the weaknesses of the current Saudi evaluation instrument is the uncertainty about the criteria within evaluation. The MoE has not clearly outlined the roles and responsibilities for principals in Saudi Arabia, and therefore, accurate evaluation is not possible.

Many studies have indicated that principals are often unsure of the criteria in their evaluation. Moussawi (2001) identified the major obstacle to principals' evaluation as the lack of a clear definition regarding the tasks for which a principal is responsible. Moreover, even when principals stated they were knowledgeable about the criteria, they believed the list was vague and pointed to aspects of their job that were less important (Yarrow, 2008).

In the study, *Saudi Principals' Job Responsibilities*, Habib (2005) used a quantitative approach to explore what principals saw as their most important work responsibilities. His sample included 201 principals from the city of Riyadh. He found building school culture, working well with parents, utilizing teaching aids, developing and implementing action plans, as well as an awareness of student achievement and staff training, are the most important responsibilities according to principals. Based on his findings, he concluded there is a need to expand Saudi principal evaluation to include leadership and management responsibility components.

Miqdadi et al. (2014) conducted a quantitative study titled, *Evaluation of Saudi Arabian School Principals: procedures and practices*. The researchers' goal was to uncover principals' views about the MoE's procedures for evaluating their performance. The study's sample included 272 principals selected from three Saudi education regions. The findings showed that the evaluation criteria and procedures were not clear to participants. Additionally, they found the evaluation instrument were not in line with their understanding of principals' best practice. Furthermore, the results indicated the principals' evaluation rating was different from one school to another, and from region to region, even though supervisors were using the same evaluation instruments; they identified the reason for this discrepancy as being a lack of objectivity. Finally, they recommended principal evaluation instruments include leadership aspects and be linked to their real practice.

Khalil and Karim (2016) did a review of Saudi Arabia's school leadership literature defining and describing a principal's role. Their findings showed procedures for supervision and evaluation are an obstacle to principals' organizational leadership. They confirmed the main challenge for principals is they have no clear performance criteria. In addition, Khalil and Karim (2016) noted, "Another common complaint principals had with their assigned supervisors is their roles as evaluators rather than supervisors, assuming

evaluators offered critique, while supervisors advise if principals did receive a poor performance evaluation” (p. 514).

In order to improve education in Saudi Arabia, principals must have a clear set of work tasks that the MoE can fairly assess. Habib (2005), Khalil and Karim (2016) and Miqdadi et al. (2014) noted evaluation of school administration is crucial; principals must have clear performance criteria but the current evaluation is in need of modification.

Adapted Models for the Saudi Context

Some researchers have tried to create a principal evaluation model that would work within an Arab context. For example, Nassar (1997) constructed a model to evaluate the performance of school principals based on four main components: students’ achievements, personal aspects, the principal’s relationship with school staff members, and the successful use of procedures and regulations. As part of his model, he included four criteria to evaluate school leadership: clarity of objectives, clear delineation of responsibilities, use of all possibilities to serve the educational process, and a strong communication system within the school, local community, and other educational bodies. However, Nassar (1997) failed to describe the theoretical framework he used when adopting a systematic derivation of evaluation standards.

In addition, there have been attempts by several researchers to apply evaluation models from other countries to the Arab gulf state context. For example, Moussawi (2001) developed an Arab version of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) that Hallinger and Murphy (1985) created to measure the effectiveness of principals. PIMRS includes the dimensions of instructional leadership with an emphasis on the development of learning to increase student achievement (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Hallinger and Murphy (1985) divided these dimensions into 10 precise instructional leadership functions: “Frame the school goals, Communicate the school goals, Supervise and evaluate instruction, Coordinate the curriculum, Monitor student progress, Protect instructional time, Maintain high visibility, Provide incentives for teachers, Promote professional development, and Provide incentives for learning” (p. 221).

In Moussawi’s (2001) Arab version of PIMRS, the measures included 71 elements covering eleven different tasks for school leaders. Moussawi (2001) applied his

version to a sample of secondary school teachers and found that the Arabic version of Halinger's measurement tool has properties that allow it to accurately measure and assess school leadership within a gulf state context.

In a recent study titled, *Modification and Adaptation of the Program Evaluation Standards in Saudi Arabia*, Alyami (2013) set out to examine the appropriateness of The Joint Committee Standards for Educational Evaluation. Included in the study were five groupings (Utility, Feasibility, Propriety, Accuracy, and Evaluation Accountability) and 30 standards. The goals of the study included looking at the Saudi context, identifying the level of appropriateness for the use of The Joint Committee Standards for Educational Evaluation in Saudi Arabia, and identifying the standards that do not fit a Saudi environment. Alyami's (2013) study used the Delphi technique and included 55 government agency employees from different educational areas from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The results indicated The Joint Committee Standards for Educational Evaluation would require modifications in order to fit the Saudi context. The standards identified as being the most conflicting were comprehensibility of language and religion as well as meta-evaluation, primarily because of its newness in Saudi evaluation practice. Alyami (2013) believed that having standards unique to the Saudi context would lead to creating an assessment that would benefit evaluators and provide them guidance regarding evaluation standards training.

Teachers' views about principals' evaluation

An additional weakness in current principal evaluation instrument is the discrepancy between how principals perceive their responsibilities compared with others' perceptions—there are clear differences in how people within education perceive principal performance. Fallatah (2001) studied principal performance in public secondary schools in Saudi Arabia from the point of view of teachers and educational supervisors. The findings revealed teachers and supervisors believe principals spend more time on administrative duties than on educational issues. In addition, he found participants did not believe the current evaluation system encourages principals to be creative and that the evaluation system penalizes deviations resulting from creativity. Moreover, his findings suggested elements of the evaluation instruments give principals the opportunity to guess during the evaluation process and that there is ambiguity in the evaluation concepts and terminology. Finally, he found there is a need to involve teachers in the

principals' evaluation process. Fallatah (2001) recommended further studies in this field to examine the differences in perception about the evaluation instrument.

Al-Ghamdi (2007) and Hamdan (2013) researched teachers' attitudes about the performance of principals. They conducted their studies with two goals in mind. The first goal was to identify the level of effectiveness of principals in Riyadh and Medina. The second had both researchers exploring teachers' perspectives about the use of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) measurement tool in order to achieve the education goals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Although Al-Ghamdi's (2007) sample was 450 male teachers in secondary and elementary schools and Hamdan's (2013) sample was 780 female teachers in high schools, the results of both studies were almost the same. Both concluded that the effectiveness of the performance of school principals using PIMRS from the point of view of the teachers was high for the PIMRS instructional dimension, especially for providing learning incentives for supervisory and evaluation instruction.

Teachers' Evaluation

In order to address issues regarding evaluation, it is important to identify and understand previous findings about education evaluation in Saudi Arabia. While there is little research on the current principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia, there is research about teachers' evaluation. Because the evaluation form for all education employees, including principals, is the same in Saudi Arabia, I looked at research on teacher evaluation to gain a better understanding about issues regarding evaluation in general in Saudi Arabia.

Qazi and Mubarak (1993) presented research at the Second Conference of Teacher Preparation at the University of Umm Al Qura in Saudi Arabia about the views of teachers and supervisors regarding the Education Job Performance Form when used to evaluate teachers. The study sample included 530 participants - 216 supervisors and principals and 314 teachers. Results indicated that more than 70 percent of the participants believed evaluation instrument components do not reflect teachers' real performance. Furthermore, the overall results of the study showed that the teacher evaluation needs modifications in order to fulfill current educational goals and purposes.

Ten years later, Al Asem (2003) conducted a study similar to Qazi and Mubarak's (1993) study. The participants in Al Asem's (2003) study included 135 social studies

teachers and their supervisors. Results showed that neither teachers nor supervisors believed that the evaluation system provides a true image of the capabilities of teachers. In addition, neither was satisfied with the evaluation mechanism; 76 percent of participants believed that there were no benefits from the evaluation system and believed there was an urgent need to review and change the education evaluation instrument.

Ahmari (2013) conducted a study to look at potential evaluation instruments for evaluating English language teachers from the perspectives of specialists and English language supervisors and teachers. The study sample consisted of seven educational specialists at Umm Al Qura and Taif universities, 20 English language educational supervisors in Taif and Makkah, and 90 English language teachers in Taif. The researcher used a descriptive methodology, relying on a questionnaire, to collect data. He concluded that the current evaluation instrument does not fit with the English teachers' position and that it should be modified to make use of Ahmari's proposed English language teachers' evaluation form.

The findings from these studies clearly show that the current Saudi evaluation system in education is failing to meet the needs of all its employees. Without clear performance expectations delineated by role and level, it is difficult for organizational leaders in Saudi Arabia to overcome obstacles to effective evaluation (Karim, 2014). Finally, by having one standard evaluation instrument in education, it is impossible to receive accurate results about the performance of employees in a specific area of education.

2.4.4. Gap in Saudi literature on evaluation

Successful education is not possible without a strong administrative system and a structured leadership scheme that includes tools that accurately measure and assess outcomes. Education leaders are responsible for the success or failure of the school system they administer and guide. They effect the most change through their influence on student achievement (Cotton, 2003; Dhuey & Smith, 2014; Marzano et al., 2005), teachers' performance and all other related school programs (Salloum, 1991). As Hoy and Hoy (2009) stated, "School leaders are responsible for creating learning

organizations....[and] improving teaching and learning whether they are teachers, curriculum and instructional specialists, or administrators” (p. 2).

Louis et al. (2010) agreed with Hoy and Hoy (2009); they commented on their findings from a five-year research project,

To date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership. Why is leadership crucial? One explanation is that leaders have the potential to unleash latent capacities in organizations (p. 9).

The effects of principals and the significance of their effect on school success are not always clear; as such, it is in the best interest of the MoE to examine ways to better develop the characteristics and skills of effective principals. By enhancing the skills of principals, all school staff would experience change and improvement (Sousa, 2003).

Marzano et al. (2005) have also noted, “School leader’s ability to select the right work is a critical aspect of effective leadership. It might be the case that teachers and administrators in a low-performing school are working “hard” but not working “smart” in that they select interventions that have little chance of enhancing student academic achievement” (p. 97). Based on this view, it is important to accurately identify principals’ work tasks and formulate measurement tools that assess and evaluate their performance in order to achieve success in schools.

The demand for effective educational leaders extends to all individuals involved in the education process. In schools, principals are fully responsible for its success or failure. As such, it is crucial that the MoE ensures all efforts are in place to help principals develop in order to have a positive impact. This would include looking at the tools used to measure a principal’s work and success. Moreover, evaluation designers should base evaluation and assessment for principals, and all staff, on research and best practices. Yet, despite the importance of the role of school principals, we know little about the current evaluation system and how the MoE implements it in Saudi Arabia.

The major changes that have occurred in education in Saudi Arabia have affected the overall structure of the MoE. Specific to principals is the implementation of new authority. The significance of this change highlights the need for a study on the evaluation process and its measurement methods. Knowing how effective principals are at implementing the changes is essential.

There is limited empirical research on evaluation from Saudi Arabia. Despite the existing literature on principals' evaluation, there is a general lack of research about whether the evaluation and assessment process is accomplishing its goal of improving principals' performance. Moreover, it is unclear whether the implementation process of the principals' evaluation and assessment, the performance measurements for evaluation, and the feedback provided to principals and administrative educational supervisors are achieving their objectives.

According to the literature, principals' evaluation in Saudi Arabia fails to reflect their new authority and responsibilities. Past studies do not provide a complete picture of how evaluations assess principals in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, as noted in the review of the literature, the evaluations are unsupportive to influencing or guiding professional development for education employees' or furthering school effectiveness.

2.5. The literature on evaluation from a Western context

Saudi Arabia is not alone in experiencing struggles related to their education system and the evaluation of educational leaders. Studies from other countries have revealed that as schools struggle to meet their needs in high-accountability environments, unease is increasing with respect to the condition of educational leaders (Parylo et al., 2012).

The limited amount of research around principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia led me to look at studies from other countries. While looking at Western-based studies, I began questioning whether the results would be relevant to Saudi Arabia's education system. My personal conclusion and opinion is that because education is the progress of a nation's culture, it's usually entrenched in the nation's characteristics. This means that different studies and theories, from a different context, may help a country break out of its entrenched cultural norms.

That said, while there is a clear need to improve Saudi Arabia's education system, it is important to remain cautious when applying Western education theories and experiences to Saudi's system. The successful theories in Western-based research may not be appropriate in a Saudi context due to the difference in culture, standards, and context.

However, it is also important to consider that Saudi Arabia is still in the developmental stages regarding education systems, processes, and policies, compared to Western countries. This means that Saudi Arabia can learn from the experiences of those countries, and adapt information to better fit with its own cultural circumstances. As such, I believe Saudi education reform leaders should carefully consider learning from the experiences of Western education systems, while still conscientiously considering Saudi traditions, values, and social structures.

According to Davis et al. (2011), not much scientific literature is available in the field of principals' evaluation, and therefore, it is extremely difficult to evaluate the impact of principals' evaluation on the performance of students and teachers.

All the information regarding research on principal evaluation that follows is from researchers outside Saudi Arabia. As in the previous sections, I present the information study-by-study initially, it is then synthesised and discussed by theme in Sections 2.8 and 2.9.

2.5.1. The New Profile of a Principal's Role

In the 20th century, combinations of business management concepts and theories, as well as some ideas from the behavioral sciences, have been the base for defining the roles of educational leadership and principals (Murphy, 2005).

Over the past few years, the work profile of principals has changed and their responsibilities have increased (Fullan, 2014). Previously, they were only concerned with managing the day-to-day affairs of a school (Valentine & Prater, 2011). Principals mainly dealt with administrative issues such as ensuring the safety of the school buildings, managing finances, enforcing government laws and rules, and dealing with teachers, staff members, students, and parents (Walker, 2009). Slowly the role of principal has transformed and they are now direct instructional leaders. Community members, as well as higher levels of school administration, expect principals to guide schools in a particular direction by defining objectives, enforcing discipline, and assessing the performance of students (Portin, 2009; Valentine & Prater, 2011; Fullan, 2014).

Schools are taking steps to keep up with changing times and principals have had to change to keep up with the new beliefs and values. Moreover, many modifications

have occurred in the definition of school leadership in recent years (Fullan, 2016). In short, the role of principal in recent years is different and more complex than two decades ago (Fullan, 2016). According to Marzano et al. (2005) and Stronge et al. (2008), ensuring principals continue to make changes to their own professional behaviour monitored through assessment and evaluation is essential.

Principals play a central role in the successful running of a school, and any assessment or evaluation of their capabilities should be thorough, precise, and provide feedback that helps them to improve their performance and ensure their accountability (Gullickson & Howard, 2009). Moreover, Lashway (1998) noted, “Many instruments are based on perceptions, which are not always accurate, or have been developed in a corporate environment. When results are accepted blindly, they lose much of their value” (p. 19). However, meticulous scrutiny of evaluation processes is often unachievable; the creation and implementation of a comprehensive assessment covering the roles of school principals is a difficult task.

2.5.2. Evaluation Process and Tools

When an evaluation process is in place, principals can learn information about their personal behaviours and attitudes that may be affecting them negatively professionally and personally (Davis et al., 2011; Stewart & Matthews, 2015; Stringer & Hourani, 2016). However, education scholars have noted that achieving the intended purpose and benefit of principal evaluation is full of challenges (Goldring et al., 2009).

According to the literature, the methods for assessing and evaluating the performance of principals are unclear. Researchers have identified two main causes for the vague methods. First, there are no fixed criteria or methods to help in evaluating performance. Secondly, most principals and their superiors have different viewpoints regarding the process of evaluation and assessment (Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Reeves, 2009).

When Ginsberg and Berry (1990) conducted a thorough analysis of all research on the methods of evaluation for principals in the preceding thirty years, they discovered many different methods but no evidence to suggest which method was better. According to Ginsberg & Berry (1990), the evaluation process is generally dependent on customs

and represents a continuation of past methods used in the organization. This casual approach towards evaluation shows that there is no proper method or criteria for accurate evaluation. Instead, assessment is generally based on local organizational practices and personal preferences. The evaluation is not only subjective but does not conform to principles of scientific methods (Ginsberg & Berry, 1990).

Davis and Hensley (1999) conducted a study in northern California on the politics of principal evaluation. They interviewed 14 principals and 6 superintendents and found they viewed evaluation differently, often holding conflicting views of their purpose and usefulness. The principals in Davis and Hensley's (1999) study felt their evaluation process did not help them improve their performance and evaluators based their judgements on minimal data and the influence of other stakeholders, such as the school board and parents and/or guardians. Principals also mentioned ineffective short school visits and a minimal focus on day-to-day practices or successes as reasons for their dissatisfaction with their evaluation process. In contrast, superintendents were positive about the evaluations. They described processes as being followed and believed clear procedures were in place to support principals' development. However, both principals and superintendents admitted, "most feedback was qualitative and subjective in nature" (p. 391).

Thomas et al.'s (2000) research highlighted the difference in the perception of the effectiveness and value of existing evaluations methods. Principals indicated that there were a number of issues with the process. In particular, they pointed out a lack of opportunities to give and receive feedback, the absence of a mentoring system, and minimal onsite support visits. They claimed that evaluations did not take a broad view of their performance and instead focused on a restrictive set of defined criteria. Principals in the study also mentioned a lack of support for continuing professional development. Contrary to principals' views, superintendents had positive thoughts about the purposes and practices of principal evaluation. Thomas et al.'s (2000) concluded that principal evaluation is more meaningful to superintendents.

Reeves (2009) reviewed a lot of research about leadership evaluation and procedures. He observed the scope of leadership with respect to principals was broken. He found that only 18% of principals receive some kind of assessment. Moreover, he

found that many of those evaluated felt the process was “inconsistent, ambiguous, and counterproductive” (p. 2).

In addition, Reeves (2009) noted principals believed that evaluations are usually grounded on the personal feelings of the person who evaluated them rather than on measurable skills related to their actual performance. These findings had been observed earlier by Gaziel (2008), who had found that supervisors traditionally used subjective judgements in areas such as administrative skills, moral strength, his/her practical aptitude to deal with problems politically and his/her personality during principal evaluation.

Brooks & Voss (2008) indicated principal evaluations should be able to portray an effective principal using descriptors and indicators, but some do not. Moreover, other researchers have noted few evaluation systems have undergone validity testing and thus they may lack accuracy and consistency, may be outdated, or cannot be trusted (Condon & Clifford, 2012; Davis et al., 2011; Reeves, 2009). According to Reeves (2009), evaluation should not rate, categorize, or shame individuals; evaluation should be a way to improve performance in areas such as professional skills and implementation of new programs. Measurement of principals’ skills and job performance should address elements and criteria that are clearly defined using performance standards and rubrics; this would enable evaluators to measure elements of performance effectively (Reeves, 2009). Finally, Elliott & Clifford (2014) noted evaluation and assessment should be such that it improves and changes continuously.

A formal evaluation process is the best way to analyze the complex and often vague role of a principal. Lashway (1998) and Reeves (2009) commented that using evaluation tools helps to systematically collect valuable information about an individual’s qualities and performance for assessment purposes. The correct tools, carefully selected and appropriate to the situation, can deliver an in-depth evaluation that adds impartiality. The tool can be basic or multifaceted, with a number of individuals contributing to the process. It can also help a principal to reflect on his or her own performance, and support professional and personal development as well as measure effectiveness, all of which is vital to all evaluation tools (Lashway, 1998). The consequences of not providing principals with acceptable evaluation and assessment processes are clear when looking at the available studies in this subject area.

In *the Policies and Practices of Principal Evaluation: A Review of the Literature*, Davis et al. (2011) created a wide-ranging report about the effectiveness of principals' evaluation. They concluded that there is no reliable evaluation or assessment that measures the effectiveness of principals because of a failure in both design and implementation. However, older assessment methods usually emphasized the cognitive abilities of the principal and these intellectual capabilities received special consideration. Recently, however, current assessment and evaluation methods place more importance on the role played of principals as a leader in the field of education.

According to Condon and Clifford (2012), existing evaluation methods vary in both content and degree of complexity in different areas. In their study looking at principal evaluation in the United States, they identified the existence of 20 commonly used evaluation models for principals. In looking at these evaluation models, they concluded that only eight of the twenty were dependable and effective.

Muenich (2014) conducted a study entitled, *A Study of How Secondary School Principals in Minnesota Perceive the Evaluation of Their Performance*, to identify Minnesota principals' beliefs about principal evaluation processes. Munich (2014) looked at the perceptions of 124 secondary school principals about past practices, the responsibilities principals interpret as significant, and the ideas principals hold about the mandatory evaluation process set by the state. Though most principals reported receiving a formal evaluation, Munich (2014) noted the evaluation tools used were inconsistent between schools. Principals saw the evaluation as having been fair and consistent, and yet, only fifty percent of the participants saw the assessment as valuable or highly valuable in terms of its usefulness for professional growth.

In the educational field, evaluation often falls behind a long queue of directives and initiatives. Most often, the systems employed for evaluation are old, limited or do not have any credibility or use valid methods for measuring performance of principals (Condon & Clifford, 2012).

2.5.3. Evaluation Types

Evaluation data from narratives, assessments, artifacts, surveys, and rubrics as well as from sources like parents, stakeholders, supervisors, and teachers differs; the

inclusion of such a diverse information gathering options highlights the complexity and range of expectations (Sanders, Kearney, & Vince, 2012). Moreover, some researchers believe that individuals being assessed and evaluated should be included in the creation of the “evaluation and assessment process because “reflection, renewal, and growth are key pieces that we must promote and protect, working within the context of accountability mandated performance evaluations” (Harper, 2015, p. 80). When individuals are part of their evaluation and assessment process, such as with defining its goals, criteria, methods and tools, its accuracy increases (Amsterdam, Monrad, & Tonnsen, 2003; Gullickson & Howard, 2009).

Amsterdam et al. (2003) and Gullickson and Howard (2009) also expressed that principals should be a part of the evaluation system and its development. They assert principals are best versed with the nuances and dynamics of the jobs that are present in the district as well as in the respective schools. Moreover, because numerous stakeholders of a school are interested in a principal’s successes and failures, it is necessary to develop an evaluation system with collaborative input. Amsterdam et al. (2003) assert that if the stakeholders are involved in refining and determining the purposes, evaluating criteria and instrumentation, as well as the methods of data collection, the evaluation will be more accurate.

Most evaluation methods use a checklist to outline leadership qualities. However, we must be careful when judging a principal’s achievements based on a checklist. According to Ginsberg and Thompson (1992), a checklist does not accurately define the job profile of principals because their contribution is not only quantitative but also has an underlying impact that supervisors cannot measure, such as personal work style and use of innovative methods.

2.5.4. Role of Feedback

Evaluators are the main implementers of principal evaluation; to ensure the success of the evaluation process, they must execute plans and visit schools with the sole aim of conducting observations and providing feedback.

Researchers have commented on the importance of regular and consistent feedback for principals. Parylo et al. (2012) expressed that the provision of feedback is a

regular theme in the assessment of principals. Principals view feedback as the result of frequent visits by the superintendent to the school. These visits are what Parylo et al. (2012) stated as a process rather than an event. However, more often, the feedback is postponed and therefore no longer relevant. Moreover, supervisors fail to give feedback in terms of professional development (McMahon, Peters, & Schumacher, 2014).

A recent a study by Hvidston et al., (2015) looked at principals' perceptions about their evaluation and their supervisors' feedback. The study included 82 respondents from the Rocky Mountain region in Wyoming. The components they looked at included "Superintendent Performance, Principal Evaluation Components, Specific Feedback, Needs, and Reflective Feedback" (para, 1). Hvidston et al. (2015) acknowledged four features that would be present in an idyllic evaluation: professional growth; acknowledged responsibilities; higher success by students; and effort within the school to achieve improved instruction. The findings concerning principals' beliefs about superintendents indicated that the most important feature in the evaluation of principals is the abilities of superintendents. In addition, the principals also pointed out that an ideal evaluation would include feedback that improves instructional leadership.

A system of evaluation and assessment must be relevant as well as reliable and flexible so that it is possible to identify areas for improvement and enhance instruction opportunities through effective feedback. Principals can use the information from the evaluation process to increase their skills and knowledge and develop their approaches (Gullickson & Howard, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000). If assessments formed the basis of professional development for principals, they could help increase learning and improve education. Kimball et al. (2009) confirmed principal evaluations within formative purposes are a significant element to support and monitor leaders in their professional and personal development as well as school goals.

In their study titled, *Assessing the Promise of Standards-Based Performance Evaluation for Principals: Results from a Randomized Trial*, Kimball et al. (2009) explored principals' views of the effectiveness, objectivity, and quality of the evaluation process at a geographically diverse school district in the western United States. They randomly selected principals from the district and divided them into two groups, one group to be evaluated by an old evaluation system, the other by the new Standards-based Performance Evaluation system; the new evaluation system included features

from standards-based teacher evaluations. Concepts and elements from Reeves (2004) and Hessel and Holloway's (2002) models provided the base for the new Standards-based Performance Evaluation system. The researchers hypothesized that principals who are exposed to the new system may show the following:

1. Have clearer performance expectations;
2. Perceive receiving higher quality performance feedback;
3. Perceive that their evaluation was more useful in improving performance;
4. Perceive the system as more fair;
5. Be more satisfied with the evaluation system overall; and
6. Report spending more time and effort on job features emphasized in the new system. (p. 237)

The findings showed the new standards-based evaluation approach allowed principals to get frequent and continuous feedback and opportunities to improve. This model, however, rests on the understanding that the feedback from principal evaluated must be reciprocal, proactive, empowering, based on standards, true, and objective in nature. In general, the findings of this study showed principals in the standards-based performance group saw their evaluated more positively than those who were evaluated under the district's old system. Principals perceived the standards-based performance evaluated as being supportive to principals and closer to their expectations. Moreover, principals and supervisors recognized the quality of implementation as a critical part of effective principal evaluation systems. Finally, principals were happier with the feedback given through the standards-based evaluated; this suggests that principals who work in a system that outlines the work conditions as related to continued employment, including the feedback received through performance evaluations, had a higher level of job satisfaction.

Time and feedback

The amount of time supervisors spend on evaluation is a concern for many researchers. The amount of time supervisors spend in each school provides little opportunity to provide guidance to principals under the current evaluation system; for some districts, the evaluation is merely perfunctory work (Lashway, 2003; McMahan et al., 2014; Normore, 2004). However, many scholars recommend that evaluation and

assessment include adequate time for feedback in order to facilitate the improvement of educational leaders' performance (Davis et al., 2011; Gullickson & Howard, 2009; Jacques, Clifford, & Hornung, 2012; Kimball et al., 2009). These findings and suggestions indicate that the time dedicated to feedback might improve the quality of supervision sessions and in return help principals' professional development (Matarazzo, 2014; Parylo et al., 2012).

While there is limited data available regarding the type of feedback principals receive from their evaluations (Goff, Goldring, Guthrie, & Bickman, 2014), much literature supports the belief that an evaluation process may obtain essential information supervisors could use to provide feedback. Researchers have also noted that feedback would support and assist principals improve their performance (Aloathyanee, 2014; Davis et al., 2011; Gullickson & Howard, 2009; Hvidston et al., 2015; Parylo et al., 2012; Reeves, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000).

2.5.5. Principals' Performance and School Quality

A common quality of all effective principals is their capacity to assess the requirements of everyone involved with the school and their ability to fulfill these requirements to create a healthy work environment (Cotton, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005).

Twenty-five years ago, Ginsberg and Thompson (1992) stated that because of the greater demands on improving student performance with fewer resources, it is probable that accountability and assessment of principals will intensify. Later, Marzano et al. (2005) and Stronge et al. (2008) commented that improving principal practices would result in changes that create successful schools. Most researchers agree there is a need for principal evaluation and assessment practices (Reeves, 2009; Thomas, et al., 2000) and are skeptical about the present methods being used (Davis et al., 2011; Reeves, 2009).

However, since 2003, there have been many research studies showing a connection between students' achievement and principals' leadership (Dhuey & Smith 2014; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Jacobson, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Portin, Feldman, & Knapp, 2006).

Cotton (2003) conducted a review of 81 study reports about the connection between principals and student achievement. The findings indicated the range of roles a principal assumes is both numerous and broad; this far-reaching scope is the facilitator for effectively empowering a school to strive for improved student achievement. For Cotton (2003), “principals do have a profound and positive influence on student learning. The opposite is also true: High-achieving schools whose principals do not lead in these ways (the range of roles a principal assumes is both numerous and broad) are difficult to find” (p. 74).

In her review of studies about the effect of principal practice on student achievement, Cotton (2003) defined 26 behaviours within leadership practices that influence schools in positive ways, which she grouped into five categories. These five categories are:

The first is establishing a clear focus on student learning, including having a vision, clear learning goals, and high expectations for learning for all students. The second is interactions and relationships. This category includes behaviors such as communication and interaction, emotional/interpersonal support, visibility and accessibility, and parent/community outreach and involvement. The third is school culture, which includes such behaviors as shared leadership/decision making, collaboration, support of risk taking, and continuous improvement. The fourth is instruction, which includes such behaviors as discussing instructional issues, observing classrooms and giving feedback, supporting teacher autonomy, and protecting instructional time. The fifth and final category is accountability, which includes monitoring progress and using student progress data for program improvement. (p. ix-x)

In addition, one of the more notable studies was a meta-analysis conducted by Marzano et al. (2005). They found a positive correlation between principals’ leadership characteristics and student achievement in schools. During their meta-analysis, they identified “21 leadership “responsibilities” that have clear correlation between strong school leadership and student learning. These 21 leadership responsibilities are affirmation, change agent, communication, contingent rewards, culture, discipline, flexibility, focus, ideals/beliefs, input, intellectual stimulation, involvement with curriculum-instruction-assessment (CIA), knowledge of CIA, monitor/evaluate, optimize, order, and outreach” (p. 42). However, they found there is a lack of experiential studies that focus on the link between student success and leadership within schools. While Marzano et al. (2005) found that only 69 reports and articles from 5,000 studies

conducted in the past 35 years were compatible with their search requirements and considered this relationship, a close examination of the 69 studies highlighted a clear correlation between strong school leadership and student learning.

Additional researchers identified student outcomes as greatly influenced by school leadership. Leithwood et al. (2004) stated, "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 5). Moreover, Sammons, Gu, and Ko (2011) demonstrated there is an important indirect relationship between the leadership of a school and its quality; this relationship includes such things as student achievement and classroom procedures.

Heck and Hallinger (2010) examined the results of a group of related quantitative studies to learn how leadership influences and impacts student learning and school improvement. They compared the effectiveness of four conceptual methods to examine leadership pattern change, ability to improve the school, and the learning outcomes in 195 primary schools in the USA over a four-year period. Findings included collaborative changes were positively related to changes in school capacity; growth in math occurred with school improvements; a relationship exists between collaborative leadership changes and student learning improvement in math; and successful modifications to collaborative leadership and school improvement capacity have a positive effect on student achievement. The study supports the belief that school leadership is a complicated practice that affects students' results.

On the other hand, while some researchers have found that principal leadership has considerable influence on student achievement, others noted that the direct impact on student achievement is marginal (Robinson, 2007; Radinger, 2014). Others also noted, "To date, however, this discussion has been largely uninformed by systematic analysis of principals' impact on student outcomes" (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013, p. 69).

Other studies have indicated that student test results cannot be accurately connected to principals (Grissom, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2015; Fuller & Hollingworth, 2014; Fuller et al., 2015). For example, Fuller and Hollingworth (2014) commented on the use of students' standardized test results to measure principals' success. They noted the purpose of the exams is not to assess principals and "thus, at best, there is only mixed

support in the psychometric community for the use of student test scores that were originally designed to measure student achievement as a method to evaluate teachers, and by extension, principals” (p. 472). Fuller and Hollingworth (2014) suggested using the results to merely identify a starting point for which direction supervisors should look to conduct further examination.

2.6. Evaluation and Assessment Models

In looking at the existing literature, determining the right measuring tools for principal performance is not an easy task. However, as Brown and Irby (1996) stated, “New challenges have driven educators to search for innovative and appropriate methods of evaluating professional performance” (p. 3). The review of literature uncovered many models that focus on the development and efficacy of many principal evaluation instruments. Assessment and evaluation measures attempt to provide a foundation to effectively assess and evaluate the performance of principals and enhance leadership practices. For the assessment of leadership in education, assessment measures that have been closely studied include the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale PIMRS (Hallinger, Wang & Chen, 2013), Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education VAL-ED (Murphy, Goldring, Cravens, Elliott, & Porter, 2007), and Marzano School Leadership Evaluation Model (2013).

The results from using these instruments clearly shows that there is a need to outline in detail the administrative skills and capabilities of school leaders in order to take schools into new, more positive directions. The following is a brief summary of each assessment model.

2.6.1. Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education VAL-ED

Within the literature, the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) is the principle assessment instrument associated with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC, 2008). VAL-ED includes a 72-item survey that principals, supervisors, and teachers can complete. School principals, superintendents, and educators can use VAL-ED to measure principal effectiveness based upon evidence-based criteria.

Murphy et al. (2007) identified six core elements, six fundamental procedures for learning-centered leadership, and six key processes. They chose the fundamental procedural elements because of their identification in previous studies as being factors that improve a teachers' ability to teach and students' performance. These findings created the core of VAL-ED.

The six core components within VAL-ED are: high standard for student learning, rigorous curriculum quality instruction, culture of learning and professional behavior, connection to external communities, and systemic performance accountability.

The key processes refer to how leaders create core components; they "are leadership behaviors, most notably aspects of transformational leadership traditionally associated with processes of leadership that raise organizational members' levels of commitment and shape organizational culture" (Goldring et al., 2009, p. 5). The first key process, planning, is the explanation of approaches, processes, mutual direction, and rational guidelines to achieve high standards of learner performance. The second process, implementing, refers to integrating into practice undertakings required for reaching high standards for learner performance. Third is the process of supporting, which includes the accountability of the leaders to generate working conditions that protect and make use of political, human, technological, and monetary resources to uphold social and academic learning. In the fourth process, advocating, the focus of leaders is on learning success advocate for the best interest and wants of every student. Leaders support comprehensive curricula to ensure that learning hurdles are not result of school practices. Communicating, which is the fifth process, is the capacity of leaders to create, use, and preserve exchange systems among school members and its external societies. The final process is monitoring, which is the systematic compilation and study of data to make conclusions that direct the actions and decisions to ensure continuous improvement. Designers of VAL-ED incorporated eight vision features:

(a) to work well in a variety of settings and circumstances, (b) to be construct valid, (c) to be reliable, (d) to be unbiased, (e) to provide accurate and useful reporting results, (f) to yield diagnostic profiles for formative purposes, (g) to be used to measure progress over time in the development of leadership, and (h) to predict important outcomes. (Murphy et al., 2007, p. 24)

2.6.2. The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale PIMRS

Instructional leadership is a popular topic for educational researchers and academics (Hallinger et al., 2013). Included in the discussion is often the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). Hallinger (2003) noted, “This model shaped much of the thinking about effective principal leadership disseminated in the 1980s and early 1990s internationally” (p. 330).

PIMRS includes the dimensions of instructional leadership and non-instructional leadership with an emphasis on the development of learning in order to increase pupil achievement (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Hallinger and Murphy (1985) broke these dimensions into 10 precise instructional leadership functions: “Framing school goals, Supervising and evaluating, Protecting instructional time, Communicating school goals instruction, Promoting professional Coordinating curriculum development, Monitoring student progress, Maintaining high visibility Providing incentives for teachers, Enforcing academic standards and Providing incentives” (p. 221).

The base of PIMRS stems from a concept-based model that suggests having three dimensions as part of the role of instructional leaders. The dimensions are: Defines the School Mission, Manages the Instructional Program, and Develops a Positive School Learning Climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The three dimensions of instructional leadership are outlined in the 10 functions of instructional leadership.

The first dimension, Defines the School Mission, includes two functions: Frames the School’s Goals and Communicates the School’s Goals. The second dimension of the model, Manages the Instructional Program, describes the educational leader as the manager of instructional programs. This dimension includes three leader functions. The first function is supervising and assessing the instruction; the second is coordinating the curricula, and the third is monitoring the progress of the students. In the third dimension, Develops a Positive School Learning Climate, the functions include: ensuring the time of instruction, promoting professional growth, maintaining great visibility, and offering incentives to teachers and learners (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

In 2013, Hallinger et al. looked carefully at the reliability of PIMRS, one of the most commonly used instruments for surveying educational leadership in two areas, teacher and principal assessment. Moreover, they looked at the component subscales of

PIMRS with respect to their use in different settings and through cultural context. Hallinger et al. (2013) determined that PIMRS has proven its consistency in attaining evidence and offering reliable and valid information regarding principal leadership instructions.

2.6.3. The Marzano School Leadership Evaluation Model

Marzano established his School Leadership Evaluation Model, which has enabled school administrators to conduct evaluations on 24 instructional leadership elements (Marzano, 2013). Within the leadership model, the primary actions and behaviours for the assessment are divided into the five domains and 24 strategies.

The first domain is a data-driven focus on student achievement. This domain focuses on leadership actions and behaviours. The objective is to ensure a data-driven center of attention on student achievement is established. The second domain is continuous improvement of instruction. Domain two looks at why principals' actions and behaviours influence the school in its entirety. It also aims to ensure teachers' pedagogical skills are among the strongest tools for improving student learning. Furthermore, it ensures professional development of pedagogical skills. The third domain is a guaranteed and viable curriculum. The design of this domain is to ensure maximum student learning while teachers adhere to the approved curriculum. The fourth domain is cooperation and collaboration. This domain deals with the actions and behaviours of the school leader in terms of handling matters of teamwork and the efficient running of the school. The final domain is school climate. In the fifth domain, the school leader's actions and behaviours call for the creation, by every stakeholder involved in the school community, of an image that is both positive and well-functioning (Marzano, 2013).

2.6.4. Other Models

My review of the literature revealed many other models that focused on principal evaluation and assessment, but these models are limited in scope and researchers have not expressed support for their use. For example, there is the Essential Behavioral Leadership Qualities Model (EBLQ). In this system, supervisors measure a leader's qualities and capabilities against the pre-set standards of the EBLQ. These standards

include teachers' opinions and beliefs about the qualities of an effective leader. Unlike a forced choice questionnaire that other evaluation instruments use, the EBLQ uses an analytic process to assess participants' perceptions of critical and effective leadership behaviours. However, researchers have shown EBLQ is not effective because various aspects need to be controlled. Moreover, the Essential Behavioral Leadership Qualities (EBLQ) is "built on the assumptions that a leader should be evaluated on clearly defined behavioral qualities and his/her effectiveness rating should be standards based" (Oyinlade, 2006, p. 25); however, researchers have yet to define clearly the qualities of effective principals.

Oyinlade (2006) conducted a study of 294 teachers and 25 principals in 25 schools for the blind and visually impaired. He used the EBLQ survey to learn about the beliefs of teachers regarding effective leadership. The study revealed four behaviours of effective leaders: hardworking, understanding of policies, financially competent and possess good listening skills. However, researchers have yet to define clearly the qualities of effective principals.

Oyinlade (2006) identified three essential qualities: good listening skills, honesty, and fairness. One of the limitations of this study is Oyinlade included only 25 principals and they were all from schools for the blind and visually impaired. To address this, Oyinlade (2006) emphasized that this system needs additional testing in other settings and with different groups of participants. Moreover, he also suggested that modifications should be done according to the views of the participating subordinates. Since there are various aspects that need to be controlled, more research of the EBLQ method is required to determine the practicality of the assessment.

Derrington and Sanders (2011) sought to create another model using a framework to evaluate principals under a multi-dimensional approach. Based on their extensive research and experience, they conceptualized a model that could better addresses principals' evaluation needs. They surmised a principal evaluation system should focus on four components: "create and maintain a supervisory relationship based on trust, determine the competencies desired through selection of research-based leadership standards, describe performance in terms of the desired competencies by collecting data using multi-dimensional approaches, and make judgments and decisions based on the closeness of fit between the standards and principal performance as

supported by the data” (p. 33-34). Despite identifying these four components through a thorough review of the literature, Derrington and Sanders (2011) failed to provide empirical evidence of their four strategies. As a result, their strategies require additional research to confirm the instruments are valid and appropriate for practical use.

2.6.5. Summary

It is important that supervisors evaluate school principals despite it being a highly challenging task (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Goldring et al., 2009; Harper, 2015; Reeves, 2009). Principals’ performance evaluations would provide districts with further mechanisms for monitoring accountability in terms of getting results and addressing the need to ensure strong leadership practices are being reinforced (Condon & Clifford, 2012). Performing consistent evaluations assessment on principals will provide valuable information necessary in the development of professional learning plans as well as in charting professional growth, which school principals themselves and central office administrators would find very useful. Since the practices of the school principals and the influence they have on instruction are not quite clear, the task of evaluating and assessing them remains quite challenging.

Examining principals’ practice through evaluation could provide information that captures leadership and administrative practice qualities, which makes rich data on practice available. Principal assessment data could serve as an appropriate means of obtaining feedback on what school principals undertake in their work and for their school, as well as how they seek to improve students’ learning, but only if handled by principal evaluators who are experienced and well-trained.

Utilizing principal evaluation and assessment instruments makes it possible for expectation structures to become available to school principals. The desire for principals to strive for and meet the expectations outlined from the evaluation and assessment instruments is a natural process. Instruments used in examining the assessment of school principals establishes the extent to which instructional leadership conforms to the state accreditation levels so that professional levels are highlighted and can be improved.

The review of the evaluation models discussed above highlights different approaches for assessing school principals' performance. Moreover, they address the role that school principals play as instructional leaders and as members within the schools' learning communities. The most notable are elements related to leadership and student achievement. The principal evaluation models Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale, Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education and The Marzano School Leadership Evaluation Model measure the level to which principals fulfill different roles. PIMRS focuses on the principals as instructional managers. However, the focus of VAL-ED is on principals as instructional leaders while the Marzano Model investigates the ability of a principal to enhance school systems. Additionally, the means each model uses to collect data differ, but can include questionnaires, rubrics, or self-assessment. Table 1 provides a comparison summary of the three most respected measurement models of school leadership included in this review.

Table 1. Methods/Assessment: Comparing School Leadership Models

| Instrument | Number of Components | Content | Domains |
|--|--|---|---|
| Principal Instructional Management-Rating Scale (PIMRS) | <p>survey including 71 questions</p> <p>includes a review of 11 educational leadership subscales</p> <p>commonly used in the field of education</p> | <p>content validity comes from an analysis of the literature on instructional leadership</p> <p>documentation from schools is used to substantiate PIMRS scores</p> | <p>Defines the School Mission</p> <p>Manages the Instructional Program</p> <p>Develops a Positive School Learning Climate</p> |
| Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) | <p>evaluation tool</p> <p>includes 72 items</p> <p>distributed to principals, teachers and principals' supervisors</p> <p>yields a qualitative diagnostic profile</p> <p>linked to ISLLC Standards</p> | <p>content validity is founded in an analysis of literature examining conceptual frameworks</p> <p>factor analysis -shown to be effective at identifying central components and fundamental practices</p> | <p>High Standard for Student Learning</p> <p>Rigorous Curriculum</p> <p>Quality Instruction</p> <p>Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior</p> <p>Connection to External Communities</p> <p>Systemic Performance Accountability</p> |
| Marzano School Leadership Evaluation | <p>24-item measurement tool</p> <p>addresses 5 domains</p> <p>includes examples of success drawn from scales</p> | <p>grounded in a broad review of the literature on school administrator leadership</p> <p>intended to be used in combination with the Marzano Causal Teacher Evaluation Model which is founded in the Art and Science of Teaching model</p> <p>can also be used independently</p> | <p>Data-driven Focus on Student Achievement</p> <p>Continuous Improvement of Instruction</p> <p>Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum</p> <p>Cooperation and Collaboration</p> <p>School Climate</p> |

2.7. Challenges in Principal Evaluation

Researchers have expressed much concern about issues and problems surrounding evaluation. It is clear that principal evaluation still requires clarification about appropriate tools and methods.

There are some inherent problems in principal evaluation systems; these problems relate to the complexities and lack of clarity regarding the role of school leadership. One of the critical issues is identifying the behaviours and skills that ensure effective school leadership (Brooks & Voss, 2008; Murphy, et al., 2007). Moreover, understanding the relationship between student achievement and school leadership can help answer important questions about the need for evaluating and assessing school principals. If principals influence student learning, knowing how they take care of schools and about their performance is of immense importance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Marzano et al., 2005).

Despite the existence of tools for evaluating principals, such as The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale PIMRS (Hallinger et al., 2013), Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education VAL-ED (Murphy et al., 2007) and Marzano School Leadership Evaluation (2013), there is still no complete method or criteria for accurate principal evaluation (Condon & Clifford, 2012; Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Oyinlade, 2006).

A principal has a complex and demanding role (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Ediger, 2014) that is tiring but highly rewarding. Moreover, principal evaluation is a difficult task (Lashway, 1998) that requires more attention (Ahmari, 2013; Goldring, Cravens et al., 2009; Reeves, 2009) because “leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 5). As such, it is very important that the systems employed to evaluate and assess a principal’s performance be neither too complicated nor too simple; it must be at par with the kind of work performed each day to improve and maintain a school properly. It is necessary to conduct research to monitor the evaluation systems used and identify the best ways to evaluate and assess principals’ performance.

2.8. Discussion

Schools are complicated organizations, where performance is determined by an intricate combination of factors. Principals play a significant role, and it is important they be assessed and evaluated on their aptitude to efficiently deliver on the aims of the organization. However, understanding the unique circumstances of a school can be a challenge.

In the review of the literature, I looked at studies related to different aspects of evaluation, and more specifically principal evaluation, to create a set of knowledge about the current evaluation systems various countries. I focused greatly on Saudi Arabia and findings about the current functioning of evaluation.

In the following three sections, I discuss evaluation research looking at the Saudi context, the Western context, and implications across contexts.

2.8.1. Discussion of the Saudi Context

In Saudi Arabia, modern education began in 1953 (Salloum, 1991). In contrast, in the United States, there were already approximately 50 principal evaluation models by the early 1960s (Redfern, 1972). This highlights how Saudi Arabia is truly in a position of trying to catch up in the field of education.

The timing of when Saudi Arabia began focusing on education makes the limited research on evaluation no surprise. However, while there exists research in this area, there is a general lack of research about whether the evaluation process is accomplishing the goal of improving the performance of principals. Moreover, it is unclear whether the current principal evaluation is sufficient for providing feedback to principals and administrative educational supervisors so that goals can be achieved.

Recent research about principals in Saudi Arabia has covered several important areas. For example, there are studies about Saudi principals' perceptions of their new authority as well as the challenges principal face related to management skills.

Research about the challenges principal face related to improving their management skills has focused on the role of principals as managers rather than

leaders. Authors have also addressed why the MoE fails to provide guidance to current principals in the area of improving management skills (Aseri, 2016; Ayaserah & AL-Harthy, 2015; Otaibi, 2009). Researchers have concluded the failures of the Ministry of Education's management are the result of holding on to old routines, remaining inflexible, possessing an inability to make decisions, and hesitating to exercise the powers leaders possess (Aleem, 2009; Ahamed et al., 2011).

The second area of focus is how principals' exercise their new authority. Throughout the literature, findings have indicated that principals perceive their ability to use new authority as weak, in part because they feel a lack of support from the MoE for implementing them. The researchers concluded there is a limited ability for principals to implement new authority; moreover, the authority may not accomplish the goals of the MoE (Alhumaidhi, 2013; Alotaibi, 2013; Allheaniy, 2012; Meemar, 2014). Indeed, without ways to better support and develop principals' use of the authority, their effectiveness remains questionable.

Throughout the Saudi literature, researchers conclude the evolution of the education system in Saudi Arabia has failed thus far to achieve the goals of the MoE and the aspirations of educational leaders. Research has also shown an absence of clarity in the evaluation system; the evaluation and assessment methods are unclear and ambiguous, especially as they relate to principals' professional development. Moreover, findings show the current evaluation system does not reflect what the research literature reveals should be part of principals' evaluation and assessment. This failure is evident in many ways.

First, the current evaluation system used for educational employees in Saudi Arabia has failed to ensure the evaluation process and its feedback and tools are effective. Moreover, it has failed to ensure credibility and consistency (Al-Ghamdi, 2007; Habib, 2005; Miqdadi et al., 2014; Qazi & Mubarak, 1993).

Second, the current evaluation system has seen no changes in the last 25 years (Ahmari, 2013) despite the changes within the Saudi education system and the increasing responsibilities of school principals. However, research has confirmed the need to for changes to the MoE's evaluation system since it is ineffective (Al Asem,

2003; Al-Ghamdi, 2007; Hamdan, 2013; Habib, 2005; Khalil & Karim, 2016; Miqdadi et al., 2014).

The above-mentioned issues are the reasons that Saudi principals struggle to know what best practice is, and how to improve their practice. The research findings suggest that the main reason for this struggle is the lack of clarity around their roles (Alotaibi, 2013; Karim, 2014; Khalil & Karim, 2016; Mathis, 2010). There is a need for a system that clarifies and explains what principals should be doing in their role as leaders. In addition, this system should be based on the research on leadership and must be used formatively to help principals improve.

Past studies have shown the existing evaluation system does not provide a complete picture of principals' roles in Saudi Arabia nor how the system helps principals (Al-Ghamdi, 2007; Ahmari, 2013; Qazi & Mubarak, 1993). Therefore, as noted in the review of the literature, the evaluations are unsupportive to influencing or guiding professional development for education employees' or furthering school effectiveness.

2.8.2. Discussion of the Western Context

Based on the information found during the literature review, the use of systematic procedures for evaluating principals varies widely. However, when looking at principal evaluation, there is a clear deficiency of in-depth research (Clifford & Ross, 2012; Davis et al., 2011; Goldring et al., 2009; Kimball et al., 2009). Clifford & Ross (2012) stated that the "research on principal evaluation is surprisingly thin" (p. 5). What is surprising is that Ginsberg & Berry (1990) revealed that scant information existed about evaluation quality outcomes and offered suggestions about the manner in which principal evaluation should be undertaken more than a quarter of a century ago. This finding remains true whether the focus is on principal evaluation and assessment design, present evaluation systems, or measuring principal performance.

Throughout the literature from Western countries, researchers identify common themes about principal evaluation. These common themes include evaluation methods, evaluation feedback, principals' professional development, and the relationship between principals' behaviours, school effectiveness and student achievement.

Within the existing literature on evaluation, purpose, subject, and methodology vary greatly; this affects the consistency of evaluation methods. However, Clifford and Ross (2011) noted the content of an evaluation is less important than the manner in which evaluators conduct principal evaluations. Similarly, Davis et al. (2011) stated, "Implementation trumped instrumentation in terms of how well evaluations were conducted, how evaluations were perceived by principals, and how connected effective evaluations were to promoting the principals' professional growth" (p. 8).

On the topic of evaluation methods, researchers have looked at the quality of principal evaluation methods, defined how and whether the methods have the ability to improve principals' performance, and their effects on educational leadership (Condon & Clifford, 2012; Mendels 2012).

Throughout the literature, researchers have shown the methods for assessing and evaluating the performance of principals are unclear. Researchers have identified two main causes for the vague methods. First, there are no fixed criteria or methods for evaluating performance. Secondly, most principals and their superiors have different viewpoints regarding the process of evaluation and assessment (Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Reeves, 2009).

Recent evaluation systems lean towards using formative process as a way to blend assessment of principal practice with the advancement of their professional development. The literature about educational leadership highlights that both formative and summative processes play an important role in evaluation when developing goals and objective for principals (Matarazzo, 2014; Parylo et al., 2012). Davis and Hensley (1999) stated, "A combination of formative and summative evaluation procedures is critical to the development of successful principals" (p. 389). However, the formative process, where regular feedback occurs throughout the year, appears more helpful to principals for improving their skills.

The second area that receives attention is evaluation feedback. The literature highlights the importance of feedback for supporting and assisting principals improve their performance. A system of evaluation and assessment must be relevant as well as reliable and flexible so that it is possible to identify areas for improvement and enhance instruction opportunities through effective feedback (Brooks & Voss, 2008; Davis et al.,

2011; Hvidston et al., 2015; Okasana, et al., 2012; Reeves, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000). Principals can use the information from the evaluation process to improve their skills, attitudes, and knowledge (Hvidston et al., 2015; Parylo et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2000). These findings highlight the importance of regular feedback.

The third area of focus ties effective feedback from evaluation and assessment to successful professional development (Davis et al., 2011; Jacques et al., 2012; Reeves, 2009). Based on the findings, an understanding exists about the need to conduct principal evaluations that are consistent with professional standards. Moreover, they must include appropriate performance measurement tools inherent within a process for providing ways to improve principals' performance.

While evaluation can influence a principal, numerous factors influence the evaluation and assessment processes and outcomes. Influences may include the organization, the profession, the individual, and even the culture; as such, the processes and the methods need to evolve continuously.

To improve successfully the effectiveness of principal evaluation, the inclusion of professional development is essential (Anderson, 1991; Brown-Sims, 2010; Portin, 2009; Lashway, 2003). Moreover, researchers Glickman et al. (2014) observed modern evaluation systems lean towards formative methods to blend assessment of principal practice with progressing professional development.

The fourth area that receives great attention is the relationship between principals' behaviours, and student achievement (Gaziel, 2008; Goldring et al., 2009; Harper, 2015; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Louis et al., 2010; Marzano et al., 2005). Researchers have shown effective school leaders are vital for an education system that focuses on accountability for student achievement. Evaluation researchers have noted principals who work as a facilitator for positive transformation can influence student achievement. According to Elliott & Clifford (2014), maintaining systemic performance accountability through the monitoring of student achievement is achievable. Many modern principal evaluations models adopt the suggestions from these findings by focusing on school leadership actions that influence student achievement.

2.8.3. Implications across contexts

Many researchers have noted principals have a role that is tiring, complex, and demanding (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Ediger, 2014); however, it is also highly fulfilling. Lashway (1998) pointed out that principal evaluation is a difficult task, while other researchers (Ahmari, 2013; Goldring, Cravens et al., 2009; Reeves, 2009) have commented school leadership requires additional consideration as only classroom instruction is more influential on what students learn (Leithwood et al., 2004). In response to the literature, it is crucial that researchers in Saudi Arabia, as well as elsewhere, study how to monitor existing evaluation systems and identify the most effective ways to evaluate and assess principals' performance. Moreover, evaluation systems that evaluate principal performance must be on par with the jobs that principals do; they must be neither too complicated nor too simple.

Recent evaluation systems tend to use formative methods as a way to blend assessment of principal practice with the advancement of their professional development (Glickman et al., 2014); however, principal evaluation practices in Saudi Arabia are far behind those found in Western countries. Moreover, there have been few studies on the evaluation of principals using a Saudi context. The current Saudi evaluation system used in education is a summative process and has been in place for over 25 years with little change. Moreover, the MoE uses the same evaluation for all its employees.

The research literature indicates that there are several reasons to assess and evaluate principals - the reaching school goals, ensuring continued advancement, identifying strengths and weaknesses, supporting professional growth, and making decisions regarding staff (Davis et al., 2011; Reeves, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000). However, the Saudi principal evaluation does not address most of these areas, and the result is a summative evaluation only (Habib, 2005). Findings from the literature underscore the importance of a formative process for evaluating principals so that feedback could be ongoing and lead to appropriate professional development. Feedback helps principals improve their performance and should be an important purpose for evaluation.

There are intrinsic issues related to principal evaluation systems; these are seen in evaluation within Saudi Arabia as well as elsewhere. These problems are the result of

the complexities of the role of principals and a lack of clarity regarding the role of school leadership. In order to address this, researchers must look into school leadership behaviours and skills (Brooks & Voss, 2008; Murphy et al., 2007). Additionally, if researchers continue to explore the relationship between student achievement and school leadership, they might be able to provide answers about evaluating and assessing school principals (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Marzano et al., 2005).

Evaluating a principal's performance is a critical issue and numerous factors influence the process and outcomes. A principal has an incredible amount of influence on a variety of groups – parents, students, teachers, other staff, and the community as a whole. If principals have clear guidelines related to effective practice, they can better support student learning and those they influence.

There is no question that all school systems need a strong evaluation system for principals. Based on the information from existing research, principals affect a school's achievement through their actions; however, there is a lack of information about principal evaluation and assessment in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, there is a lack of research on how to truly quantify, evaluate, and assess a principal's job performance.

Tools for evaluating principals from outside Saudi Arabia, such as The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale PIMRS (Hallinger et al., 2013) and Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education VAL-ED (Murphy et al., 2007), do not provide far-reaching methods or criteria for accurate principal evaluation (Condon & Clifford, 2012; Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Oyinlade, 2006).

Some researchers in Saudi Arabia tried to create an evaluation model based on those from other countries. For example, Nassar (1997) constructed a model to evaluate the performance of school principals. However, he failed to describe the theoretical framework he used when adopting a systematic derivation of evaluation standards. However, at this time, Saudi researchers have failed to create a model that works efficiently within the Saudi context.

In Saudi Arabia, education often falls to the end of a long line of priorities and initiatives. The fact that education is not always seen as a high priority is reflected in the MoE's outdated education evaluation that fails to include appropriate standards for measuring successes and accomplishments. In contrast, principal evaluation within a

Western context consists of many models including The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED). If Saudi Arabia continues to lag in education research, it will not meet the goal of becoming a modern education system.

Additional research on principal evaluation, in Saudi Arabia and in Western countries, would help uncover what best practice is, how to improve best practice, and how principals can learn and incorporate the information into their own practice. Similarly, improved assessment and evaluation based on research is substantial. Both evaluation and assessment would benefit from leadership research on how to improve their quality; research is a key to building successful evaluations and assessments.

2.9. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on the recent and relevant literature related to the evaluation of principals. The information in current research studies supports the belief that to improve the performance of principals, and thus increase the probability of success within the education process, it is crucial to have a comprehensive approach for evaluating principals.

Maxwell (2013) suggested researchers identify a priori themes to guide their research in specific areas, including: the key characteristics of the main phenomenon under study, commonly used definitions from literature reviews, the researchers own standards, the primary theoretical positions and perspectives, and personal background.

I identified seven a priori themes related to my research questions and based on the literature review presented above. The seven a priori themes are: purpose of evaluation, characteristics of evaluation, feedback from evaluation, evaluation tools, components of evaluation, strategies that support or improve evaluation criteria, and strategies that support or improve data collection. As discussed in Chapter 3, these themes guided creation of my data collection protocols and data analysis. In the following sections, I provide an analysis of the a priori themes.

During my review of the literature, I identified seven a priori themes related to my two research questions; What are high school principals' perceptions of the process and criteria for their evaluation? and What are principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature? I was looking for general themes and ideas related to my research questions. Prior to beginning the literature review, I identified four of the a priori themes concerning question one. The a priori themes for question one are: purpose of evaluation, characteristics of evaluation, feedback from evaluation, and evaluation tools.

As the information from the literature review evolved, I added three additional themes that all related to question two. Question two a priori themes are components of evaluation, strategies that support or improve evaluation criteria, and strategies that support or improve data collection.

When I first identified the a priori themes for question two, I did not have specific content or areas of focus for the themes related to that question. As I read the literature, my understanding and insight increased and I was able to add content focused information to each of these three themes. I repeated this step several times until I felt I had reached a complete level of understanding about the a priori themes. Figure 1 illustrates my conceptual framework for this study.

In the following sections, I outline the most common themes and highlights from the literature for all seven a priori themes; these themes are what I used to create the conceptual framework for this study. As discussed in Chapter 3, these themes guided creation of my data collection protocols and data analysis.

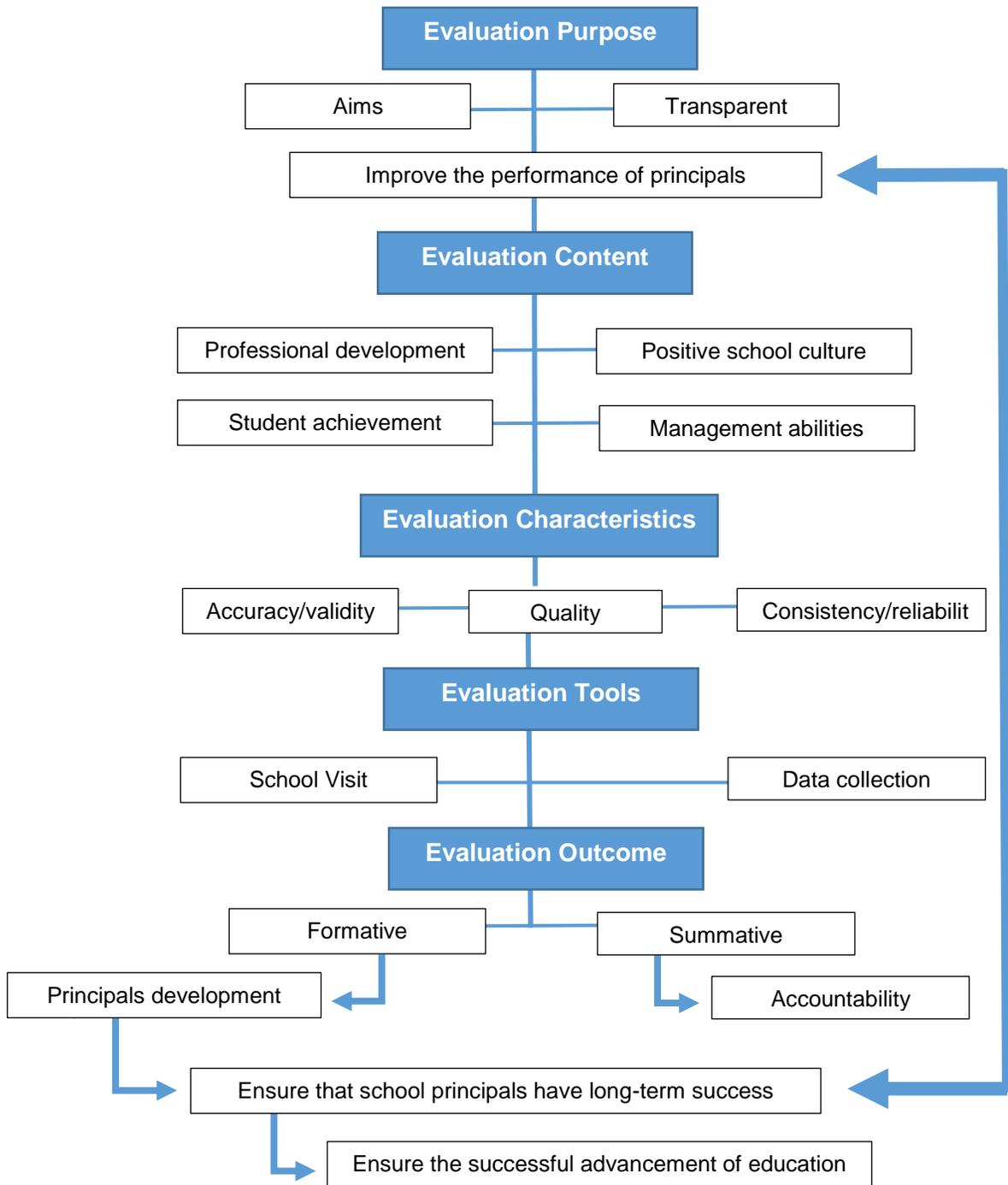


Figure 1. Conceptual framework that guides this study

2.9.1. Purpose of evaluation

There is much variety within the existing literature on purpose, subject, and methodology. For example, Clifford and Ross (2012) commented the manner in which evaluators conduct principal evaluations is more important than the content of an evaluation. Similarly, Davis et al. (2011) stated, “Implementation trumped instrumentation in terms of how well evaluations were conducted, how evaluations were perceived by principals, and how connected effective evaluations were to promote the principals’ professional growth” (p. 8). However, education scholars have noted that achieving the intended purpose and benefit of principal evaluation is very challenging (Goldring et al., 2009).

While evaluation purpose sometimes lacks consistency, there are specific areas the research notes should all include. Normore (2004) explained it is necessary to develop an evaluation system that includes several steps, the most important of them being to state clearly the objectives, aims, and criteria. Moreover, improving principal performance was the leading purpose for evaluation mentioned in the literature (Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Parylo et al., 2012). Finally, Lumby, Crow, and Pashiardis, (2008) noted that the purpose of evaluations “is twofold: to help a school leader improve (through the provision of constructive feedback) and to help the system make summative decisions about vacancies or rewards that ought to be given for exceptional performance” (p. 296). In order to meet these goals, Amsterdam et al. (2003) asserted that if stakeholders were involved in defining and determining the purposes, the evaluation would be more accurate.

2.9.2. Evaluation feedback

Several researchers have suggested that principal evaluation that includes a formative aspect can provide guidance for and a review of professional growth and enhanced practice (Davis & Hensley, 1999; Matarazzo, 2014; Parylo et al., 2012). Research findings also stress the importance of feedback for supporting and assisting principals improve their performance (Aloathyanee, 2014; Davis et al., 2011; Hvidston et al., 2015; Okasana, et al., 2012; Reeves, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000). Moreover, researchers have noted that effective feedback would provide opportunities for professional development (Davis et al., 2011; Lumby et al., 2008; Reeves, 2009). Based

on these findings, concluding that there is a need to conduct principal evaluation that are consistent with professional standards using proper performance measurements inherent within a process and providing ways to improve principals' performance is justifiable.

2.9.3. Characteristics of evaluation

Often times, evaluation in education is not a priority and the system evaluators use are out-of-date, limited or fail to have adequate credibility when it comes to measuring principal performance (Condon & Clifford, 2012).

Characteristics of evaluation that researchers have studied include accurate assessment of principals' performance and reliability of assessment results. According to researchers, principals' performance should be based on job expectations and principal evaluation should provide a framework those expectations (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Kimball at a., 2009; Leon, Davis, Kearney, Sanders & Thomas, 2011; Stronge et al., 2013; Voge & Weiler, 2014). Researchers understand aligning principals' performance expectations with evaluation is a difficult task. Catano and Stronge (2007) concluded, "The complexity and lack of clarity surrounding the role of a principal makes the formulation of appropriate performance assessment a daunting task" (p. 382). Nevertheless, the performance of a principal must be the result of evidence about what principals actually do on a daily basis and be connected to principal evaluation (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Kimball at a., 2009).

Goldring et al. (2009) stated evaluation must be able to identify a principal's true practice through reliable evaluation data acquired through evaluation. Additionally, researchers have suggested that should help principals improve their work performance and allow evaluators to confirm principals are meeting the performance expectations (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Clifford & Ross, 2012; Davis et al., 2011; Fuller & Hollingworth, 2014; Sun & Young, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000).

Research on evaluation within the education system in Saudi Arabia found evaluation was not in line with an understanding of principals' best practice (Al Asem, 2003; Habib, 2005; Khalil and Karim; 2016; Miqdadi et al., 2014; Qazi and Mubarak, 1993; Yarrow, 2008). These studies clearly show that the current Saudi evaluation

system in education is failing to provide clear expectations of all its employees because the evaluation forms are the same for all MoE employees. It is difficult for organizational leaders in Saudi Arabia to surpass hindrances to effective evaluation when they do not have clear performance expectations allocated by role and level (Karim, 2014).

Research about evaluation reliability is limited; Goldring et al. (2009) found there is little information about evaluation reliability and validity from school districts. However, there is concern about the lack of reliability as reported in studies by Alyami (2013), Condon and Clifford (2010), Davis et al., (2011). Furthermore, other researchers have reported that evaluation lacks consistency (Davis & Hensley, 1999; McAdams & Barilla, 2003; Portin, 2009; Reeves, 2009; Stine, 2001) which can result in a lack of reliability. In response, Miqdadi et al. (2014) recommended reliability be the key to equality of evaluation, and therefore, during evaluation, principals' must be treated the same.

According to the literature, there is a lack of credible principal evaluation methods. In addition, vague purposes and unclear criteria can result in an inconsequential principal evaluation (Lashway, 2003; Portin, 2009; Reeves, 2009). Reeves (2009) asserted principal evaluation is often perfunctory and unclear.

Davis et al. (2011) created a wide-ranging report about the effectiveness of principals' evaluation and assessment. They concluded a failure in design and implementation has resulted in no fully reliable evaluation methods. First, they noted that in general, there is little validity and reliability to district-developed principal evaluation systems. Second, the number of principal evaluation instruments that do have validity and reliability and have a design that addresses leadership behaviours is extremely rare. In addition, Davis et al. (2011) and Gullickson and Howard (2009) believed evaluation and assessment processes must be in line with expected principal practices and that a lack of consistency and reliability in the evaluation process may result in unreliable evaluation and assessment outcomes.

2.9.4. Evaluation tools

Condon & Clifford (2012) noted that different areas of existing evaluation methods vary in both content and degree of complexity. Researchers have identified two main causes for the inconsistency among methods. First, there are no fixed criteria or

methods for evaluating the performance of methods. Secondly, most principals and their superiors have different viewpoints regarding the process of evaluation and assessment (Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Reeves, 2009). Moreover, Thomas et al. (2000) noted that minimal onsite support visits is an obstacle with the evaluation process. This reflects that the evaluator is a tool in the process.

A formal evaluation process that includes appropriate tools is the best way to analyse the complex and often ambiguous role of a principal. Lashway (1998) and Reeves (2009) commented that using an evaluation tool helps to systematically collect valuable information about an individual's qualities and performance. The correct tool, carefully selected and appropriate to the situation, can deliver an in-depth evaluation that adds impartiality to the assessment method. The tool can be basic or multifaceted, with a number of individuals contributing to the process. It can also help a principal to reflect on his or her own performance, and support professional and personal development as well as measure effectiveness, all of which is vital to all evaluation tools (Lashway, 1998). The consequences of not providing principals with acceptable evaluation and assessment tools are clear when looking at the available studies in this subject area.

Throughout the literature, researchers identify the quality of evaluation methods and their effects on educational leadership as significant issues (Condon & Clifford, 2012; Parylo et al., 2012). Researchers have looked at how and whether the principal evaluation methods have the ability to improve principals' performance. For example, they have commented on the poor design and process of evaluation as well as on the shortage of empirical evidence to support their use (Condon & Clifford, 2012; Goldring, et al., 2009). For Saudi principals, the absence of clarity and the complex nature their roles make the job of developing the right evaluation quite daunting (Al Asem, 2003; Miqdadi et al., 2014; Khalil & Karim, 2016).

Brown and Irby (1998) concluded evaluation must include multiple steps and procedures for it to be effective; "procedures must include a system for communication, a strategy for ongoing monitoring and provisions for a continuous feedback loop between evaluators and principals" (p. 11). Furthermore, researchers do not support the practice of unscheduled evaluation visits (Gullickson & Howard, 2009; Stine, 2001). Stine (2001) stated, "Dates should be established in advance and the format needs to be clear to both parties" (p. 4). In addition, measurement of principals' skills and job

performance should address elements and criteria that are clearly defined using performance standards and rubrics; this would enable evaluators to measure elements of performance effectively (Reeves, 2009). Amsterdam et al. (2003) asserted that if the stakeholders were involved in establishing evaluating criteria and instrumentation, as well as the methods of data collection, the evaluation would be more accurate.

2.9.5. Components of evaluation

When reviewing the literature, I focused on four evaluation components for this study. The first three are professional development, positive school culture, and student achievement. Researchers highlight these components in many studies and are part of many evaluation models. The fourth component from the literature was school management. I selected school management because of the role principal play in schools in Saudi Arabia, where the primary focus is on management and administration and not on leadership.

Professional Growth

Numerous researchers have identified professional development as an important factor in evaluation (Gullickson & Howard, 2009; Kimball et al., 2009; Sun & Youngs, 2009; Woulfin, Morgaen, & Donaldson, 2016). According to the literature, principals need constant professional development (Davis et al., 2011; Stewart & Matthews, 2015; Stringer & Hourani, 2016). Since there is a correlation between professional development and evaluation performance and proficiency, it is necessary to include professional development in evaluation systems (Hvidston, et al., 2015; Sun & Youngs, 2009; Sun et al., 2012). Davis and colleagues (2011) found that "evaluation should stimulate and guide a principal's professional development" (p. 33).

Positive School Culture

The literature indicates that creating positive school culture is one of the most important skills for leaders (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Habib, 2005; McEwan, 2003; Murphy et al., 2006). Moreover, researchers have noted positive school culture and effective leadership lead to successful schools (Dhuey & Smith, 2014; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Marzano, et al., 2005; Stronge, 2013).

Throughout the literature, there is much evidence about how, when all staff in a school works together, it becomes easier to deal with issues within a school (Leithwood et al., 2004; Waters et al. (2004). As seen, much research highlights the importance of positive school culture and its inclusion in principal evaluation. Along with other areas related to evaluation and assessment, researchers have suggested school culture (Deal & Peterson, 2016; McEwan, 2003) and student achievement (Dhuey & Smith, 2014; Marzano et al., 2005) should be the focus.

Student Achievement

Recently, there has been an increase in the number of studies focusing on the relationship between principals' behaviour, school effectiveness, and student achievement (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Cotton, 2003; Dhuey & Smith, 2014; Gaziel, 2008; Goldring et al., 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Lashway, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis et al., 2010; Marzano et al., 2005; Sammons et al., 2011; Zepeda, Lanoue, Price, & Jimenez., 2014). In many of the studies, researchers have found the effectiveness of school leaders is fundamental to an education system where leaders concentrate on student achievement and accountability.

School Management

Several researchers have concluded that effective principals are the key to a successful education process (Dhuey & Smith, 2014; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Marzano, et al., 2005; Stronge, 2013) the work conditions of school staff are the direct result of how effectively a school principal manages and leads. The leaders in the Saudi education system need to balance leadership and managerial skills. However, at the time of this study, the MoE had not yet done this, and had failed to provide guidance to current principals about this issue (Aseri, 2016; Ayaserah & AL-Harthy, 2015; Otaibi, 2009).

Having a compressive understanding of principal management information from the literature could support student learning; it could help staff function more efficiently within a school. The literature shows that educational leaders are responsible for the success or failure of the school system they administer and guide (Abu-Nasser, 2008; Brooks & Voss, 2008; Cravens & Porter, 2011; Hallinger et al., 2013; Louis et al., 2010;

Oyinlade, 2006; Sammons et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2004). As such, it is important not to overlook the role of a principal's ability to manage effectively.

2.9.6. Strategies that Support or Improve Evaluation Criteria

The issue of appropriate evaluation criteria is very important because they determine where evaluation focus is. The strategies identified in the literature that could support or improve evaluation criteria, improving evaluation quality, clarity of evaluation, performance expectations, and adopting existing evaluation standards.

Building a new evaluation process involves significant change that could improve principal performance and result in increased positive school outcomes. As mentioned above, school leaders are responsible for the success or failure of the school system they administer and guide (Cotton, 2003; Ginsberg & Thompson, 1992; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005).

There are many literature recommendations that suggest principals are better able to achieve success when they have a clear understanding of evaluation and its assessment criteria, which must be aligned with the markers of effective instructional leadership (Davis & Hensley, 1999; Goldring et al., 2009; Sun et al., 2012). In addition, success is more likely when evaluation is linked to the real performance of principals (Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Harper, 2015; Moore, 2009). Miqdadi et al. (2014) asserted that quality assurance should be fundamental in the design of all evaluation systems.

In addition, the review of the literature uncovered many models used in school districts. These models focus on the development and efficacy of different principal evaluation instruments. They include the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale PIMRS (Hallinger et al., 2013), Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education VAL-ED (Murphy et al., 2011), and The Marzano School Leadership Evaluation Model (2013). According to the research, these evaluation models attempt to provide a foundation to effectively evaluate and assess the performance of principals and enhance leadership practices (Condon & Clifford, 2012). When organizations adopt or modify the existing models so they can take advantage of the experience of others and increase the speed at which implementation can improve success.

2.9.7. Strategies that Support or Improve Evaluation Data Collection

There are two strategies highlighted in the literature that focus on improving the collection and processing of evaluation data. First is the distinction of summative and formative processes. Second is the focus on data collection processes during a school visit, such as personal interviews and school observations.

First, principals' evaluation and assessment have two important purposes, formative and summative. However, while summative evaluation provides knowledge about general competencies, it does not offer information for development once completed; formative assessments gauge competency in a way that provide individuals results they can use for future decisions, including those related to professional development (Clifford et al., 2012).

In the literature, researchers have noted that formative feedback from an evaluation process is significant for improving principals' performance (Cullen, 1995; Davis & Hensley, 1999; Glickman et al., 2014; Matarazzo, 2014; Parylo et al., 2012). Parylo et al. (2012) and Clifford et al. (2014) noted that evaluation would be more useful to school leaders if assessment included formative evaluation methods that provided effective feedback. Brown-Sims (2010) commented that principals' professional development, including future aims, training and strategies, should be connected to evaluation findings resulting from both formative and summative assessment tools.

Second, findings in the literature support the use of many information sources when collecting data for assessment and evaluation (Miqdadi et al., 2014). Lashway (1998) and Reeves (2009) commented that using evaluation tools helps to systematically collect valuable information about an individual's qualities and performance for assessment purposes. The correct tools, carefully selected and appropriate to the situation, can deliver an in-depth evaluation that adds impartiality. The tool can be basic or multifaceted, with a number of individuals contributing to the process. It can also help a principal to reflect on his or her own performance, and support professional and personal development as well as measure effectiveness, all of which is vital to all evaluation methods (Lashway, 1998). The consequences of not providing principals with acceptable evaluation and assessment processes are clear when looking at the available studies in this subject area.

Past researchers have reported that effective evaluation measurement tools provide assurance for the success of the educational process (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Gaziel, 2008; Goldring et al., 2009; Harper, 2015; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Louis et al., 2010; Marzano et al., 2005; Reeves, 2009). Without a well-built principal evaluation and tools that can measure outcomes, there might not be the positive changes in the principals' performance that should be happening (Moore, 2009; Reeves, 2009). Thomas et al., (2000) noted a poorly designed evaluation might increase the likelihood of lesser quality in educational programs and affect school outcomes.

2.10. Conclusion

Overall, to support the 2011 administration policy changes regarding principal practices in Saudi Arabia and help to achieve the Saudi 2030 vision, it is crucial to understand the relationship between the new reform, new powers held by principals, and school leadership. Researchers must provide a clear picture of the current evaluation system and identify effectual changes. Moreover, if the MoE begins to ensure the use of a formative assessment instead of summative evaluation, it will have more opportunities to enhance and experience success regarding principal performance. In order to be in line with what many leadership researchers have concluded (Derrington & Sanders, 2011; Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Goldring, et al., 2009), the evaluation would need to be summative, so that it could provide principals the feedback they need for improvement. For the MoE to begin this process, it should look to existing literature, where descriptions of how several evaluation models use multiple assessment methods exist. It would then be able to use the experience of other models to improve its own evaluation system.

A look at how principals meet the expectations of an evaluation model would provide a picture of what areas need to improve in Saudi Arabia. It would also highlight ways to improve performance measurements currently in the assessment of principals and ways to provide feedback to principals and administrative educational supervisors. Becoming familiar with the features of different assessment models will enhance researchers' and the MoE's knowledge on the characteristics and kinds of tools that would best meet the needs and context of the education environment in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine the current evaluation process in Saudi Arabia as experienced by high school principals. I used qualitative interviews to gather data from a participant group of 14 high school principals. The main research questions for this study are: What are high school principals' perceptions of the process and criteria for their evaluation? And, what are principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature?

In this chapter, I describe the research method design, the participant selection, the data collection and interview processes, and the data analysis procedures for this study.

3.1. Research method design

For this study, I drew inspiration from Creswell (2012), Flick (2006) and Miles & Huberman (1994) when choosing to use a qualitative research approach. According to Creswell (2012) and Miles & Huberman (1994), the purpose of qualitative research is to understand the human experience especially when there is only a small amount of knowledge about the topic and there is a need for discovery about a particular phenomenon. Creswell (2012), defined qualitative research as “a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting” (p.46).

Researchers have discussed in detail the strengths and purposes of using a qualitative design (Creswell, 2012; Flick, 2006; Merriam, 2009). A qualitative study provides the rationale and characteristics for exploring a research problem and the “understanding of a central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p. 16). Moreover, it enables researchers to examine a lived experience (Creswell, 2012; Flick, 2006) and has many positive characteristics, including being flexible, highly focused, and designed to provide a quality outcome (Creswell, 2012; Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Namey, & Guest, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Mack et al. (2005) explained that qualitative research allows participants more time to expand their stories and information, which results in richer data that includes well-grounded descriptions and explanations; Miles and Huberman (1994) explained this as “richness and holism, with strong potential for revealing complexity; such data provide “thick descriptions” that are vivid, are nested in a real context, and have a ring of truth that has a strong impact on the reader.” (p.10). In addition, qualitative research can uncover unforeseen findings that go beyond the initial research goals. Lastly, they noted a qualitative research design allows for more flexibility with the collection of data, the emergence of information, and for the evolution of the study. Flexibility during the data collection process enables researchers to react to what participants share during their interactions and provides the opportunity for researchers to compare respondents’ answers (Ary et al., 2009; Creswell, 2012; Mack et al., 2009).

Beyond the above-mentioned strengths, many researchers have also noted there are weaknesses to using qualitative research methods. First, there is a high level of subjectivity to qualitative research. Second, the data can be difficult to assess and present and may be influenced by the researcher. In addition, the small sample size often used in qualitative research may not accurately represent the reality or state of a larger population. Finally, some data may not be uncovered from a qualitative research process (Ary et al., 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Despite the concerns with qualitative research, I believe that this method was most fitting to my study. Qualitative research allowed me to collect and analyze each participant’s responses at a deeper level, enabling me to understand their thoughts and beliefs (Creswell, 2012; Mack et al., 2009). To counter the negative aspects of qualitative research, I made every effort prevent the negative effects of qualitative research during my study. More details about the measures I took are included in section 3.4.

There is currently little research directly related to principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia and yet the introduction of new education reform means the experience of principals will have changed considerably. As such, there is little understanding of the issues surrounding principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia at this time. Therefore, the decision to use a qualitative approach was appropriate.

The goal of my research was to explore evaluation as experienced by high school principals in Saudi Arabia. As Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Razavieh (2009) stated, “Qualitative inquirers seek to interpret human actions, institutions, events, customs, and the like, and in so doing they construct a “reading,” or portrayal, of what is being studied” (p. 421). As part of a qualitative approach, I chose to use the technique of face-to-face interviews. By having a face-to-face conversation with the participants, I was able to ask for clarification and elaboration as well as probe for richer details. Furthermore, I chose a qualitative method for its superior feedback based on the success of previous research studies on principal evaluation as described in Chapter Two (Gaziel, 2008; Harper, 2015; Mathis, 2010; Sammons et al., 2011; Zepeda et al., 2014).

The phenomenon of this study is one that researchers, as well as educators and educator supervisors, know very little about. Meeting with principals in a face-to-face setting that allowed for flexibility provided the best possible circumstances for obtaining rich and insightful data. As such, I decided that a qualitative research design with face-to-face interviews best fit the goals of this research study.

3.2. Participant Selection

When deciding on participant selection, several factors played a role. First, Saudi Arabia consists of five large geographical areas, known as provinces. The limited period for collecting data meant that I needed to choose one area. I decided to use the Eastern Province because I am from this region; I live and work in this area when not in Canada. Secondly, the Eastern Province includes many school districts.

Initially, I had decided to use only one school district, the Al-Khobar School District. I knew it would provide a large sample of potential participants as it includes more than 154 schools and 70000 students. I used purposeful sampling that included four criteria. First, because participation was voluntary, participants had to be interested in participating in the study. Second, participants had to be working for the Ministry of Education at the time of the study; the reason for this criterion was to highlight that those principals who are retired or who have resigned would not be included in this study. Moreover, not all principals in Saudi Arabia fall under the direction of the Ministry of Education. For example, principals who work for Franca Schools and private schools, as

well as those working at international schools, do not work for the MoE; I chose not to include principals from those schools. Third, participants had to have at least two years' experience in the position. The third criterion was to ensure participants had enough familiarity with the evaluation process to be able to explain their experience without excluding a large number of those currently holding the position. Finally, participants had to be male. The reason for this criterion was that in Saudi Arabia, male researchers are unable to interview female participants due to cultural and social structures that prevent interaction between unrelated members of the opposite sex.

To begin, I contacted all high school principals in the Al-Khobar District by email to identify those who were both interested in participating in the study and believed they met the study's criteria. I received replies from 18 principals; I emailed the 18 principals to confirm their interest in participating and that they met the study's criteria. I then followed up on the email with a phone call. After discussing my research on the phone with all 18 potential participants, only 14 met the criteria of the study. I excluded six of those 14 because they were on a temporary assignment and would not be in active roles as principal during the study. Of the remaining principals, two refused to participate citing a lack of time both during school hours and outside of the school day. The final number of participant principals from the 21 principals I contacted from the Al-Khobar School District was six.

I began my data collection interviews with the six participant principals from the Al-Khobar School District at the beginning of December 2015. After completing all the interviews, I removed two additional principals because of a lack of information; they were not able to provide data related to my research and they went off topic during the discussion several times.

Since the initial data was the result of only four participant interviews, which I did not feel would be adequate for addressing my research questions, I began looking at other school districts within the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. I expanded my search to include three additional school districts, Dammam, Jobil, and Safaw. I chose these districts because they are the closest in geographical terms to the Al-Khobar School District.

In choosing the additional school districts, I believe I did not compromise the study's rationale or validity. One governmental organisation, the Ministry of Education, oversees all school districts across Saudi Arabia. The MoE uses the same systems, regulations, and evaluation procedures for all its employees. As such, all principals experience the same evaluation process, and therefore, including additional school districts did not introduce new evaluation systems.

When I began searching for additional participants, I followed the same selection procedures I used during my search in the Al-Khobar School District. From these three additional school districts, I identified 10 additional participants for a final sample size of 14 participants. I believed this number was consistent with Mack et al.'s (2005) observation,

Sample sizes, which may or may not be fixed prior to data collection, depend on the resources and time available, as well as the study's objectives. Purposive sample sizes are often determined on the basis of theoretical saturation (the point in data collection when new data no longer bring additional insights to the research questions). (p. 5)

Once I had interviewed all 14 participants and begun looking at the data collected, I felt that I had reached the saturation point (Ary et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014; Edwards & Holland, 2013; Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Mack et al., 2005) for the data on evaluation in Saudi Arabia; participants' responses began to overlap significantly, and I was not receiving new information. As a result, I did not see value in adding participants (I further discuss this below).

3.3. Data Collection

3.3.1. Interviews

Interviews are a common way to collect data for qualitative research (Ary et al., 2009; Creswell, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2006). Rubin and Rubin (2012) defined qualitative interviews as "conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion" (p. 4). Interviews offer researchers focused interactions with participants. The purpose of qualitative interviews is to collect data that will help the researcher recreate vivid descriptions of the participants'

experiences in order to build models that will explain a phenomenon (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2006).

According to Seidman (2006), during in-depth qualitative interviewing, the researcher aims to understand and learn about the importance of the lived experiences of individuals. The framework for qualitative interviews allows the interviewee to explain, in their own words, their perceptions and comprehension of a situation (Merriam, 2009). The flexibility of interviews, which offers more detailed information than a typical survey, allows researchers to capture respondents' feelings and interpretations of situations and experiences from their lives (Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, Rubin and Rubin (2012) noted that qualitative interviews allow the researcher to view the world from a perspective that is different from their own by exploring the experiences, intentions, and thoughts of others.

Interviewers can personalize an interview to fit the understanding and familiarity of the subject the researcher is interviewing an individual about (Creswell, 2012). Researchers use pre-determined questions in a semi-structured interview in order to collect qualitative data, however, the questions are also open-ended (Creswell, 2012). This provides the researcher the freedom to change, remove, or add questions as needed.

According to King & Horrocks (2010) and Patton (2015), questions should be informal and appealing so that the participant feels more at ease expressing their thoughts. This process eliminates ambiguity of situations and allows the main concerns to be clearly revealed and analyzed (Creswell, 2012). Rubin and Rubin (2012) recommended preparing possible follow up questions for when an answer goes in an unexpected direction during the interview. These questions, however, do not limit flexibility since they can be changed, or simply not used, as necessary.

There are several other factors that researchers must take into consideration when choosing to use interviews for data collection within a qualitative study. For example, in a personal interview, there is the risk of researcher bias; the interviewer may lack objectivity because of his current state of mind, personal attitudes, age, race, or gender, among other factors. Consequently, Ary et al. (2009) noted that researchers must consider all relevant influences in order to manage their relationship with

participants. I have included additional information related to this issue in the researcher role/positionality section in this chapter.

According to the literature, there are different scholarly views regarding the number of interviews required for a qualitative approach. Researchers base their decision on a number of factors including: the heterogeneity of the sample group (Guest et al., 2006); the type of sampling techniques the researcher is applying (Patton, 2015); and the time and resources available to the researcher (Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1995).

Seidman (2006) suggests using three interviews per participant, three to seven days apart, and lasting ninety minutes each. Seidman (2006) stated using three interviews ensures an understanding of the context of a participant's experience, allows participants the opportunity to construct a detailed account of their experience, and provides time for participants to reflect on the meaning of the experience. He stated that each of these elements requires its own interview block. Seidman (2006) also noted the spacing of the interviews provides time for participants to reflect on what they discussed without having enough time to lose focus and interest on the topic. With respect to length of the interview, Seidman (2006) remarked that the most important thing is the researcher determines the length before the interview. He explained that for humans, there is a sense of time where 2 hours is too long but less than 90 minutes is not long enough.

Rubin and Rubin (2012) are more flexible concerning the number of interviews but noted that the process of responsive interviews should include presenting yourself and the subject, asking probing questions, demonstrating interest in the participants' insights, movement from general to more specific themes, and leaving room for future interviews.

When Weiss (1995) addressed the issue of number of interviews in his book, *Learning from Strangers*, he went into detail explaining the value of multiple interviews. He noted,

Only infrequently does the cost of a second interview with a respondent outweigh its usefulness. Third interviews are generally also worth doing. Of importance here is the number of areas to be covered in the interviewing. Fourth and fifth interviews are likely to produce a sense of diminishing returns, except when they provide information on continuing stories in

respondents' lives. It is not that nothing at all is learned from fourth or subsequent interviews; respondents can always report on new events for new aspects. (p. 57-58)

While the suggested number of interviews is different amongst researchers, they agree that data collection in the form of interviews should continue until the researcher reaches the saturation research point (Ary et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014; Guest et al., 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Mack et al., 2006). Weiss (1995) noted about the notion of saturation,

When do you decide you have interviewed enough people? The best answer is that you stop when you encounter diminishing returns, when the information you obtain is redundant or peripheral, when what you do learn that is new adds too little to what you already know to justify the time and cost of the interviewing. (p. 21)

The most conventional ways for conducting interviews include face-to-face and telephone interviews (Weiss, 1995); however, there are also other technology-based approaches researchers commonly use (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). For example, along with telephone interviews, internet interviews are a distance interviewing technique that is useful when collecting data from participants who are not in the same geographical area as the researcher. Telephone and internet interviews enable "the transcendence of boundaries of time and space, reaching beyond the constraints of face-to-face contact" (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 26).

However, telephone and internet interviews include several drawbacks and some raise concerns. First, telephone and internet interviews frequently take more time than face-to-face interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Secondly, online and telephone interviewing can create a sense of anonymity for the participant that is not present in face-to-face interactions. This may alter the participant's level of truth as well as change the dynamics of power between the interviewer and interviewee. Thirdly, face-to-face interviews include verbal and non-verbal indicators that are not as clear during online and telephone interviews; these indicators reinforce the boundaries between researcher and participant (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

Though distance interviews can be beneficial, Rubin and Rubin (2012) confirmed that these interviewing methods would be more productive and work better if they follow a face-to-face interview.

3.3.2. Interview protocol

For my study, I employed a qualitative interview approach (Flick, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2012) with probing sub-questions to produce comparable data from participants and because of its power to reveal experience and knowledge (Creswell, 2012). I conducted semi-structured interviews to understand the opinions and beliefs of the school principals regarding the evaluation process. The semi-structured format enabled me to gather detailed information using a communication style that was informal and slightly conversational. The informal nature provided me with the opportunity to thoroughly understand participants' answers (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2012; King & Horrocks, 2010).

As previously mentioned, for this study, I used a comprehensive review of the literature to create my interview questions. I identified seven a priori themes from the literature review presented in chapter 2; I used these a priori themes to guide my questions. I created specific interview questions in relation to each a priori theme to get the participants' views about that theme.

There are four a priori themes connected to the first question, what are high school principals' perceptions of the process and criteria for their evaluation. The a priori themes are: purpose of evaluation, characteristics of evaluation, feedback from evaluation, and evaluation tools. The three remaining a priori themes relate to question two, what are principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature? These a priori themes are: desired components of evaluation, strategies that support or improve evaluation criteria, and strategies that support or improve data collection. Table 2 outlines the themes and interview questions.

Table 2. Themes and Interview Questions

| Research Question One | | What are high school principals' perceptions about the process and criteria for their evaluation? | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| # | a priori themes | Probing Question | |
| 1 | Purpose of evaluation | A | In your own words, can you define the purpose of principal evaluation in your district? |
| | | B | Is the evaluation process consistent with the purpose and definition you specified? |
| 2 | Characteristics of evaluation | A | Does principal evaluation capture the performance of principals? |
| | | B | Do you feel that the characteristics by which performance is judged are clearly defined and accurate indicators of ability? |
| | | C | Do you believe that principals fully understand the organizational outcomes they are meant to accomplish? |
| | | D | Do you think principals understand the evaluation criteria evaluators use with respect to achieving specific goals and objectives? |
| 3 | Feedback from evaluation | A | How would you describe your evaluation feedback experience? |
| | | B | Does the assessment tool provide information that the evaluator can use to offer constructive and positive feedback? |
| | | C | Do you have a clear understanding of the expectations and professional skills required for your job? |
| | | D | Are meetings held between evaluators and principals as soon as possible following an evaluation? |
| | | E | Are professional growth goals related to deficiencies noted in prior evaluations? |
| | | F | Describe what resources and support your district currently provides principals to improve their performance as a school leader based on evaluations? |
| 4 | Evaluation tools | A | How would you describe the tools used during evaluation? |

- B What kinds of methods are you currently evaluated with (interviews, observations, etc.)?
- C Is accumulating data for principal evaluation an ongoing process throughout the year?
- D How often are you evaluated (yearly, monthly, etc.)?

| | |
|---|---|
| Research Question Two | What are principals' opinions on how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature? |
| 5 Desired components of evaluation (Principals' opinions about the components of evaluation) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A According to much of the research literature, principals should demonstrate professional growth. Can you talk about whether you feel professional growth should be taken into account on principals' evaluation? B According to much of the research literature, principals should focus on creating a positive school culture in order to succeed in reaching school goals. Can you talk about whether you feel that school culture should be take into account on principals' evaluation? C According to much of the research literature, many researchers confirm that student achievement is deeply affected by the principal that leads a school. Can you talk about whether you feel that student achievement should be take into account on principals' evaluation? D According to much of the research literature from Saudi Arabia, principals should demonstrate and have school management skills. Can you talk about whether you feel that the current system assesses this? Do you think it should be included in a principal evaluation? |
| 6 Strategies that Support or Improve Evaluation Criteria | <p>Can you give your opinion about how to improve the criteria used in evaluation? Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A According to much of the research literature, many of education policy maker around the world applied change to the principal evaluation. Do you think it should happen here? B What discrepancies do you think exist between the expectations of principals and the MoE's purpose for using an evaluation tool? <p>Do you think including an outline of evaluation purposes would improve the quality of the evaluation?</p> |

- C Do you think principals' performance expectations should be outlined clearly for principals?
Do you think providing clear guidelines for evaluation would improve the quality evaluation?
- D In looking at the existing literature, there are many models that focus on the development and efficacy of principal evaluation and assessment instruments. In your opinion, should the MoE adopt one of them? If so, how might the MoE apply these models?
- E Do you think including principals in the creation or modification of their evaluation instrument would improve quality evaluation?
- F Do you have any suggestions for how to improve evaluation quality?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | Strategies that Support or Improve Data Collection | <p>Can you give your opinion about strategies to improve the methods used in evaluation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A What do you think is more helpful for improving principal evaluation, a formative or summative process? B Why do you think formative is better than summative? Why do you think summative is better formative? C Do you think the number of school visits from the evaluator should increase? D Do you think the methods for evaluation data collection should be improved? If yes, how might the MoE improve these methods? |
|---|---|---|

Do you have any suggestions regarding the principal evaluation criteria, procedures, or methods?

During the interviews, I also used an interview guide (Merriam, 2009) (see Appendix B) and took field notes to maintain focus on participants' responses and made notations of non-verbal communication for future reference (Creswell, 2012).

Before beginning the official interviews, I met with each potential participant to conduct a recruitment meeting. Prior to the recruitment meeting, I sent each participant an email to introduce myself, provide an overview of the purpose of the study and the

proposed field interview questions as well as the methods I would be using, my contact information and an interview schedule. I sent the information early enough so that participants would have time to consider their responses and to schedule a time for a recruitment meeting (Appendix C).

The recruitment meeting took place face-to-face in Saudi Arabia and lasted between 10 and 15 minutes. The goals of this meeting were to ensure I had enough participants to conduct my study within my projected timeline and to officially invite the participant to be part of my research.

During this meeting, I went into further detail about the study. I explained the Informed Consent Form (Appendix D); I translated the consent form into Arabic (Appendix E) prior to the recruitment meeting. The form emphasized participants could refuse to answer any question as well as end the interview or withdraw from the study at any time. All participants signed the consent form.

The recruitment meeting helped me build participant engagement from the beginning, which is crucial for supporting interest and involvement throughout the study (Mack et al., 2005). Furthermore, it provided an opportunity to provide a detailed study plan to participants that included the study's goals, information about the effort and time required for the success of the study, participation eligibility criteria, as well as the procedures, interview questions, and study methodology. At the end of each recruitment meeting, I scheduled the interview with the participant.

Prior to beginning the data collection interviews, I created an interview protocol. This document was to help me stay focused on participants' perceptions and experiences about principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia; in particular, the evaluation process, feedback, criteria, and methods. It also contained prompts to elicit principals' views about what practices would be better for the evaluation and strategies to support and improve evaluation.

The set of interview questions and sub-questions I created was part of the protocol documents. Having the prepared questions increased the accuracy, credibility, and depth of the research data.

I followed my interview protocol procedures as carefully as possible with each participant. I designed the protocol to include prompts for each question to help keep me on track during the interview. The prompts helped me remember the main issues I planned to ask about while at the same time allowed for unexpected data to emerge by taking the participants in several different directions (Creswell, 2012; King & Horrocks, 2010).

A day or two prior to a scheduled data collection interview, I reviewed the purpose of my study over the phone with the participant. My hope was that by adding this extra step, participants would be encouraged to provide richer, more meaningful replies. I also used follow up emails and telephone calls to confirm scheduled appointments.

Before I began interviewing participants, I did not identify a specific number of interviews per participant. I planned to continue interviewing until the data was complete and the subjects had fully elaborated on their ideas, their meaning was clear, and I felt I had reached the research saturation point (Ary et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014; Guest et al., 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Successful interviews depend in large part on how the researcher communicates with participants (King & Horrocks, 2010). For that reason, I made every effort to build a relationship of mutual trust by addressing participants' concerns or issues prior to beginning the interview. One concern that several participants expressed was thinking I would judge or evaluate their work; this was especially strong for those with no prior experience taking part in research. In order to address these issues from the beginning, I explained and stressed to all participants that my role was to learn from their experiences and not to judge their work.

The face-to-face interviews took place while I was in Saudi Arabia, over a period of eight weeks during December 2015 and February 2016; after returning to Canada, I interviewed three of the participants an additional time via Skype. I used Skype for three reasons. First, I was unable to schedule a second interview time with the participants before I needed to return to Canada. Second, time ran out before the participant has finished sharing the details of his experience during our first interview. Third, the

participants' descriptions and experience were extensive; therefore, I wanted to ensure I had all their thoughts.

Participants were free to choose the location of their interview; those that did not feel comfortable meeting in their office chose a coffee shop. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour; this amount of time was sufficient to elicit depth in the responses. I digitally tape-recorded all interviews; prior to starting each interview, I tested the recording instrument to ensure it was functioning properly and that it had good sound quality. I conducted the interviews in Arabic because it is the mother tongue of all participants as well as myself. A hired transcriptionist transcribed each interview.

In order to build a relationship of trust with the participants, I spent time at the beginning of the data collection interview welcoming the participant. I started with basic background questions such as years of experience, years of teaching etc. Additionally, I asked the participants about their school and university experience. I also asked how they made the decision to become a principal. After that, I asked concrete questions about principal evaluation. I used participants' responses to allow for a more natural evolution of the questions asked during the interview.

Once the interviews were complete, and they had been transcribed, I sent participants a copy of their transcript. I asked them to review it, add information they wished they had said during their interview, and return it to me. This step provided the participants the opportunity to ensure they had provided complete answers, add information they felt was important but had not said in during the interview, and confirm they had communicated their ideas fully and clearly, thus increasing the credibility of the data.

A secondary reason for sending participants their transcript was to ensure accuracy. I hired a professional transcriber and wanted to ensure that she had not misunderstood what had been said due to issues with the sound of the recording. All participants returned their transcript and confirmed that the information was complete and accurate.

As mentioned above, along with recording each interview, I took written notes of my personal insights, ideas, and participants' comments that could help in the analysis of the data (Creswell, 2012). I chose to take notes for several reasons. First, it was an

important opportunity for me to stop and think about the available data. Second, they helped me identify misunderstandings and gaps from previous interviews. Third, they showed whether I needed to conduct further interviews. Finally, the notes helped with coding during data analysis and offered data comparisons between categories and from concept to concept (Charmaz, 2002).

I carefully considered two factors while taking notes: the location of the notes in the relation to the questions during the interviews and the organization of the notes for potential codes and categories based on a priori themes for this research. Staying aware of these elements during note taking meant when I began the coding process, I was able to easily return to the notes to review my initial thoughts about the codes and categories I would be identifying in the transcript. These also helped when comparing participants' information.

3.4. Research trustworthiness and reproducibility

In a qualitative approach, the investigator is the main tool. However, research has an element of subjectivity and positionality may influence the study itself, as well as the results (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Moreover, a researcher's biases can affect the results of the research. In order to address this issue, it is crucial that the researcher closely analyze and monitor his/her positionality (Merriam, 2009).

Maxwell (2013) pointed out that researcher bias may pose a threat to qualitative reproducibility and thus researchers must be cautious of personal intentionality, such as the researcher's theory, values, or preconceptions. Researcher bias may be a potential limitation to my study because of my preconceived ideas and opinions about the principal evaluation process in Saudi Arabia; these could have affected the data interpretation and interview process.

Since I have been a supervisor in a public school setting in Saudi Arabia, I bring with me an understanding of the MoE's evaluation system. I have heard some principals state they deserve complete autonomy to perform their work. They believe there should be no type of evaluation since the administrative supervisors usually visit a school only one or two times yearly. I have also heard principals complain about their level of job satisfaction. These principals often expressed this was the result of an evaluation

process that measures principals' job performance using vague and inaccurate measurement tools that lead to a lack of reliable or credible results.

My opinion about evaluation is that it is not worth the considerable time and effort required. For example, principals' advanced planning related to school issues has little real value, and the formal evaluation system prevents adaptive responses to problems. Despite this skepticism, I also believed that summative principal evaluation could be about important changes in practice, particularly if rigorous evaluation procedures were developed and attached to real consequences for principals. While I still believe this to be at least partially true, as is evident in my data analysis I have added substantial nuance to this belief.

With this in mind, I recognize that consciously or subconsciously, my own insights and beliefs about principals' evaluation might still have affected the data collection and analysis of the findings and that it ultimately may diminish the credibility of my study. By acknowledging my beliefs at the outset, I hope to control for their influence on my findings. My data collection, analysis, and findings can now be examined in light of the potential influence of my previous beliefs.

As Seidman (2006) stated with respect to this issue, "...it is important that the researcher identify his or her interest in the subject and examine it to make sure that the interest is not infused with anger, bias, or prejudice. The interviewer must come to the transcript prepared to let the interview breathe and speak for itself" (p. 117). Furthermore, Seidman (2006) pointed out, "Subjectivity is not seen as a failing needing to be eliminated but as an essential element of understanding" (p. 45). As a tool in the process and as the researcher, I worked to maintain research reproducibility by participant representativeness, replicating the findings and providing in depth, rich descriptions. In addition, I worked to keep positionality during all steps of the research process including planning this research, the interviews, data analysis, and the interpretation of results. I describe how I did this in the following paragraphs.

First, as I describe earlier in this chapter, for this study I used purposive sampling that included several criteria. Three of these criteria were to ensure representativeness of a larger group; of high school principals in the Eastern region, I included 14 in my study. Miles and Huberman (1994) noted data quality can be assessed by checking for

representativeness and avoiding errors associated with in the participant selection methods used in qualitative research. For this research, I applied their suggestion to “increase the number of cases” (p. 265). This study includes 14 participants from four school districts, where each participant had familiarity with the evaluation process and were able to explain their experiences.

Second, my participant sample helped ensure that the findings are valid and trustworthy because I was able to replicate the findings. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), researchers can replicate their findings in several ways. “At the most basic level, you are replicating as you collect new information from new participants, from new settings and events. New data bolster or qualify old data by testing their validity and generality” (p. 273).

Third, to establish credibility in this study, I provide detailed descriptions of the participants’ background and responses, the a prior and emergent themes and a detailed explanation of the results. Creswell and Miller (2000) explained the purpose of providing a rich and detailed description of the study findings and its setting “creates verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study” (p.129). To ensure richness of the study, I provide summaries of each participant’s responses to provide a sense of their outlook, feelings, and thoughts related to this research. Moreover, I created tables to highlight my research process and present information. As well, I provide a complete detailed report of this study findings.

Finally, while designing the research methodology, I considered the potential for internal biases. I carefully reflected on what Creswell and Miller (2000) call researcher reflexivity. According Creswell and Miller (2000) researcher reflexivity “is the process whereby researchers report on personal beliefs, values, and biases that may shape their inquiry. It is particularly important for researchers to acknowledge and describe their entering beliefs and biases early in the research process” (p. 127-128). When I was creating the interview questions, I considered my own opinions and carefully worded the questions so that my personal feelings about the research topic were not evident.

Once I began interviewing, I made every effort to minimize any influence I had on the participants. I did not provide my opinion even when asked directly; I explained to

participants that I was there to learn about their experiences. The hope was I could minimize my influence on the participants during the interview. By consciously not sharing my own experiences, I hope that the interviews remained objective and without bias.

Similarly, and more importantly, is the constraint of social desirability bias. Social desirability bias may lead a participant to provide responses they feel the researcher will see as acceptable. Furthermore, participants may tailor their answers to provide the information they perceive the researcher is looking for. Participants may also choose not to answer questions they would have answered in a questionnaire because they believe they are not anonymous (Ary et al., 2009). In order to eliminate, or at the very least minimize the effects of social desirability bias, I clarified the purpose of the study and emphasized to the participants the principle of confidentiality of study information.

Despite the concerns inherent with interviews, interviewers must be cautious not to give the participants too much control during the interview. Interviewers need to focus on what participants describe and continue with questioning that is relevant to obtaining further detail. Additionally, interviewers must remain aware that their own body language and their choice of words can send information about their emotional reactions (Mack et al., 2005). In order to address this issue, I followed my interview protocol during each of the interviews.

To ensure this study's trustworthiness, I took into account my bias during the data analysis and interpretation stages. I focused on researcher credibility, using evidence based on referential or interpretive evidence of trustworthiness (Ary et al., 2009). Ary et al. (2009) explained referential or interpretive evidence of trustworthiness refers to "meaning attached by participants to what is being studied by the researcher" and "the degree to which the participants' viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and experiences are accurately understood . . . and portrayed in the research report" (p. 277). Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994) explained member checks "encouraged feedback from case participants" by allowing "commenting on a short summary of findings, evaluating the accuracy of a causal network, verifying researcher predictions" (p. 275). I used two strategies to enhance my credibility, member checks and low-inference descriptors (Ary et al, 2009; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

According to Ary et al. (2009), member checks answer the question about participants' feedback, "Do the people who were studied agree with what you have said about them?" (p. 500). My use of member checks allowed me to receive feedback from participants that I used to verify my understanding of what they said was consistent with the message and meaning they were trying to convey.

In order to ensure evidence based on referential or interpretive methods, I provided each participant a brief summary of their interview and the coding as it related to their interview. I included the overall themes that emerged and information they discussed as well as the potential codes; I provided them my full interpretation of their transcript. Participants had the opportunity to review their transcript summary and make adjustments in areas where they felt I had not heard their wording correctly or where they felt they had miscommunicated their thoughts and ideas. I provided participants explanations about what I understood their meaning to be; the goal was to ensure they agreed with my interpretations. My instructions to participants were not reply with only a "yes or no" to the information on their transcript; I asked them to confirm my understanding of the information they wished to convey. For example, when a participant said 'ongoing feedback', I wanted to ensure it was correct to interpret that as 'formative feedback'." This process took place during the analysis stage.

All participants returned the brief summary of their interview and the coding and confirmed the information in the transcript was what they wished to communicate; none of the participants made any comments or changes. By including this step of information and interpretation sharing, participants were able to confirm the information was complete and accurate, thus increasing the trustworthiness of the data (Ary et al., 2009; Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Along with sharing information with participants, I used a digital recorder to increase the credibility of my data. Ary et al. (2009) explained tape recorders assist researchers in providing low-inference descriptors such as quotes. They explained, "Verbatim or direct quotations help the reader experience the participants' world" (p. 500). Moreover, they noted that using a "thick, rich description also helps the research convey an understanding of the study's context. These descriptions are very detailed, helping the reader "see" the setting, or if reporting themes from interviews, using the actual words of the respondents" (Ary et al., 2009, p. 500). In addition, Creswell and

Miller (2000) noted including low-inference descriptors could help the reader sense that they have experienced, or may possibly experience, the happenings described by participants. By recording the interviews and transcribing them, I was able to include direct quotes as frequently as needed to provide readers with a detailed description of the participants' experiences, as well as a deeper understanding of the study's context.

To sum up, while conducting this study, I took steps to ensure that this study is reliable and valid and ensure my own biases and positionality did not obstruct the results. I used participant representativeness, replicating the findings and providing thick, rich descriptions. In addition, I maintained my position as researcher when interviewing participants so that I learned through listening. I avoided sharing any of my personal experiences about the principal evaluation process. I used member checks, low-inference descriptors, and controlled my bias by using reflexivity and avoiding biased questions. By being aware of possible influences on my research, I avoided introducing or including preconceived concepts about the principal evaluation process in Saudi Arabia and reached neutral conclusions. By using the steps described in this section, my expectation is that the credibility of the study is solid.

3.5. Data analysis

I had a wealth of data due to the number of interviews and the range of participants' experiences. I sorted and analyzed the data from the interviews and my personal notes.

The interview protocol questions are regularly where researchers look when first attempting to create themes. Mills, Durepos, and Wiebe (2010) stated, "Researchers might use their research questions, interview questions, or theory-derived categories as a start list of a priori themes for coding data documents, an approach that can facilitate within- or cross-case comparisons" (p. 962).

After I received the letter of approval to conduct this study from the MoE in Saudi Arabia (Appendix F), I identified seven a priori themes from the literature related to my research questions (Creswell, 2014). As Maxwell (2013) suggested, I identified the study's a priori themes from multiple points of views including: the key characteristics of the main phenomenon under study, commonly used definitions from literature reviews,

my own research standards, my primary theoretical positions and perspectives, and my individual personal background. The a priori themes that I identified prior to the interviews are: evaluation purpose, evaluation characteristics, feedback, evaluation tools, desired components of evaluation, strategies that support or improve evaluation criteria, and strategies that support or improve data collection.

Ary et al. (2009) noted researchers rarely wait for all the interviews to be completed and for all the data to be collected before beginning the analysis of the data; rather, data collection and data analysis take place simultaneously. According to Ary et al. (2009), the purpose of doing data analysis and collection concurrently is so the researcher can reflect on the information from one interview, develop a working hypothesis, and then examine whether the hunches are defensible.

I began analyzing the data from each interview after meeting with a participant as Ary et al. (2009) suggested. I completed methodical notes after each interview and performed data collection and analysis concurrently. These techniques allowed me to confirm a priori themes and examine developing findings as well as create a summary of the main findings (Creswell, 2014; Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2015).

Several guidelines exist regarding the process for analyzing data in a qualitative way (Creswell, 2014; Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). During the data analysis and interpretation phase, I used analysis techniques from Creswell (2014). The methods include: “(a) organizing and preparing the data for analysis, (b) reading all the data (c) starting to code all of the data, (d) using the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis, (e) expanding the description of the qualitative narrative, and (f) making interpretations” (p. 197-200). By using these analysis techniques, I was able to move through logical steps in a timely manner and with the assurance that the study data I collected was representative of the research questions.

In the first step of data analysis, I organized and prepared the data for analysis. I used participants’ responses to identify critical information for comparing perceptions regarding the evaluation process and procedures. I listened to each interview audio digital recording and compared them to the written transcripts, which included 316 pages, to ensure accuracy. I assigned each transcript document a number that identified

which interview recording it was connected to. I then reviewed my notes and entered them into word documents. Finally, I assigned each participant a pseudonym to maintain the anonymity of participant data.

In the second step, I reread all interview data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of key ideas. I read each transcript one or two times to ensure I had a solid sense of the information and possibly its general meaning. During this step, I wrote down my general thoughts as I tried to make sense of the information. Furthermore, my notes included my initial thoughts and patterns and repetitive phrases from the transcripts. The patterns and phrases helped me to identify relationships between themes, categories, and codes. This was a significant stage aimed at preparing for the data coding process.

During the third and fourth steps, I worked through the coding process, explained by Marshall & Rossman (2006) as “the formal representation of analytic thinking” (p. 160). At this time, I identified categories, organized them into themes, and looked for connections between themes (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). The analysis of data involved two different coding actions. First, I analyzed the data according to a priori themes; second, I analyzed the data for emergent themes. I chose to complete both analyses because, as Merriam (2009) explained, a priori themes are important but emergent themes can offer superior insight. Figure 1 illustrates the data coding process.

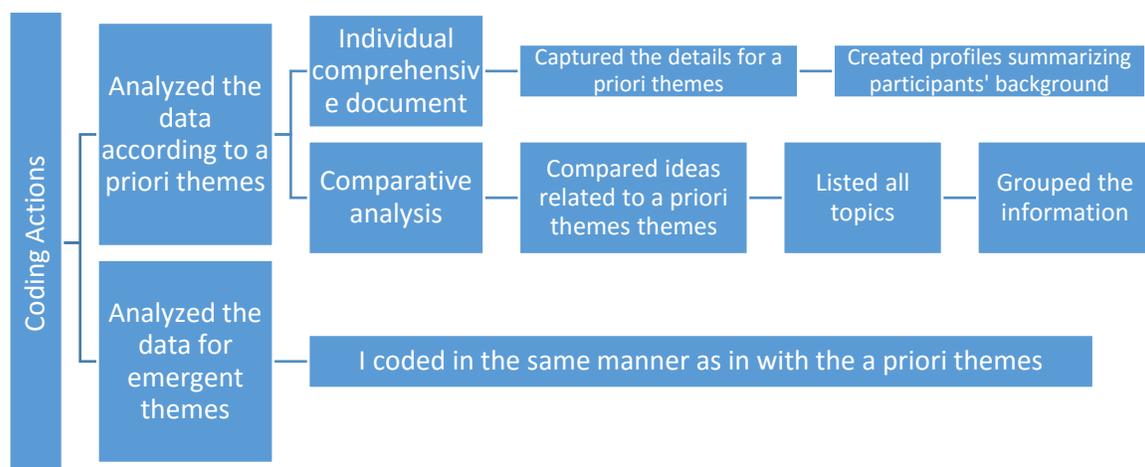


Figure 2. Data coding process.

For the data coding, I looked at each interview as an individual, comprehensive document. I began by reading the transcripts to identify relevant information in each interview. I looked into each individual experience to identify situations that were relevant to the research questions and that played a role in a participant's view of the effectiveness of the evaluation process. I reviewed my notes in the margins for each case and added additional notes as new ideas emerged. The goal was to facilitate the data coding process.

Additionally, I looked at the individual interviews as comprehensive cases to capture the details for a priori themes. I read each interview once for a priori themes and I analyzed the transcript line by line to identify relevant information from each interview; it was during this stage that I identified each code by colour so that it matched an a priori theme. There were seven colour codes to identify themes in each interview transcript. Moreover, I created code abbreviations for each preliminary code related to that theme. For example, PRR is short for Routine Requirement. Table 3 identifies a sample of the code's coloring and abbreviations for the summary responses to research Questions 1.

Table 3. Example of some preliminary codes for research question one

| Code abbreviations | Potential Themes | Term | Definition | Colour |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---|---------------|
| PRU | 1 | Purpose | To remove unsuccessful principals | Blue |
| PNC | 1 | Purpose | Purpose of evaluation not clear | Blue |
| PRR | 1 | Purpose | To fulfill a routine requirement | Blue |
| PEH | 2 | Performance | Does the current evaluation capture principals' performance? | Green |
| CPJ | 2 | Performance judgment | Characteristics of how performance judgment are not clear | Green |
| PR | 2 | Reliability | Lack of evaluation reliability | Green |
| EVY | 3 | Evaluation feedback | Current rating system provides feedback | Red |
| PGF | 3 | Professional growth | Feedback helped principals in their professional growth | Red |
| EFN | 3 | Evaluation feedback | Recent evaluation did not provide fair feedback | Red |
| FT | 3 | Feedback time | A lack of time provided for feedback | Red |
| NSV | 4 | Number of visits | A lack of times a year a supervisor visit the principals | Yellow |
| OPE | 4 | Ongoing process | Principal evaluation is an ongoing process throughout the year | Yellow |
| EM | 4 | Evaluation methods | Methods currently used to evaluate principals | Yellow |
| CIA | - | Critical aspect | Important research areas in transcript not related to an a priori theme | Orange |

Once all coding for the individual interview analysis was complete, and I had identified all a priori themes in each case, I worked on the second stage of data coding

analysis, a comparative method or comparative analysis (Schwandt, 2007). In this stage, I was able to look at individual interviews as well as the group of interviews to study concepts, theories, and social processes among other things.

I looked for existing patterns within the interviews related to a priori themes in a bottom up and top down analysis. By using this analysis strategy, I was able to further my understanding of the process of data integration. Horizontally, I compared the ideas related to a priori themes from the participants to enhance my understanding of similarities and differences between study participants (Merriam, 2009; Mathison, 2005; Mills et al., 2010).

During comparative method, I first made a list of all the topics I had identified in the individual interviews; I then grouped the information from different interviews by patterns. I returned to my data after I had completed this step to compare the list of topics and ensure focus. I created a general description of all the participants' information in order to identify the codes for data analysis. The final stage was matching participants' preliminary codes with their summary responses (see Table 4). I arranged all code abbreviations for each a priori theme and indicated participants' responses by using a dot symbol in each column when it applied to a specific participant. The goal was to simplify the analysis process when reviewing the data again. Arranging the data in this manner allowed me to identify clear a priori theme patterns and relationships, as well as repetition. Table 4 outlines the comparative analysis data for research question one.

Table 4. Example Summary of Participants' Responses for Research Question One

| A prior themes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----|-----|----|-------------------------------|----|----------|-----|-----|------------------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|
| | 1 | | | | 2 | | 3 | | | 4 | | | Critical features | |
| Themes | Purpose of evaluation | | | | Characteristics of evaluation | | Feedback | | | Evaluation tools | | | | |
| Name * | PRU | PNC | PRR | PE | CPJ | PR | EVY | PGF | EFN | FT | NSV | OPE | EM | CIA |
| Hamza | | • | | | • | • | • | | | • | • | | • | • |
| Adam | • | • | | | • | | • | | • | • | • | | • | |
| Hadi | | • | • | | • | • | • | | • | • | • | | • | |
| Mohammed | • | • | | | • | | • | | | • | • | | • | • |
| Abdullah | • | • | | | • | • | • | | • | • | • | | • | |
| Omar | | • | • | | • | | | • | | • | • | | • | • |
| Nawaf | • | • | • | | • | | | • | • | • | • | | • | |
| Ahmed | | • | | | • | • | • | | | • | • | | • | • |
| Saleh | | • | | | • | • | • | | • | • | • | | • | |
| Amin | • | • | | | • | • | • | | • | • | • | | • | • |
| Anwar | | • | • | | • | • | • | | | • | • | | • | • |
| Ibrahim | • | • | • | | • | • | • | | | • | • | | • | |
| Hasan | | • | | | • | • | • | | • | • | • | | • | |
| Adel | | • | • | | • | • | • | | • | • | • | | • | |

* Pseudonyms have been used to protect participants' identity.

Once I had completed all coding of a priori themes in the data, I worked on emerging themes. I started by reading over the interview data again, looking for additional information related to my research but where I asked no direct questions. When I found a pattern, I coded it in the same manner as in the previous step. It was at this point that one new theme emerged.

Once I had completed all coding for a priori and emergent themes, I translated the coding into English; I did the original coding in Arabic. I read the English version

several times to see if I noticed any further information. During the additional readings, I was able to gain more understanding of the data; I was able to look at the transcript with a new perspective as it was now in English.

At this point, I had identified 87 codes; I put similar codes into groups. I re-read the transcripts to find the best descriptive wording from participants' statements for each group of codes.

During the final phase of this step, I created categories; the final count was 24 categories from the 87 codes. 22 categories clustered under seven a priori themes and 2 categories clustered under one emergent theme. It was during this step that I began profiling and summarizing participants' background information and main beliefs on how to improve evaluation. Figure 2 shows the final count of codes, categories, and themes.

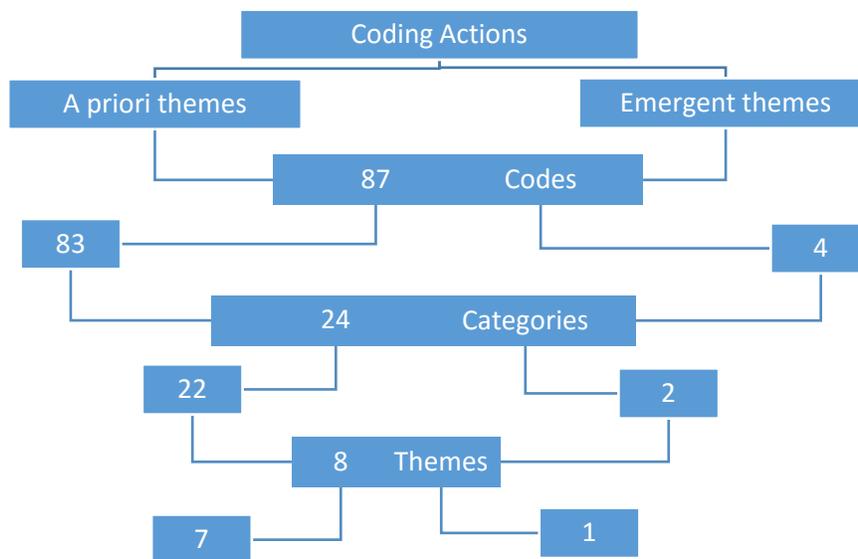


Figure 3. Final count of codes, Categories and themes

Once I had completed the initial coding and created categories, I shared the information with the participants in individualized summaries of the results from their interview. I included the overall themes that emerged and information they discussed as well as the potential codes. The goal of this step was to ensure that I had represented their opinion accurately and that I had understood their exact meaning. 12 of the

participants responded to me affirming that the preliminary coding represented their idea; two did not reply to my email.

In the fifth step of data analysis, I followed Creswell's (2014) suggestion of finding "a narrative passage to convey findings" (p. 200). I took my data, which I had divided into a priori and emergent themes, and began to support each category with direct quotes from the participants' transcripts.

Moreover, I created summaries of the participants' thoughts. The summaries provide a sense of each participant's outlook, feelings, and thoughts related to the research. The goal of including these summaries in this dissertation is introduce participants to readers.

In order to further my understanding of the data, I created tables to highlight my research process and present information; for example, themes and categories identified in the research findings, samples of some preliminary codes and demographic data.

The final step of the data analysis was to look at the findings as a whole in order to present a summary of the main findings. I also prepared a discussion of the implications for policy and practice, the limitations of my study, and suggestions for future research on principal evaluation. I discuss these topics in chapter 5.

As mentioned above, there was one emergent theme, character traits of the evaluator. When I got to my analysis section, I noted the emergent theme arose from the data; when I looked back at the literature, I found research that helped me interpret the theme.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Walker (2007) noted that trust between the participants and researcher supports the interview process. I obtained informed consent from all participants prior to the interviews in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Simon Frasier University. None of the participants is identifiable in any data I share.

I analyzed the data and interpreted it for themes and categories for the purpose of this study only. Any participant who wished to withdraw from the study could do so at

any time. There was minimal risk that participants would share personal or confidential information about evaluation, or that a participant would feel uncomfortable talking about the topics. However, participants did not have to answer any question they felt was too personal or take part in the interview if discussing the topic made them uncomfortable. Moreover, withdrawal from the study would have had no adverse effects on the participant or on the participant's employment because I was not sharing information with others. Furthermore, I informed and reassured participants that their information would be kept private and in a safe location in order to ensure complete confidentiality. Finally, I emphasized that no judgments of participants' experiences would occur during analysis.

To sum up, the purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the current evaluation process as experienced by high school principals. The methodology I used to gather data from high school principals was a qualitative research approach. The participant sample was high school principals who were working for the Eastern General Department of Education in Saudi Arabia at the time of the study. The sources for data collection were interviews and personal notes. I employed in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews because they are the most efficient way to develop context and gather vast amounts of data.

I analyzed the data using recommendations from Creswell (2014) including "(a) organizing and preparing the data for analysis, (b) reading all the data, (c) starting to code all of the data, (d) using the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis, expanding the description of the qualitative narrative, and (f) making interpretations" (p. 197-200). I compared the principals' ideas and identified similarities and differences between participants. The goal was to better understand how the MoE evaluates high school principals in Saudi Arabia. I analyzed the data first according to a priori themes, then for emergent themes. I identified 24 categories from 87 codes. 22 of these categories clustered under seven a priori themes and two categories clustered under one an emergent theme.

Chapter 4.

Results

In this chapter, I present the analysis of the 14 written transcripts from the high school principal interviews, along with the results. I collected the data over an eight-week period and formulated the results over a period of eight months. There are three sections in this chapter. First is a review of the research design and analysis methods. Second, I provide a summary detailing the profiles of the participants; these include a description on the findings from each participant's interview. The third section is a complete report on the findings. In this section, I explain the findings from my comparison of the principals' descriptions of the current evaluation system in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, I present their opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods supervisors use during evaluation.

4.1. Review of Research Design and Analysis Methods

The primary purpose of the study is to examine the current evaluation process as experienced by high school principals in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the examination provides principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation. Finally, the study provides a comparison of principals' recommendations with those advocated in the literature.

This research addresses two questions: What are the perceptions of high school principals in Saudi Arabia regarding the process and criteria for their evaluation? And, what are principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature?

I organized the data for analysis according to a priori themes and for emergent themes. I used recommendations from Creswell (2014) including (a) organizing and preparing the data for analysis, (b) reading all the data, (c) starting to code all of the data, (d) using the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis, (e) expanding the descriptions of the qualitative narrative, and (f) making interpretations (p.197-200). Finally, I compared participating principals' ideas against one another as well as against findings from the literature.

4.2. Participant Profiles

The following is a summary of each participant's background and main thoughts about evaluation as well as their ideas for how to improve it. The objective of the profiles is to introduce participants to the readers.

For this study, I use pseudonyms in place of the participants' names to protect their identity and ensure confidentiality. The pseudonyms assigned are Adam, Abdullah, Nawaf, Adel, Ahmed, Amin, Anwar, Hamza, Ibrahim, Mohammed, Omar, Saleh, Hadi, and Hasan. When describing a participant's years of experience, I use labels to identify ranges to further protect and safeguard confidentiality. The labels are: more than 15 years' experience as an administrator - highly experienced; 5 to 15 years – experienced; and for participants with less than 5 years' experience - new administrator. Table 5 provides a summary of the demographic information of all participants as well as some of the details of their interviews.

Table 5. Demographic Data

| | Name * | Experience | Transcript Pages | Number of Interviews | Total Interview Length in Minutes | Interview Date |
|-----------|---------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 1 | Hamza | experienced administrator | 40 | 2 | 100 | 14/12/2016 10/2/2016 |
| 2 | Adam | experienced administrator | 37 | 2 | 95 | 31/12/2015 8/02/2016 |
| 3 | Hadi | highly experienced administrator | 28 | 2 | 72 | 4/1/2016 19/02/2016 |
| 4 | Mohammed | highly experienced administrator | 18 | 1 | 45 | 2/12/2015 |
| 5 | Abdullah | highly experienced administrator | 12 | 1 | 30 | 3/12/2015 |
| 6 | Omar | experienced administrator | 14 | 1 | 35 | 27/12/2015 |
| 7 | Nawaf | new administrator | 27 | 1 | 60 | 10/1/2016 |
| 8 | Ahmed | experienced administrator | 16 | 1 | 40 | 30/12/2015 |
| 9 | Saleh | experienced administrator | 26 | 1 | 60 | 16/1/2016 |
| 10 | Amin | new administrator | 16 | 1 | 40 | 4/1/2016 |
| 11 | Anwar | experienced administrator | 18 | 1 | 45 | 17/1/2016 |
| 12 | Ibrahim | experienced administrator | 20 | 1 | 50 | 7/1/2016 |
| 13 | Hasan | experienced administrator | 18 | 1 | 45 | 22/1/2016 |
| 14 | Adel | experienced administrator | 26 | 1 | 58 | 5/1/2016 |

* Pseudonyms have been used to protect participants' identity.

4.2.1. Participants' thoughts - Summaries.

Before starting the written part of my results, I created summaries of the participants' thoughts. The summaries provide a sense of each participant's outlook, feelings, and thoughts related to the research topic. The goal of including these summaries is to provide an introduction of the participants to the reader.

Adam

I interviewed Adam twice; in the first interview, time ran out before he had finished sharing the details of his experience. As his descriptions and experience were extensive, I wanted to ensure I had all his thoughts. The first meeting was in his office on 31/12/2015; the second was via Skype on 8/2/2016. In both interviews, Adam provided rich data and valuable information. Adam is an experienced administrator. He worked a few years as an assistant principal and has been working for many years as a high school principal.

Adam shared that he had one visit that included a face-to-face and written component per year from the evaluator. Adam explained,

I have been visited one time each year since I became principal. Usually, the visit lasts between two and three hours and is a face-to-face meeting in my office. At the end of each visit, the supervisor fills out a written report, and often, they are similar to the previous year.

What Adam described as the evaluation process and procedure, all participants echoed – one visit that included a face-to-face and written component and no inclusion of self-evaluation. Since this information is the same for all participants, I do not repeat it in each participant summary.

Adam's general attitude about the current principal evaluation was it is a waste of time; he explained that he felt this way because there are no real usable results. In his opinion, the evaluation affects neither principals' progress nor their position within a school district. He expressed that there is no clear purpose to the evaluation; however, he did note that sometimes the MoE uses it to remove ineffective principals. Adam explained,

When a supervisor wants to remove an ineffective principal, he visits the school with this (remove a principal) in mind. Regardless of the existing evaluation form, the supervisor keeps looking at what the principal has done in a way that is for inspection only. In the end, the supervisor usually finds a sufficient number of reasons to remove the principal from his position. They are not reasons you can find in the evaluation form.

Adam explained that conducting principals' evaluations is complex. He expressed that training is an important part of the development of successful principals and that there should be a close link evaluation and professional development through the feedback evaluators provide. He stated, "The evaluation itself is complex. Successful

feedback from evaluation would help with our professional development. If we (principals) knew how to use the results, I would actually benefit from the evaluation with respect to training.” However, he expressed that this is difficult to accomplish with the Saudi evaluation system because of the lack of school visits by evaluators as well as a shortage of evaluators who understand the true complexity of a principal’s role. When it comes to the evaluators themselves, Adam explained that supervisors rarely provide feedback due to a lack of time and/or a lack of knowledge about how to provide effective feedback.

When Adam discussed the characteristics of the evaluation, he stated the procedures for evaluating performance were not in line with expected practice standards that should act as guidelines. Adam explained, “There is no connection between my performance and my evaluation, no link at all except in some management areas.” He expressed that this results in the evaluation not capturing a principal’s performance. In the end, Adam expressed that the poor quality of the evaluation characteristics meant the evaluation fails to have either reliability or credibility. He explained,

If you have followed the principals’ evaluation procedure steps for measuring principal performance, and you, as the evaluator, are not be able to determine any difference among the performance of principals, then the evaluation process is a farce. All principals every year get the same score on their evaluation, regardless of what they have done. Do you see what I mean! I think everyone would conclude the reliability and credibility of the evaluation are not good.

Adam stated that evaluation components should include positive school culture, school management, and professional growth. However, he expressed that student achievement should not be included because there are internal and external influences on students and it would be unfair to hold principals 100% responsible for student achievement. He provided the following example; "If a grade 8 student has a weakness in his learning skills in a specific subject area, it is possibly because a weak foundation from pervious grades."

Adam expressed that he thinks the current evaluation should change and provided suggestions to improve principal evaluation criteria and procedures. He stated that any new evaluation should include both formative and summative methods. He explained, “We need to move towards measurements that ascertain the degree to which I meet the expected position requirements. That way, the system can deliver trustworthy evidence and feedback that we can apply in our position and school.” He noted the MoE

could achieve greater evaluation quality in Saudi Arabia by adopting existing evaluation standards from other education environments. He said, "The MoE has to think seriously about making some changes. The Hallinger Scale (referring to PIMRS), I think you know it. Why don't they (MoE) just adopt it? My expectation is that evaluation quality would improve doing this." Finally, he suggested that supervisors use a wider variety of diagnostic tools, in addition to as many data sources as possible, in order to achieve more valuable data from the evaluation.

Adam's thoughts on strategies to support and improve evaluation included: should be clear and simple; should be easy for evaluators to carry out; should be straightforward; should have a clear purpose; and should ensure that principals' have knowledge of the performance expectations. Adam emphasized that the MoE must consider these elements when creating a new, or changing the current, evaluation system in Saudi Arabia. Adam said, "To make a successful assessment and evaluation, the MoE must consider these elements when modifying the current evaluation system in Saudi Arabia. I stress that our actual work must be in the line with the assessment instrument."

Hamza

I interviewed Hamza twice. In the first interview, time ran out before he had finished sharing the details of his experience. The first meeting was in his office on 14/01/2016; the second was via Skype on 10/2/2016. Hamza attained a Master Degree in Leadership. He is a highly experienced administrator who has worked in three different regions in Saudi Arabia; this experience enabled him to provide a great amount of rich detail. Hamza explained that the policy of the MoE requires an individual to return to teaching when changing districts; he has gone back and forth several times between teacher and principal.

Hamza described the current principal evaluation as an objective summative process that lacks a clear purpose. In his opinion, the evaluation does not affect principals' development and supervisors only carry out the evaluation to meet an MoE legal obligation. In addition, he expressed the current system fails to provide appropriate feedback to principals. Regarding feedback, he stated, "Procedures are not meaningful and feedback is not provided in a timely manner." He said feedback is necessary and is the only way to "improve principals' leadership capabilities."

When Hamza discussed the characteristics of the evaluation, he stated, “Not all of our authorities and duties are aligned with our evaluation.” Moreover, he expressed that because its procedures do not focus on principals’ duties, the evaluation cannot capture principals’ performance. In his opinion, “The capacity of our evaluation leads potentially to an unfair evaluation.”

For Hamza, the evaluation system loses credibility because the results from individual evaluators are not consistent, even when evaluators carry out the evaluation in the same way. He expressed it allows for too much subjectivity on the part of the evaluator. He also expressed that, in his opinion, “There is a problem beyond the assessment model - it is the inexperience of the supervisor himself.”

Hamza stressed that the first priority for a new evaluation, based on the literature, is including positive school culture. He stressed the “importance of positive relationships between teachers and other school staff.” He suggested that evaluation should also include components such as school management and professional growth; he noted, “A positive climate, professional growth, and school management are the pillars of successful evaluation systems” and communicated these would improve teaching practice and student achievement. However, he did not see any value in including student achievement data as a part of his evaluation.

Hamza expressed that the current evaluation should change and provided suggestions on to improve principal evaluation criteria and procedures. He explained that the focus for improving evaluation should start with quality. He stated, “The evaluation outcomes are limited and negatively impact our development; lack of evaluation quality has long been a concern among principals.” He recommended that supervisors use a more diverse set of diagnostic tools, along with more data sources, to achieve higher evaluation quality. He commented, “It is important to provide tools that accurately assess and measure my work, tools that will reflect my actual work.” Finally, he said hiring experienced supervisors to evaluate and assess principals’ is one of the key components to a successful evaluation process. Hamza stated, “How can he (supervisor) evaluate the work of principal if he does not know the actual work, if he hasn’t experienced what I do? Then the supervisor can never help us.”

Hamza stressed in order to improve the evaluation, it must be clear, simple, and easy to administer. Moreover, he added that it must clearly outline the performance expectations for principals. Hamza emphasized the MoE must consider these elements when creating a new evaluation system or changing the current one. Hamza stated, “I think the purpose of the evaluation is not clear ... Evaluation data does not lead to accurately measuring the level of our performance, yet it must.”

When commenting on evaluation research, Hamza noted that research is rare in the area of principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia. He explained that he had never read research articles connected to his evaluation. In his opinion, adopting existing evaluation standards from other education environments could be the first step to improving the evaluation. He stated, “Let’s start from where others have ended.” He suggested building a new evaluation system using existing evaluation standards, however, he stressed that it must not cause creators to lose focus on formative and summative methods. Hamza suggested that the formative process and summative process be separate; “To have positive results in our evaluation, the person who assesses principals should be different from the person who evaluates them. The person who assesses me must be different from the person who evaluates and makes decision about me.” He concluded, “Evaluation is supposed to inform principals about where they should focus for professional development. Giving the right kind of feedback, and in a timely manner, is something evaluation should be providing.”

Hadi

I interviewed Hadi twice; there was not enough time during the first interview to cover all the topics. The first interview took place in his office on 4/1/2016, and the second was via Skype on 19/2/2016. He has a Bachelor degree and a School Administration Graduate Diploma. Hadi is an experienced principal in school administration. He has been working as an educational supervisor in his current district for few years. He has rich experience in education administration.

Hadi explained that he has seen an increase in the roles principals play over the past three decades. He stated principals are responsible for both management and leadership. In his opinion, the current evaluation system, which has not changed much over a long period of time, does not support principals’ development for keeping up with the new complexity of the role. Hadi expressed, “The current principal evaluation does

not capture my real work performance.” In addition, he articulated that the evaluation could not measure principals’ performance accountability. He stated, “Principals hold important roles in the new education reform. But, principals’ evaluation is not in line with the complexity of our roles.” Furthermore, Hadi said there is no clear purpose to the evaluation; he stated, “The principals’ evaluation system is just a routine requirement for the school districts.”

Hadi noted supervisors do not have enough time and sometimes they have no new information to provide feedback to principals; he explained that supervisors have gone so far as to tell him, “I’m in a rush!” He explained, “Because of recent education reform, there is a greater need for continuous feedback, to keep principals updated about what is going on around them.”

Hadi also expressed that there is a shortage of qualified evaluators in his school district. He explained he is frustrated “when the supervisor gives me wrong information about the mechanisms of how school administration works.” In addition, he recounted, “This is not a secret - there are complaints in every school about a lack of qualified supervisors in the school districts.”

Hadi expressed that evaluation should be informal and geared to helping principals improve. He also said the most important component of principal evaluation is positive school culture; he recommended including school culture as one of the evaluation components. He stated, “Positive school culture is believed to be one of the foundations of instructional leadership.” Moreover, Hadi recommended including school management. He explained, “In order to design an evaluation that aligns with the principals actual duties, it should include our administrative tasks.”

Hadi was one of 12 participants who did not support including student achievement as part of the formal principal evaluation, citing shared responsibility. However, in his view, professional development is an essential component for principal evaluation. He stated, “It is true principals have new authority in their role with the goal of achieving school improvement. But in our centralized system, it is difficult for principals to exercise their authority. Also, there is a lack of appropriate training courses related to principals’ work.”

Hadi said that the current evaluation should change but explained, "If this is not possible, the MoE should at least modify it." He also emphasized that "policy makers must acknowledge differences between school environments" when designing a new evaluation or modifying the current one.

Hadi noted evaluation should include both formative and summative methods. "Evaluation should offer a way for principals to develop as well as provide principals with helpful feedback." Additionally, he said, "The end of year evaluation should be used to compare principals for training and promotion purposes."

Hadi also suggested that supervisors increase their number of school visits and use additional diagnostic tools. He explained, "The use of technology has been growing in our workplace but not in relation to our evaluation. I think our evaluation should take advantage of current technology." Furthermore, he stated the evaluation should include as many data sources as possible in order to achieve better quality data. He explained, "Evaluation standards should develop from many sources, including all key people involved."

Finally, Hadi expressed his thoughts on strategies to support evaluation. He explained, "Evaluations should have a clear purpose in order to provide the framework for assessment; and should ensure that performance expectations are clearly outlined for principals to have positive feedback."

Mohammed

My one meeting with Mohammed took place in a coffee shop on 02/12/2015. Mohammed has experience as a teacher and an education administrator.

Mohammed was not satisfied with the current principal evaluation; he explained that the evaluation system fails to provide appropriate feedback and therefore does not affect his level of performance, nor increase his administrative abilities. Mohammed recounted,

After every formal evaluation that I have had, my supervisor told me that my work is ideal, but I think I have serious management issues. Actually, I thought to myself, 'this is a lie' (referring to the supervisor's opinion). But, I keep my opinion to myself. Once I asked my supervisor to help me with some of my management problems, he said, 'I will respond to you in few days', he never responded! Wow.

Mohammed expressed that there is no clear purpose to the evaluation; however, he stated strongly that the MoE uses the evaluation to remove ineffective principals. He said, "I have never seen a principal be evaluated on everything he is doing by his supervisor. Actually, the only time that happens is in a situation where the supervisor's intention is to remove an unqualified principal from his position."

Mohammed stated that there are many barriers for the Saudi principals' evaluation system; these included the lack of school visits, a shortage of evaluators who understand the real complexity of a principal's role, and the tools available to supervisors. He said, "The evaluation tools that are used by an evaluator to assess performance are limited ... one visit is not enough for a useful evaluation." For these reasons, Mohammed felt that the evaluation of principals is unfair and lacks reliability.

Mohammed said the MoE should incorporate positive school culture, school management, and professional growth into evaluation. He explained, "There is need for more attention on improving our education system in this fast-paced world. Continuously updating of our jobs skills requires a well-developed professional development plan."

Mohammed did not see any value in including student achievement data. He explained that using student achievement to measure principal leadership success was neither reasonable nor useful. He stated, "Evaluating me directly on student achievement does not make sense to me. I may affect the learning environment surrounding students through things such as school planning, contributing to teacher development, and frequent classroom visits. I think that is what I should be assessed on."

Mohammed supported using leadership research as a way to improve the quality of evaluation. He suggested placing a greater focus on improving evaluation quality in Saudi Arabia; he explained the MoE could achieve this by adopting existing evaluation standards from other education environments. Mohammed said, "Adopting framework evaluation standards from another education environment, it sounds like a good strategy. And, if it can improve our existing evaluation, the results will help to save time and money when building a new one." He also thought that any new evaluation should include both formative and summative process. He said, "Implementing a continuous evaluation that offers continuous feedback during the year will help principals improve."

He also explained, "The end of the year evaluation is also important because principals who work hard would like to feel some appreciation by getting high scores."

Mohammed's opinions on strategies to support and improve evaluation included being clear; being easy for evaluators to carry out; having a clear purpose; and ensuring principals' performance expectations are clearly outlined. He expressed, "It is important that the main intent and purpose of my evaluation is clear. For example, I have to know, is my evaluation to develop my skills? Or, is it just to judge my work?"

Abdullah

I met Abdullah in his office for one interview on 03/12/2015. Abdullah is an experienced administrator.

Abdullah said the existing evaluation "is not taken as seriously as it should be" in Saudi Arabia. In his view, the main reason for the failure of the evaluation is it does not capture principals' performance. He said the current principal evaluation is not clear and stated, "The results of my evaluations haven't surprised me; it doesn't capture our performance clearly. Therefore, evaluation results are not accurate." Moreover, in his opinion, "evaluation does provide feedback to principals." He thought principals who are new to the position benefit from the feedback provided because, as he said, "They have limited experience and may get some beneficial feedback from their supervisor."

Abdullah stated that effective principals are vital to an education system that focuses on increasing student achievement. He explained that the current evaluation fails to foster effective principals and thus the MoE needs to change it. He commented, "Student achievement should be included in my evaluation; everything that happens in the school has been influenced by what I do every day." He also explained that a quality evaluation should have "clear expectations about evaluation goals and should be in line with a standard job description of principals' tasks."

Abdullah expressed that evaluation components should include professional growth; he explained, "Professional growth is a way to develop principal practice. I am confident that policy makers must rethink the efficacy of principal evaluation. They have to take action to include professional development in principals' evaluation." Furthermore, he noted that positive school culture and school management should be

part of any new evaluation process. He said, "For me, school culture is an essential focus for the leader. For example, I try to create an environment where my teachers feel comfortable discussing their problems with me so they can get appropriate feedback on a regular basis."

Abdullah noted that evaluation should only follow a formative process. He explained, "Development of the evaluation system can encourage us (principals) to improve our skills by focusing on immediate feedback from supervisors and through multiple visits to the school." He also pointed out that indirect observations should be an important part of the evaluation process. His examples included, but were not limited to, "attending teacher meetings, observing teacher practice, and reviewing school data." Lastly, Abdullah advocated for improved school visits. He said, "I would prefer if our school district implemented three formal school visits for principals. One at the beginning of the year, another mid-year, and one at the end of the year to provide feedback."

Abdullah asserted it is very important to ensure principals' performance expectations are outlined and in line with their work. He said,

Improving principals' skills should rank high on the list of priorities for our school reform. The expectations about our performance have changed and expanded with our new roles. Honestly, responsibilities now exceed what I expected I would have to be responsible for in my school and it has to be carried out by me alone. If more attention were given to the role of principal, it would make my work easier.

Abdullah stressed that the creation of a new evaluation should include feedback and suggestions from all persons involved in education; for him, this means including information from as many sources as possible. He suggested improving the data collection process by adding more school observations. Abdullah explained, "Direct observation of school practices and principals' actions may support our assessment and provide additional evidence for the evaluation and measure us in a proper way." He also expressed the process would improve if educational supervisors understood appropriate leadership behavior; he commented, "Supervisors may facilitate the evaluation by his perception, ownership, interests, dedication, and commitment."

Omar

I met Omar in a neighborhood coffee shop on 27/12/2015 for his only interview. He is an experienced administrator.

Omar said that the principal evaluation has little influence on his work and has no impact at all on his progress. He stated, "I do not know why principals receive an evaluation. There is no guide, no clear goal. The results of my evaluations provide no material or moral incentive."

Omar expressed there is no way to ensure fairness and equality of principal evaluation. Moreover, he was not sure about the reliability of his evaluation. Omar stated, "Much of our work responsibilities are not included in the context of our evaluation. The evaluation is not related to the actual principals' daily duties; the results do not accurately describe our work."

Omar stated feedback is always important but especially since the new Saudi education reform. Omar noted that there is lack of time during the supervisor's yearly visit for adequate interaction and feedback. He explained,

Often, the evaluator fails to provide sufficient information to facilitate and assist my work. For example, I rarely have the evaluator's assistance to help me facilitate my work process. So, even when the supervisor has sufficient information related to my work, usually, he does not have time to give me information.

Omar expressed that evaluation components should include positive school culture and school management. He said, "I spend almost 80% of my time on school management issues. My daily duties are to insure school operations, so why should the MoE not include my management skills in my evaluation?" However, he did not support including professional growth; his concern was "the efficiency of the principal's evaluator." In addition, Omar did not see any value in including student achievement. He expressed that student achievement is the result of many influencing factors. He noted principals do not have powers that enable them to have an effect on student achievement. He said, "I'm working in a centralized work environment, where I have no hand in a lot of what is happening in my school. I only carry out the instructions of the MoE."

Omar expressed the current evaluation should change. His thoughts on strategies to support and improve evaluations included should have a clear purpose and should ensure that principals' performance expectations are clearly outlined. He said, "Evaluation should have a clear purpose and my performance expectations should be clearly outlined; indeed, this is the ideal evaluation." Moreover, he identified the most

important thing to consider when designing a new evaluation system is including principals in the building of their evaluation. Omar said, "Principals' opinions should be taken into account when the MoE formulates a new evaluation. Principals have experience in their position and they can give abundant suggestions to build an evaluation."

Omar voiced that evaluation tools should use as many information sources as possible and should include school observations and interviews with teachers. He also noted, "Personal interviews with my supervisor must improve." He stressed that the "number of school visits must increase" and that the MoE must hire professional educational supervisors who understand principals' work.

Omar further expressed any new assessment should be flexible and take into account differences between schools. He explained,

Not all of us (principals) work in the same kind of environment. For instance, urban and rural schools are different. Urban and rural schools do not have the same distribution of resources and experienced teachers from the MoE. For teachers, when it comes to the differences in teaching staff, it is the result of the MoE placing less qualified teachers in remote areas. As for the resources, schools in cities are always better equipped than village schools.

Finally, Omar stated that any new evaluation should include both formative and summative methods. He said, "Successful evaluation is when an evaluator measures my work development during the school year and again at the end of the year, but by different evaluator who will see all my work as a whole and can then judge me."

Nawaf

I interviewed Nawaf one time in his office on 10/1/2016. He is a new administrator; he was enthusiastic when discussing his achievements and goals for professional growth.

When Nawaf described the evaluation process, he noted that the current evaluation is not good enough to help experienced principals, but it is sometimes beneficial for new principals. He said, "Assessments of principals are sometimes a powerful catalyst for supporting learning-centered leadership in schools."

Nawaf said feedback is sometimes a purpose for evaluation. He described, "When I started working as a new principal, my skills were improved by beneficial

feedback from the supervisor.” However, Nawaf still saw no clear purpose to the evaluation in Saudi Arabia. He also expressed that “the evaluation does not capture a principal’s performance.” In the end, he voiced that the evaluation is of poor quality and does not support the new Saudi education reform. He explained, “How the evaluation is carried out is ambiguous. The evaluation has no effect on our roles ... Principals do not have the guidance they need to operate and improve as effective leaders during education reform.”

Nawaf said that evaluation components should include positive school culture, school management, and professional growth. He said, “I believe an effective evaluation should be a context and framework to support our professional growth.” Moreover, “Professional growth should be an important component of any effective evaluation.”

Nawaf did not see any value in including student growth data as a part of his evaluation. He expressed that external factors such as parents’ background and economic issues can affect students’ outcomes. Nawaf commented, “The variation of the social class of children and their families in our schools today, and its effect on students’ progress, can be seen. Schools are not the same as two decades ago, when almost all students came from middle class backgrounds.”

Nawaf expressed that the current evaluation should change; he explained that a greater focus on improving evaluation quality in Saudi Arabia could start with “linking our assessment to global research.” He commented on adopting existing evaluation standards from other education environments. He explained, “There is a need to change our evaluation system. I think, to save time and effort, the MoE needs to use successful evaluation models from other successful education environments for our education administration system.” Finally, he stated that any new evaluation should include both formative and summative methods. He said, “A variety of evaluation methods should be used to improve principal’s evaluation. Summative evaluation can be at the end of each year by a completely different person; however, the best evaluations include ongoing feedback to improve my skills during the year.”

Nawaf explained that in order to support and improve evaluation, the MoE must ensure principal evaluation has a well-developed purpose and is easy to follow and carry out. He also proposed that the MoE provide supervisors more diagnostic tools with

which to gather data from as many sources as possible. Nawaf specified, "Supervisors should spend enough time during the visit and look for as many sources as they can to capture the principals' actual performance. For example, talking to some school staff and taking a look at some of the school facilities would reflect a principal's actual performance."

Ahmed

I met Ahmed in his office on 30/12/2015; we met only once. Ahmed has been working as a principal for many years and has both middle and high school experience.

Ahmed explained that, in his opinion, because there is no real feedback to improve principals' skills for handling complex work, nor a clear goal in the evaluation, "the process is frustrating." Moreover, he said, "The current evaluation system is very poor and time consuming."

Ahmed expressed that the Saudi evaluation is not in the line with his daily responsibilities. He indicated, "Evaluation does not reflect our (principal) existing standards and it is not in the line with our daily duties." He explained his evaluations have been based solely on his oral answers and that oral evaluations fail to have reliability. He stated, "My evaluation is based on questions from the supervisor about my work! Honestly, I have never given a negative answer about my work to his questions."

Ahmed explained that feedback is essential to the improvement of principals' skills, particularly for new school principals. He expressed that sometimes evaluation provides a way for feedback; "Feedback is the biggest reason for principal evaluation, to help them improve their practice." However, Ahmed expanded by explaining that he sees the current evaluation system as a way of helping principals only when they are new to the position; "When I was new to the position of school principal, my supervisor's comments helped me with my management skills."

Ahmed indicated that feedback should be closely linked to professional growth and professional training. Ahmed pointed out, "The lack of a connection between our professional growth training and our evaluation feedback leads to ineffective development of our real leadership skills, and sometimes we just waste our time in the

training we take.” In his opinion, a lack of time and/or a lack of knowledge affects the feedback from supervisors.

Ahmed stated quality evaluation should contain positive school culture, school management, and professional growth. He did not recommend including student achievement because “there are many factors that influence a student’s success outside a principal’s control, such as the quality of school buildings and parents’ background.”

Ahmed provided suggestions on how to change the current evaluation criteria and procedures. He thought a new evaluation should to contain a formative process. He stated, “I would prefer if my evaluation provided me with immediate feedback about the best ways improve my work. The evaluation should be used to help me decide whether I need to modify how I do my work and offer me concrete ways to improve my skills.” In addition, he recommended that supervisors use a broader selection of diagnostic tools and data sources to attain improved evaluation data and thus better results. He explained,

Without meaningful diagnostic data tools, it is impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of school principals. A variety of data sources can inform and guide principals’ actions. The use of a variety of data to evaluate principals -such as observations, improvements to interview protocols, tracking forms, and much more – can help to maintain a focus on improving principals’ skills. Consequently, effective principals would lead to more successful and improved schools.

When explaining what strategies would improve evaluation, Ahmed emphasized that a new or changed evaluation “should be easy for evaluators to carry out and have a strong purpose that is consistent with principals’ performance expectations.” Ahmed said adopting existing evaluation standards could improve the quality of the evaluation in Saudi Arabia but that it must “take into account the education environment in Saudi Arabia.” Finally, Ahmed supported encouraging local researchers to become more involved in principals’ evaluation.

Saleh

I met Saleh in his office on 16/1/2016. Saleh is highly experienced administrator.

Saleh’s general attitude about the current principal evaluation was it lacks depth and focus. With respect to feedback, Saleh stated, “Feedback is not common unless

there is something negative.” He noted that district offices sometimes use evaluation to remove ineffective principals.

Saleh thought another problem with the evaluation was “not with the evaluation itself but with unqualified evaluators who are careless and inexperienced. They provide an inefficient evaluation which negatively affects the quality of work of some principals.”

When Saleh discussed the characteristics of the evaluation, he explained that the evaluation does not capture principals’ performance. He stated, “Most of time, the evaluation I receive does not reflect my work performance. In short, my evaluation does not align with my actual work.” Furthermore, he said that the existing evaluation lacks credibility and reliability.

Saleh expressed that evaluation components should include positive school culture and school management. He said, “I think, based on my duties, 50% of my evaluation should be related to management issues.” He further noted, “The timely development of principals can be ensured through a well-designed principal evaluation system that includes principals’ ability to create a positive school culture.”

Saleh did not see any value in including student growth data. He expressed external influences such as quality of school buildings may affect students’ outcomes. He recounted, “The new building with the features of a classroom design maximized our students’ achievement.” In addition, he did not see any value in including professional development as a part of the evaluation. He explained, “It is difficult for the evaluator to accurately judge the principal when his training is poor.”

Saleh said the MoE should modify the present evaluation. He suggested adopting existing evaluation standards from other education settings and linking a new evaluation to existing research. He stated, “I believe in evaluation research as a way to improve our (principals) assessment. Giving more attention to research will improve the evaluation... Also, looking for commercial evaluation with good supervisor training could solve the current evaluation problem.”

Saleh thought the evaluation should only follow a formative process in order to provide principals with ongoing feedback. He explained, “We need a formative assessment. In my opinion, evaluating our performance for the purpose of making

decisions about approving continued employment in school administration without clear standards about principals' work is just a random action." Furthermore, Saleh suggested, "If a principal fails to meet some of his work requirements, he must be offered appropriate professional development. A principal should receive sufficient support and time to overcome his failures or deal with barriers."

Saleh expressed that evaluations should be clear and simple as well as easy for evaluators to carry out. He stressed that a new or changed evaluation must have a strong purpose that includes principal performance guidelines. Saleh stated, "All the credit for the success or failure of a school is often given to the principal. Through a well-designed principal evaluation system, the timely development of principals would be ensured. It should not be vague but be compatible with the actual performance of the principals."

Amin

I interviewed Amin one time in his office on 04/01/2016. He is a new administrator who has worked as a middle school and high school principal.

Amin explained that the principal evaluation has not changed for a long time and does not reflect the role of principals today; he stated, "This affects my motivation negatively." He felt strongly about having a more systematic, focused evaluation system that can help principals to do better in their work. Amin stated the purpose of his evaluation should be clear; "The purpose of the evaluation is not supposed to be vague." Amin also noted the purpose of his evaluation is just to meet the requirements of the MoE.

Amin noted that supervisors should explain the characteristics of the evaluation clearly and carefully. He explained, "The evaluation does not match what I do." Amin did not have trust in the current evaluation, believing it lacks credibility and is potentially unreliable. Amin explained, "One visit could be bias and personal factors related to the evaluator could interfere (with the evaluation)."

Amin was not sure how the evaluation methods affect his evaluation results. However, he noted feedback from educational supervisors is weak and confusing.

Moreover, he explained, "Professional growth was not linked to my evaluation because of the incomplete feedback I received."

Amin explained that the role of principal in Saudi Arabia is one of more administration than leadership. He stated, "We (principals) manage and do not lead." As such, he thought that school management should be one of the components of evaluation.

Amin expressed that positive school culture should be included in the evaluation components. He explained that building "strong relationships among school staff and respecting all staff leads to more successful school outcomes."

Finally, he said the MoE should include professional growth in evaluation to encourage principals to improve their skills. He commented, "We have had many reforms in the last 10 years. To ensure that these reforms are effective, we need continuous learning and training."

However, Amin did not see any value in including student achievement. He explained his opinion as the result of "the social and economic conditions, and the parents' educational background, and the nature of the school environment."

Amin said the present evaluation should change. He specified, "Due to the complex role of the principal in our current era, and due to the new authority principals have, our evaluation system must be adjusted." He suggested including formative and summative methods. He noted, "For a professional growth plan to work, we should have continuous assessment, and principals have to be evaluated at the end of the year in order to differentiate between efficient and inefficient principals." He thought adopting existing evaluation standards from other education environments could help improve principal evaluation. He said, "Starting from zero to build an evaluation is hard because knowledge is accumulated over time! I strongly support taking advantage of the previous experiences of others on evaluation." In addition, Amin noted, "Principals should contribute in the building of a new evaluation system."

Amin noted that evaluation should be clear and simple, easy to complete, have a clear purpose, and include an outline of performance expectations. He noted, "Design wise, all efforts should be made to keep evaluation activity easy-going and simple." He

expressed that observations by an evaluator are a key tool for collecting data and should be part of principal evaluation; moreover, he said current interview techniques must improve. Finally, he noted the principal evaluation system would benefit from taking advantage of existing technology. He noted, "Our evaluation should take advantage of current technology. For example, what prevents us from having synchronous e-evaluations?"

Anwar

I interviewed Anwar one time in his office on 17/1/2016. Anwar has been working in education for long period; the majority of this time has been in his current district as a principal.

Anwar commented that school progress depends on effective school principals. He noted the current principal evaluation was not effective in measuring principals' leadership skills. He explained, "I'm positive there is a need for a new effective evaluation that has a strong foundation that provides reliable feedback and opportunities for us (principals) to improve." Anwar stated feedback is an essential part of effective supervision. He said, "The initial step is to have practical and significant feedback from the evaluation. Evaluation feedback will discover principals' needs and give them the right skills." He expressed the evaluation system lacks supervisors who have time to provide feedback; he stated,

Time is the biggest challenge; principals' evaluation can be time-consuming for our supervisors. Supervisors need to spend time in schools during the year, but they (supervisors) have a busy schedule. During a one-time site visit, it can be difficult for them to give us an effective evaluation.

Anwar said that the main reason for principal evaluation in his school district is to remove ineffectual principals. He stated, "Evaluation is sometimes used by supervisors to control objectionable persons." In addition, Anwar explained that "the evaluation system has not been in line with principals' performance in the past years; and there is no sign that it will change or be adjusted in the near future."

Anwar expressed that evaluation components should include positive school culture, school management, and professional growth; he stated, "These components should be the core of principals' evaluation. For instance, good management in schools can lead to the improvement of students and teachers." However, he did not see any

value in including student achievement data. He stated, "I have no hand in the hiring, development, or discipline of teachers. I do not think it is fair to evaluate me on the results of teachers' work." In addition, he stated, "Parents' educational background can help children succeed in school. Conversations about what children learned or helping them with their assignments can also improve their skills, and vice versa."

Anwar stated the MoE should modify the current evaluation but not change it. He explained, "Changing the whole evaluation is tough. It is critical to find the right balance between the MoE's centralized functions and changing the whole evaluation system." Moreover, he expressed that the MoE should consider differences between schools when evaluating principals.

Anwar's opinion on strategies to support and develop evaluations included the evaluation should be as formative as possible in order to provide school leaders with ongoing feedback that would lead to appropriate professional development. He stated, "The initial step to improving principals' evaluation is taking into account formative processes to encourage professional growth for school principals through professional feedback."

In addition, Anwar's opinion on strategies to support and develop evaluations included: evaluation should be easy for evaluators to carry out; should have a clear purpose; and the MoE should ensure that principals' performance expectations are clearly outlined. Anwar explained,

There's been a lot of talk lately within the MoE about how to improve principals and how well education reform is working. Principals have a major impact on the school environment and help education reform to work. We know poor leadership may lead to negative results. Therefore, creating a new evaluation model should include a clear purpose and explain the exact work of principals. These actions would allow for professional growth, and would also allow education reform to succeed.

Ibrahim

Ibrahim has been in education for long time and has rich experience. I met him in his office on 7/1/2016.

Ibrahim's general attitude about the current principal evaluation was the MoE policy makers have not given enough attention to principal evaluation. He stated evaluation should be clear and principals' work expectations should be in line with the

evaluation system, but that they are not currently. He said, "Evaluation does not capture the performance of my work." He noted that the current evaluation is unclear and the feedback is ambiguous because it is given improperly. He said, "Even when the evaluator has given me feedback, it has usually been done poorly."

When Ibrahim described the characteristics of the evaluation, he stated, "Our evaluation system does not show our actual efforts." He added, "I can assure you that the performance evaluation system and tools are not aligned with current principal standards for evaluation." Ibrahim's statements show he believes there is a lack of reliability regarding principal evaluation.

Ibrahim stated a new evaluation should not include professional growth. He was worried about the qualifications of the principal's evaluator. He said, "I think it is necessary to make changes to our evaluation; we need evaluation changes that could start a new stage of excellence in our school communities." He continued, "... but professional growth should not be included in a new evaluation unless we have supervisors who have the ability to guide us toward actual professional growth."

Ibrahim did express that evaluation should include positive school culture and school management; he stated,

I spend almost 90% of my time on management and day-to-day school operations. A principal who has no communication skills cannot be a good fit for school administration and cannot build a strong school culture. How can a principal deal with teachers, students, parents, and the whole community without the ability to communicate?

Furthermore, Ibrahim supported including student achievement as a part of principals' evaluation. He explained, "I see principals as being responsible for school improvement. I assume that the most important role of the principal is improving student outcomes."

Ibrahim expressed that the current evaluation should change and provided suggestions to improve principal evaluation criteria and procedures. He suggested that supervisors use a wider variety of diagnostic tools, as well as many data sources, in order to achieve better quality data. For example, Ibrahim stated, "Today's technological improvements would allow supervisors to collect data from principals directly." Finally, he noted policy makers should consider external environmental factors that may influence

school success. Ibrahim noted he would like “parents’ background and economic level” considered when creating a new evaluation.

Ibrahim’s thoughts on strategies to improve evaluations included should be clear, simple, and easy for evaluators to carry out; should have a clear purpose, and should ensure that principals’ performance expectations are clearly outlined for principals. He explained, “An understanding of these basic steps may improve the principal evaluation efforts.” Ibrahim emphasized that the MoE must consider these elements when creating a new, or changing the current, evaluation system in Saudi Arabia.

Finally, Ibrahim commented the best strategies for improving principals’ evaluation is using a formative evaluation as much possible. Ibrahim explained, “Ongoing feedback during the year would allow me to know my weaknesses in my work. That type of process would motivate me to engage in related training courses that improve my abilities, increase my knowledge, and reduce my weaknesses so my skills would improve.” He suggested increasing the number of school visits from supervisors; “It is well known, more visits mean more feedback.”

Hasan

I interviewed Hasan in his office on 22/01/2016; we met only once. Hasan has been working in education for long time; he is highly experienced in school administration.

Hasan stated that the current evaluation does not improve his practice because, as he explained, “It fails to provide appropriate feedback.” Hasan stated the purpose of principals’ evaluation is not clear, however, evaluation is sometimes to remove unsuccessful principals. He explained, “If the supervisor wants to remove a principal from his position, he will find reasons regardless of the assessment instrument; he (supervisor) knows it doesn't really measure the work of the school principal.”

When discussing the characteristics of the evaluation, Hassan expressed the system is frustrating and ineffective. He noted, “The current evaluation system is not equivalent for failing principals and successful ones; neither successful nor unsuccessful principals can be identified with the current evaluation system.”

Hasan discussed how the evaluation process does not give the right kind of feedback for principals. In his opinion, the main reasons are that “supervisors have very limited time and the assessment instrument lacks reliability.”

Hasan stated the most important component to principal evaluation is positive school culture. He explained, “Understanding the culture of the school is a very important task for the educational leader. And it plays a significant role in student learning.” He also noted that evaluation should include school management skills and professional growth. However, he did not see any value in including student growth data as a part of the evaluation. He stated, “Student growth is a teacher’s responsibility.”

Hasan believed that the current evaluation should change. He suggested that a new evaluation should be a formative process. For example, he said, “I guess linking effective evaluations with principals’ professional growth is the right way to improve ourselves. Knowing the reality of the actual principal work can help to determine the right professional development programs for every principal.” He also suggested supervisors use a wider variety of diagnostic tools and data sources in order to obtain better evaluation data. Hassan expressed that he would like to see additional interviews as part of the principal evaluation and supervisors using synchronic communication. He noted, “Technology will facilitate the availability of evaluation materials that will allow us to obtain information quickly.”

Hasan’s thoughts on strategies to support and improve evaluations include the process should be clear, should have a clear purpose, and should ensure that principals know their performance expectations. Hasan stressed that the MoE must consider these elements when creating a new evaluation system in Saudi Arabia. He said,

Assessing principals is not an easy task. There are no new tools available for assessing principals’ performance in significant ways. For evaluation to be successful, we must first know the roles of the principal, so he can be assessed in professional ways. Principal performance expectations should represent the most important work done by school principals with the goal to improve the education process. Principals’ actions must be designated then analyzed. Expectations must be prioritized among the principals’ various roles. Then, in the end, the evaluation and assessment system should be built with these performance expectations in mind.

Adel

I interviewed Adel in his office once on 5/1/2016. He has worked as a vice principal and principal for long time.

Adel said the evaluation process does not reflect a good understanding of the responsibilities of school principals. He expressed that “there is no clear purpose to the evaluation and there isn’t enough feedback from my evaluation”; however, he did note that the supervisors use evaluation to meet the MoE's system requirements.

Adel stated the evaluation lacks reliability because the principal evaluation does not capture his performance and the MoE expectations and principal evaluation are not linked nor are they reliable. For example, he said, "When the evaluation does not reflect the nature of my work, it is a sign of a lack of reliability.”

Adel stressed the importance of having qualified and experienced principal supervisors. He said, “You see, supervisors are often inexperienced. This issue is something outside of the assessment tools.”

Furthermore, he saw time as a barrier for educational supervisors; he expressed this leads to a lack of feedback. In Adel’s view, the lack of feedback affects the performance of the principals as well as the school as a whole. “If there is no feedback, everyone will make the same mistakes and his skills will not develop.”

Adel said that positive school culture should be a part of his evaluation because it works to support student outcomes. He noted, “I have created an environment that allows teachers, parents, students, and the community to be effective towards meeting the goal of supporting students’ outcomes.” He expressed that he does not support including student achievement in evaluation; he noted that positive school culture leads to improved student outcomes and that is what should be evaluated. He explained, “Measuring the performance of principals on positive school culture is enough to measure my work.” However, he recommended including school management and professional growth as components of evaluation. Adel noted, “Since I work to implement the MoE’s instructions, I think school principals should be assessed on their ability to manage daily school operations.”

Adel expressed that the current evaluation should change and include only a formative process. He stated, "There needs to be a way for supervisors to have a more direct and immediate impact on our progress. Principals want a formative assessment. We need to know about our strengths and weaknesses in a professional way."

In addition, Adel suggested that supervisors use a wider variety of diagnostic tools and data sources. He explained, "There is a need for an evaluation that contains practical resources and tools to support our evaluation system. We need tools that help us to improve our practice and the system needs ensure that the evaluation is accurate and effective." Finally, Adel thought supervisors should visit schools more often. He noted, "The supervisor's role is very important here since he visits the school to observe the on-going operations as well as give feedback after looking into pertinent matters, and to establish a plan for the principal's professional development."

Adel expressed having a clear evaluation purpose aligned with principals' performance expectations would support and improve evaluation. Moreover, he noted the evaluation should be clear and simple as well as easy for evaluators to carry out. Adel commented, "When performance expectations are linked with principals' evaluation, I'm sure that the links between them (performance & evaluation) will increase the link between evaluation and feedback." Moreover, Adel said personal interviews with supervisors need improved synchronic communication. He explained, "I have always thought that online, face-to-face meetings, using something like Skype, with experienced supervisors could provide me with immediate feedback at a lower cost to the MoE." Finally, he emphasized that a new evaluation system must include these elements in Saudi Arabia.

4.3. Report on findings and the results

Participants' responses provided critical information about their perceptions regarding the evaluation process and procedures. Their responses varied with respect to how clearly they stated their opinion; some participants did not state any direct attitudes about some research areas.

To help to answer the research questions, I analyzed the data to ascertain both the present practice and the participants' desired practice regarding principal evaluation

in the Eastern Region in Saudi Arabia as well as identify where they expressed their thoughts and perceptions about the current evaluation.

During data analysis, I identified key quotes from participants to construct my understanding and establish relevant findings. I have included many of these quotes in the report on findings to support interpretations and explanations and to show instances of unexpected data (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Patton, 2015).

I analyzed 14 principal interviews. When organizing the results, I divided the data into two main parts, a priori themes and emergent themes. In the first part of my report on findings, I presented a priori themes acquired from the related literature and from my direct research questions. Related to the seven a priori themes, I identified 79 codes that clustered under 22 categories. In the second part of the report on findings, I identified one emergent theme, which was the result of eight codes that clustered under two categories.

As highlighted in Chapter 2, there are seven a priori themes that I identified: purpose of evaluation, characteristics of evaluation, feedback from evaluation, evaluation tools, desired evaluation components, strategies to support and improve evaluation criteria and strategies to improve evaluation methods. The one emergent theme from this study is character traits of the evaluator.

The final numbers for the organization of the data included 87 codes covering 24 major categories, which I divided into eight main themes. Table 6 outlines the themes and categories identified in the research.

Table 6. Themes and categories identified in the research findings

| Parts | # | Themes | Codes* | Categories |
|------------------------|----------|--|-------------------------|--|
| A Priori Themes | 1 | Purpose of evaluation | A | Purpose of evaluation not clear |
| | | | B | Routine requirements |
| | | | C | Removing unsuccessful principals |
| | 2 | Characteristics of evaluation | A | Accurate assessment of principals' performance |
| | | | B | Reliability of assessment results |
| | 3 | Feedback | A | Lack of time for feedback |
| | | | B | Appropriate feedback |
| | | | C | Professional growth |
| | 4 | Evaluation tools | A | School visits |
| | | | B | Methods of evaluation |
| | 5 | components of evaluation | A | Professional growth |
| | | | B | Positive school culture |
| | | | C | Student achievement |
| | | | D | School management |
| | | | A | Change of evaluation |
| | 6 | Strategies that Support or Improve Evaluation Criteria | B | Evaluation quality |
| | | | C | Clear Purpose of Evaluation |
| | | | D | Performance expectations |
| | | | E | Adopting existing evaluation standards |
| | 7 | Strategies that Support or Improve Data Collection | A | Evaluation Methods |
| B | | | Data Collection Process | |
| C | | | Number of School visits | |
| Emergent Theme | 8 | Character traits of the evaluator | A | Evaluator's qualifications |
| | | | B | Human Factor |

* Codes for Identifying Categories in the Transcripts

4.3.1. A Priori Themes

Prior to beginning my interviews, I identified seven a priori themes related to my research questions from the literature. The a priori themes are: evaluation purpose, evaluation characteristics, feedback, evaluation tools, components of evaluation, strategies that support or improve evaluation criteria and strategies that support or improve data collection.

I used the a priori themes from my comprehensive review of the literature to create my interview questions. During the interviews stage, I asked participants direct questions and probing sub-questions directly related to the a priori themes. This helped in the collection of data that could be examined across participants. The questions helped participants explain their thoughts and opinions clearly. Then, during the data analysis, I identified where the a priori themes are in the transcripts.

First: Evaluation Purpose

The first sub-question I asked participants was, “What do you believe the purpose of your evaluation is?” From their responses, I identified eight codes connected to the first a priori theme ‘purpose of the current evaluation’. I divided the codes into three categories: purpose not clear, routine requirement, and removing unsuccessful principals (see Table 7 and Table 8).

Table 7. Codes and categories of a priori theme one from analysis of interview transcripts concerning the views of principals with regard to purpose of evaluation

| | Codes | Categories |
|----|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Not clear | Purpose of evaluation not clear |
| 2. | I do not know | |
| 3. | Vague | |
| 4. | Policy obligation | Routine requirements |
| 5. | Supervisor accountability requirements | |
| 6. | Monitoring unqualified principals | Removing unsuccessful principals |
| 7. | Removing unsuccessful principals | |
| 8. | Isolation of unwanted person | |

Table 8. Participants' responses from theme one categories from analysis of interview transcript

| | | Purpose of Principals' Evaluation | | |
|----|---------------------|--|----------------|----------------------------|
| | Participants | Not clear | Routine | Removing Principals |
| 1 | Abdullah | • | | |
| 2 | Mohammed | • | | • |
| 3 | Hamza | • | • | |
| 4 | Omar | • | | • |
| 5 | Adam | • | | • |
| 6 | Nawaf | • | • | |
| 7 | Ahmed | • | • | |
| 8 | Saleh | • | | • |
| 9 | Amin | • | • | |
| 10 | Anwar | • | • | |
| 11 | Hadi | • | • | |
| 12 | Ibrahim | • | • | • |
| 13 | Hasan | • | | • |
| 14 | Adel | • | • | |
| | Total | 14 | 8 | 6 |

Purpose of evaluation not clear

All participants stated that the purpose of evaluation was not clear to them; moreover, 12 of the participants expressed that there was not a specific aim to their evaluation. The language participants used indicated that they do not think the MoE has

presented the purpose of their evaluation well. As Hamza stated, “I think the purpose of the evaluation is not clear! Maybe it is to validate the principals in our education system.” Highlighting the gap between the current evaluation system and its stated intent, Amin noted, “The purpose of the evaluation is not supposed to be vague. Each individual was supposed to know the exact objective of his evaluation.” Finally, Omar stated, “Honestly, I have no idea why we (principals) are evaluated; our annual premium is guaranteed! And our position is guaranteed! It is difficult to answer this question.”

Routine requirement. Eight of the participants stated their evaluation was merely a routine requirement for educational supervisors; they saw it as just a legal obligation evaluators must meet every year. Hamza stated, “I think it is just to meet a legal obligation” and “Supervisors visit us (principals) not to help us develop or improve or measure our performance. Frankly, the goal of principals' evaluation is to meet an MoE policy requirement.” He expanded by noting, “The evaluation of principals is a perfunctory task within the MoE.”

Removing unsuccessful principals. Six of the participants stated one reason for evaluation was to remove ineffective principals. Mohammed expressed, “I have never seen a principal be evaluated on everything he is doing by his supervisor. Actually, the only time that happens is in a situation where the supervisor’s intention is to remove an unqualified principal from his position.”

Summary of the purpose of evaluation. To summarize, 12 of 14 participants said there was no specific aim to their evaluation; 8 expressed that supervisors carried out evaluations in order to complete a required MoE procedure; and 6 suggested that the purpose was to identify unsuccessful principals to ensure their removal from their position.

Second: Evaluation Characteristics

The second a priori theme was Evaluation Characteristics. I asked participants about the characteristics of their evaluation process. Participants shared their feelings about the Ministry of Education’s current evaluation process and whether it accurately defines what principals do. I identified eight codes from their responses that fit into two categories. The categories are: characteristics of principals’ performance and reliability of assessment results (see Table 9 and Table 10).

Table 9. Codes and categories of a priori theme two from analysis of interview transcripts concerning the views of principals with regard to evaluation characteristics

| | Codes | Categories |
|----|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Poor instrument | Principals' Performance |
| 2. | Evaluation is not related | |
| 3. | Expected practice | |
| 4. | Not aligned | |
| 5. | Unfair evaluation | Reliability |
| 6. | Results of evaluators are not similar | |
| 7. | Accuracy and consistency | |

Table 10. Participants' responses from theme two categories from analysis of interview transcript

| | | Evaluation Characteristics | |
|-------|----------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| | | Principals' Performance | Reliability |
| 1 | Abdullah | • | • |
| 2 | Mohammed | • | • |
| 3 | Hamza | • | • |
| 4 | Omar | • | • |
| 5 | Adam | • | • |
| 6 | Nawaf | • | |
| 7 | Ahmed | • | • |
| 8 | Saleh | • | • |
| 9 | Amin | • | |
| 10 | Anwar | • | • |
| 11 | Hadi | • | |
| 12 | Ibrahim | • | • |
| 13 | Hasan | • | • |
| 14 | Adel | • | • |
| Total | | 14 | 11 |

Principals' Performance

When I asked participants about the current MoE evaluation process, they all expressed similar views. All participants said their evaluation does not capture principals' performance; all 14 participants explained they had not received an effective evaluation and their evaluations had not accurately described their performance. Ahmed indicated, "Evaluation does not reflect our (principal) existing standards and it is not in the line with

our daily duties.” Ibrahim noted, “Evaluation does not capture the performance of my work. My evaluation model does not show my actual efforts. During my years as a principal, I can assure you that the performance evaluation and tools are not aligned with current evaluation standards.” Hamza explained, “Principals have been given more authority since 2011 and every year we have new power. Not all of these powers and authorities are aligned with our evaluation.”

Moreover, all participants stated the evaluation procedures are not in line with expected standards that should act as guidelines. Adam explained, “There is no connection between my performance and my evaluation, no link at all except in some areas. Often, the evaluator is confused about some of the evaluation elements because they are not related to our work.” Omar stated, “Much of our work responsibilities are not included in the context of our evaluation. The evaluation is not related to the actual principals’ daily duties; the results are not accurately describing our work.”

Reliability

All participants described the reliability of their evaluation as including consistency and stability; 11 out of 14 participants expressed strongly that their evaluation lacks reliability. As participants explained, the evaluation results differ from one evaluator to another. Hamza explained,

The capacity of our evaluation leads potentially to an unfair assessment. Evaluation evidence does not lead to accurately measuring the level of our performance. I have been evaluated twice by different evaluators and I got two totally different assessments even though my work was the same.

Moreover, participants explained evaluation reliability does not exist because the evaluation does not measure principal management and leadership responsibilities. Amin explained, “District supervisors and us (principals) do not understand what to evaluate, how evaluations occur, and the proper application of results.”

Seven of the participants noted that supervisors only provide partial information ; they explained this was the result of the assessment tool being unable to cover all aspects of a principal’s work. Hasan stated, “I never accept the evaluation process and results. The process and outcomes are not fair. The evaluation does not reflect my

work. But for me, it does not matter since the evaluation process does not affect my practice or my salary.”

Regarding evaluation accuracy, participants explained they earn a final evaluation rating from the results of their evaluation; the rating scale is from 1 to 100. Participants explained they did not need to show the evaluator documents related to their work or discuss information about their duties in order to receive full marks for their evaluation. Abdullah stated,

I remember when I started my job as a school principal; I was worried and confused about my first evaluation. By the next evaluation, those feelings of fear and anxiety had disappeared. That is because the evaluation is not taken as seriously as it should be.

In addition, Mohammed recounted, “I always get the same grade every year! Last year was 100%, two years ago was 100% and so on. I will never accept less than a full grade while almost every principal gets full marks.” Hasan said, “The current evaluation system is not equivalent for failing principals and successful ones; neither successful nor unsuccessful principals can be identified with the current evaluation system.”

Summary of evaluation characteristics

To summarize, all of the participants stated their evaluation did not capture the true value of their job performance. They stated that principals’ performance and evaluation procedures were not aligned with expected practice standards. Participants noted the ambiguity of their evaluation and the lack of consistency and accuracy have led to inaccuracies during the evaluation process, which then resulted in the participants believing the evaluation has low reliability.

Third: Feedback

I asked participants to describe their evaluation feedback experience; they shared personal stories. I identified 10 codes from their answers and created three categories that addressed the theme on feedback (see Table 11 and Table 12). The categories were lack of time for feedback, appropriate feedback, and professional growth.

Table 11. Codes and categories of a priori theme three from analysis of interview transcripts concerning the views of principals with regard to feedback.

| | Codes | Categories |
|-----|--|---------------------------|
| 1. | Supervisor always in rush | Lack of time for feedback |
| 2. | Not enough time during visit | |
| 3. | Need adequate time for feedback | |
| 4. | Tools do not align with practice | Appropriate feedback |
| 5. | Feedback & education reform | |
| 6. | Poor outcome | |
| 7. | Feedback for inexperienced principals | |
| 8. | No connection between professional growth and feedback | Professional growth |
| 9. | Ineffective training | |
| 10. | Improve practice | |

Table 12. Participants' responses from theme three categories from analysis of interview transcript

| | | Feedback | | |
|--------------|----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | lack of time for feedback | appropriate feedback | professional growth |
| 1 | Abdullah | ● | ● | ● |
| 2 | Mohammed | ● | ● | ● |
| 3 | Hamza | ● | ● | ● |
| 4 | Omar | ● | ● | ● |
| 5 | Adam | ● | ● | ● |
| 6 | Nawaf | ● | | ● |
| 7 | Ahmed | ● | | ● |
| 8 | Saleh | ● | ● | ● |
| 9 | Amin | ● | ● | ● |
| 10 | Anwar | ● | ● | ● |
| 11 | Hadi | ● | ● | ● |
| 12 | Ibrahim | ● | ● | ● |
| 13 | Hasan | ● | ● | ● |
| 14 | Adel | ● | ● | ● |
| Total | | 14 | 12 | 14 |

Lack of Time for Feedback

All participants indicated that educational supervisors do not have enough time to provide comments and feedback concerning a principal's progress. Hadi stated,

The evaluator who visited me for my last evaluation was asking me questions about my work. And between each question he said, 'I'm in a rush. Please answer or provide the document quickly.' At that point, I figured out that he didn't want to stay to give me feedback.

Additionally, Adam stated, "The supervisor himself told me, 'I have no time to sit with you longer than one hour.'."

Participants noted that their work is too complex for a supervisor to provide feedback from a one-time school visit. Amin specified, "Feedback is necessary to improve a principal's leadership capabilities, but what do you expect if the feedback I get is from just one site visit and for only about three hours?" Nawaf also indicated, "Time is always the biggest challenge; it has been difficult for me to understand the supervisor's comments and feedback (during a visit). I mean, they are regularly in a hurry when they visit our schools."

Appropriate Feedback

All the participants expressed that they did not have faith in the feedback their supervisors had given; they expressed that when supervisors provided feedback incorrectly, it had a negative impact on principals. Ibrahim stated, "Even when the evaluator has given me feedback, it has usually been done poorly." Participants explained they do not receive enough useful information that they can use in their practice; they noted this creates an overall mistrust of the evaluation process. Hamza stated, "The evaluation of principals is a perfunctory task within the MoE. Evaluators are looking to make a judgment and not to provide feedback."

Furthermore, 12 of the participants explained that under the current evaluation system, it is difficult to receive useful feedback from the evaluator. They explained that the current system is not capable of measuring their actual performance due to the manner in which the evaluator conducts school visits. Mohammed stated, "Any useful feedback system should involve clear tangible evaluation tools that can give effective results related to principals' work."

The two participants who valued the feedback from their evaluation, Nawaf and Ahmed, explained that feedback is sometimes useful for improving principals' administrative skill, particularly for new school principals. Nawaf explained, "Assessments of principals are sometimes a powerful catalyst for supporting learning-

centered leadership in schools. Principals in our district usually don't lose their position for years. When I started working as a new principal, my skills were improved by helpful feedback." Ahmed expressed that he saw evaluation as a way to provide formative feedback; "Feedback is the biggest reason for principal evaluation, to help them improve their practice." However, Ahmed expanded by explaining that he sees the current evaluation system as a way of helping principals only when they are new to the position; "When I was new to the position of school principal, my supervisor's comments helped me with my management skills."

According to participants, principals need to receive feedback that can improve leadership capabilities and facilitate performance development; the goal being receiving effective training that would support their improved performance. For example, Mohammed stated, "The evaluation process should be used as a formative tool to shape principals' leadership capacity with ongoing, relevant professional development." In addition, Ibrahim said, "If we received ongoing feedback, course designers could use the feedback to create and provide workshops that are relevant to our duties. I think these types of workshops would absolutely build our leadership skills and capabilities; it would help create a strong base for improving our skills. And then, this would help in the development of quality schools for everyone."

Finally, all participants highlighted the importance of feedback due to the recent education reform and with their new powers. Adel explained, "Last week, the MoE gave us 60 new authorities. As a result of these changes to the work responsibilities, the way in which the principal receives feedback about his job performance must be changed." Adam said, "Now with our new authority, it is important to keep in mind the importance of school leadership. More than ever, principals are responsible for creating school settings that encourage great learning environments. Helpful feedback can create conditions that allow us (principals) to become better school leaders." Finally, Adel stated, "Over the past few years, my duties and responsibility have increased. Also, in every meeting with a Education Ministry official, we are told that there are more powers on the way. It is therefore essential to obtain guidance based on effective evaluation feedback."

Nine of the participants expressed what they hoped their evaluation feedback was; however, they also clarified what they see as the current reality. Hadi explained, "The evaluation aim is to improve excellence of instruction in schools, with the end result

being stronger learners and students. Evaluation offers a way for principals' development and provides helpful feedback to principals. But our evaluation! Does not." Hassan stated, "Successful feedback from the evaluation would help our professional development. If ours (principals' evaluation) gave the right feedback, then I would actually accept the evaluation with respect to training and self-improvement."

Professional growth

All participants expressed that professional growth was not linked to their evaluation due to the weak feedback associated with the evaluation process. Participants explained that though there was a section of the evaluation called *Interest in Growth of Knowledge*, the evaluator simply asks principals to show proof of any professional development sessions or courses they had attended, even if not related to their job, in order to grant the competency mark in the growth of knowledge section in their annual evaluation. These goals are optional and not linked to the evaluation model. Ahmed pointed out, "The lack of connection between our professional growth training and our evaluation feedback leads to ineffective development of our real leadership skills, and sometimes we just waste our time in the training we take." Hassen explained, "Professional development is my choice; it is not linked to my evaluation at all." In his opinion, the recent evaluation does not "give the right feedback." Hassen expanded and explained, "Successful feedback from the evaluation would help our professional development."

Summary of evaluation feedback

In summary, the majority of participants expressed that principals had not received helpful or useful feedback from their evaluation. The main reason in their view was problems related to the supervisors. First, all participants indicated that their evaluators do not have enough time to provide feedback. Second, 12 of the participants explained the evaluators are unable to give appropriate feedback because of current evaluation system structure. Participants also noted that due to education reform, feedback on principals' practice is essential; they explained they are responsible for more and yet there is no way to know if they are meeting these responsibilities effectively. Finally, participants explained that because the system is unable to provide professional feedback, they have been negatively affected in their professional learning.

Fourth: Evaluation tools

I asked the participants to describe what tools the MoE provides evaluators for principal evaluation. Within the theme of evaluation tools, I identified 10 codes that fell under two categories (see Table 13 and Table 14): school visits and methods of evaluation.

Table 13. Codes and categories of a priori theme four from analysis of interview transcripts concerning the views of principals with regard to evaluation tools.

| | Codes | Categories |
|-----|--|-----------------------|
| 1. | Visit once | School visits |
| 2. | New principals get more visits | |
| 3. | Visits take place at the end of the year | |
| 4. | Visit hours' time | |
| 5. | Face-to-face interview | Methods of evaluation |
| 6. | Written report | |
| 7. | Observation | |
| 8. | evaluation file | |
| 9. | Superficial tools | |
| 10. | Evaluation grade | |

Table 14. Participants' responses from theme four categories from analysis of interview transcript

| | | Evaluation Tools | |
|--------------|----------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | Number of visits | Methods of evaluation |
| 1 | Abdullah | ● | ● |
| 2 | Mohammed | ● | ● |
| 3 | Hamza | ● | ● |
| 4 | Omar | ● | ● |
| 5 | Adam | ● | ● |
| 6 | Nawaf | ● | ● |
| 7 | Ahmed | ● | ● |
| 8 | Saleh | ● | ● |
| 9 | Amin | ● | ● |
| 10 | Anwar | ● | ● |
| 11 | Hadi | ● | ● |
| 12 | Ibrahim | ● | ● |
| 13 | Hasan | ● | ● |
| 14 | Adel | ● | ● |
| Total | | 14 | 14 |

School Visits

All participants described that they had received one visit from their supervisor, meeting half of the MoE's requirement for evaluation visits. Nawaf explained, "The policy of the MoE states that principals must be evaluated every year and schools should be visited by an educational supervisor at minimum two times during the school year." Hadi said, "For last 10 years, I had a visit one time each year." None of the participants indicated that they had received additional visits for their evaluation after their first year as principal. Adam said, "To my knowledge, all new principals get two visits."

Participants explained the current site visit from the supervisor lasts between two and three hours; the supervisor completes an evaluation form at the end of each calendar year. All participants noted that the annual procedures had not changed since they had become a school principal. Saleh explained,

I will tell you a story. I attended an elementary and secondary school long time ago, then I became a university student. When I graduated, I began my career as a teacher, then I became a principal. With all of these years since I attended elementary school, there have still been no changes to the principal evaluation system and it is 2016! Do you see how frustrating this is?

Methods of Evaluation

The principals' descriptions of their evaluation experience indicated there were no major differences in the evaluation system across the four school districts included in this study. Most of principals described the principal evaluation process as including both a face-to-face and written portion, and occasionally a review of a principal's portfolio, which generally includes documentation of phone logs, school meetings, staff attendance, newsletters, and records of meetings with parents.

Participants' descriptions of their evaluation did not reveal differences in the tools supervisors use; furthermore, all participants explained that the face-to-face discussion took place in their office. Mohammed stated, "The evaluation tools that are used by an evaluator to assess your performance are limited. My evaluation depends on a face-to-face discussion, and then the evaluator completes the Principal Evaluation Report. I have never experienced something like models, rubrics, or protocols."

Ahmed explained, "My evaluation is based on my oral answers to the evaluator's questions. He never asks me to show him the documents I use in my work." However,

four of the participants noted that during some of their evaluation interviews, the supervisor asked for other items related to their job; the supervisor added these items to the evaluation file. Adam stated, “Supervisors usually ask to show them, or if I have any, staff files, teacher accountability issue files etc. Often the supervisor does not ask about the content of these files; he just cares about whether they exist or not.”

Summary of evaluation tools

In summary, all participants described the same evaluation system and tools. Each participant described having one visit per year from the evaluator that lasts between two and three hours. They described the evaluation process as including both a face-to-face and written component.

Fifth: Desired Components of Evaluation

Once participants had described their evaluation process, I asked them to describe their perspectives and beliefs regarding specific components of the evaluation system found in the literature. Inquiry included questions that required participants to respond specifically about the Saudi education environment. The participants expressed their feelings and opinions, as well as provided suggestions, about what criteria would improve the current evaluation system in Saudi Arabia.

All participants expressed that change to the current evaluation components was necessary because of recent education reform and the introduction of new powers to principals. The desired evaluation components for this section indicated what participants saw as essential for improving the evaluation performance of principals. The elements for a new evaluation system constituted making an additional a priori theme, which I named desired components of evaluation. I identified 18 codes that fit into four categories under this theme (see Table 15 and Table 16). This a priori theme includes the categories of professional growth, positive school culture, student achievement, and school management.

Table 15. Codes and categories of a priori theme five from analysis of interview transcripts concerning the views of principals with regard to components of evaluation.

| | Codes | Categories |
|----|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | Improve and enhancing knowledge | |

| | Codes | Categories |
|-----|--|--------------------------------|
| 2. | Improvement of leadership skills | <i>Professional growth</i> |
| 3. | Evaluator role | |
| 4. | Yearly plan of school district | |
| 5. | Importance of lifelong learning | <i>Positive school culture</i> |
| 6. | Support the education process | |
| 7. | Collaborative relationships | |
| 8. | Communication skills | |
| 9. | Inspires teachers and students (learning outcomes) | |
| 10. | Shared responsibility | <i>Student achievement</i> |
| 11. | Internal factors | |
| 12. | External factors | |
| 13. | Principals' powers | |
| 14. | Leadership skills | |
| 15. | Time of school management | |
| 16. | Management roles | |
| 17. | Management and leadership | |
| 18. | Management functions | |

Table 16. Participant support for including different desired components in principals' evaluation

| | | Desired Components of Evaluation | | | |
|-------|----------|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | <i>Professional growth</i> | <i>Positive School Culture</i> | <i>Student achievement</i> | <i>School Management</i> |
| 1 | Abdullah | • | • | • | • |
| 2 | Mohammed | • | • | | • |
| 3 | Hamza | • | • | | • |
| 4 | Omar | | • | | • |
| 5 | Adam | • | • | | • |
| 6 | Nawaf | • | • | | • |
| 7 | Ahmed | • | • | | • |
| 8 | Saleh | | • | | • |
| 9 | Amin | • | • | | • |
| 10 | Anwar | • | • | | • |
| 11 | Hadi | • | • | | • |
| 12 | Ibrahim | | • | • | • |
| 13 | Hasan | • | • | | • |
| 14 | Adel | • | • | | • |
| Total | | 11 | 14 | 2 | 14 |

Professional growth

Eleven of the participants noted professional development should be a component of their evaluation system, explaining they need an evaluation system that guides professional development. They expressed that a formative process that provides

efficient feedback and suggestions or guidance for professional development must be linked to principals' needs.

Participants suggested mandatory participation in ongoing courses, in which compliance would be checked during their evaluation. Mohammed said, "Reading and watching online self-paced training sessions and courses, or whatever it is, never improves our leadership skills. We need to engage in professional development activities that are related to our real duties to improve our performance and school community. The keyword for success is 'formative'!" Abdullah also commented, "As student learning and accountability for schools has increased in our current era, the complexity of the principal's role has increased too." To develop and sustain principal effectiveness, Hasan also said, "I guess linking effective evaluations with principals' professional growth is the right way to improve ourselves." Furthermore, Nawaf stated,

MoE policy has to foster the professional growth of school principals by using an effective evaluation system. It has to be that the supervisor focuses on professional growth rather than evaluation. I believe an effective evaluation should be a context and framework to support our professional growth.

Eleven of the participants stated adjustments to evaluation standards, with an emphasis on professional growth, might deliver well-organized training that provides principals the skills they need. Amin said, "Improving principals' capabilities and abilities, by using accurate measuring tools for a professional growth plan, will lead to successful principals and will thus lead to school success."

The three remaining participants were not sure about including professional growth within their assessment. Omar stated, "My concern about this (professional growth) is about the ability of the principal's evaluator. How does he classify our developmental needs?" The three participants suggested that the professional development process be a yearly component of the school plan with the district office.

Ten of the participants stated that in order to take advantage of professional growth, supervisors must identify principals' performance strengths and weaknesses. They explained there is no effective way to identify these without appropriate measurement tools. Participants suggested using a well-planned standard for the evaluation system, which could support principals' professional growth. Nawaf said,

“Performance models and rubrics would support evaluators in measuring elements of performance successfully.”

Positive School Culture

I asked participants whether school culture should be a component of a principal evaluation program; all 14 participants expressed that it should. Participants showed great interest in the issue of school culture; they regularly referred to this topic during the interviews and spent much time discussing it.

All participants stated that the role of the principal in influencing the culture of a school is critical to its success. They noted that behind every successful school is a principal who can provide effective leadership, which includes demonstrating how to build a strong school culture among staff. Amin specified, “Effective school leaders create a vision to develop, support, and strengthen school culture.” Hadi explained,

The potential to build and support a positive school culture is basically the responsibility of successful leaders, where the best practices and common beliefs are supported and understood by everyone. Establishing a positive school culture is believed to be one of the foundations of instructional leadership.

Abdullah specified, “Everything happening within the school and everything performed by the principal is revealed through the culture of the school.” As well, Hamza commented, “I believe in the importance of school culture; support the relationship between teachers and other school staff, as well between teachers and students, building trust and encouraging cooperation on both sides. Absolutely, a positive culture will improve the teaching process rather than create personal conflict within the school community.”

Six of the participants expressed that improvements in student learning outcomes could be fast-tracked by a principal's aptitude to develop and maintain a positive school culture, where a principal's leadership inspires teachers, students, and other employees to achieve higher goals through effective collaboration and by undertaking adventurous projects. Hasan said, “Understanding the culture of the school is a very important task for the educational leader. And it plays a significant role in student learning.” Adel noted, “I have created an environment that allows teachers, parents, students, and the community to be effective by supporting them and providing them with appropriate ways to deal with school issues.” Saleh stated,

All the credit for the success or failure of a school is often given to the principal. Through a well-designed principal evaluation system, the timely development of principals would be ensured. It should not be vague but be compatible with the actual performance of the principals.

In summary, related to the area of school culture, participants noted that the most important performance indicators included a principal's ability to develop a community of collaborative relationships between staff members, and the existence of a positive working environment for teachers, the Adam explained,

Student learning in our school has increased because of supportive leadership dialogue and social support. I support the school community by encouraging social relationships between school staff. The culture of a school is an attribute of successful schools and a supportive learning environment. Including the culture of a school in our evaluation is important and necessary.

The overview about the importance of school culture shows that participants valued a positive school culture and they noted that the reputation of a school depends on an instructional principal who can change the prevailing school culture to support the education process.

Student achievement

I asked participants to comment on whether they believed student achievement should be part of their evaluation. Twelve of the participants did not support including students' achievement as part of the formal principal evaluation. They indicated that using student achievement as a measurement of their leadership success was neither fair nor useful. They pointed out that student achievement was the result of many influencing factors.

First, 10 of the participants referred to shared responsibility as a reason not to include student achievement in their evaluation. They explained that student achievement is out of the principal's direct control. Moreover, these participants gave examples where student achievement was a product of shared responsibility that included both external and internal factors. The external factors included parents, economic factors, and background; they noted these factors are clearly not related to a principal's leadership. Nawaf said, "The variation of the social class of children and their families in our schools today, and its effect on students' progress, can be seen. Schools are not the same as two decades ago, when almost all students came from middle class backgrounds." Anwar stated, "I always notice that there is a relationship between low

academic success and poor economic and cultural conditions in the neighbourhood of the school.”

According to the participants, internal factors that influence and affect student achievement include the quality of the teachers, classroom practices, quality of school buildings, curriculum policy, student population, and school district administrators. Saleh commented on the relationship between school building features and student outcome when he said,

I worked in a leased building temporarily while running a high school due to a lack of a formal school building at that time. The building was originally built to be used as a residential house. However, when we moved to the new school with formal features, we (school staff) were surprised that there was a significant improvement in the level of student outcome. It was clear that the new building with the features of a classroom design maximized our students’ achievement.

Adel stated, “I do not decide about the curriculum. I do not have the right to choose teachers. I do not have the option of participating in policy-making. So, why should I be responsible for students’ achievement?”

Participants explained a principal is only one of many factors influencing students’ accomplishments. Mohammed stated,

Evaluating me directly on student achievement does not make sense to me. I may affect the learning environment surrounding students, through things such as school planning, contributing to teacher development, and frequent classroom visits. I think that is what I should be assessed on.

Eight of the participants discussed additional issues about including student achievement in their evaluation. These included trust and self-assurance, delegation of decision-making, and personal and professional respect. Adam commented, “A principal must focus his efforts on the working conditions of teachers while the teachers are responsible for actual student achievement!” Hasan stated,

The needs and varied personalities of teachers would be overlooked if the tasks and assigned role functions are defined by the principal at random and if the principal dealt with his staff without professional respect. It goes like that; teachers would be less motivated to work. The school outcomes would also be unproductive.

The two participants who supported including student achievement within their evaluation explained that because principals are accountable for every school matter, it should be part of their evaluation. In addition, they noted there is a relationship between

principals' behaviour, school effectiveness, and student achievement. Ibrahim stated, "Absolutely, principals' indirect leadership effects are important to the improvement of students' learning. For example, when I address teachers' educational needs, teachers will be more successful in doing their job." In addition, Abdullah explained, "Student achievement should be included in my evaluation because everything happening within this school is influenced by me."

School Management

All participants mentioned school management when I asked about their perspective and beliefs regarding specific components of the evaluation system. They explained that a principal holds total responsibility for every aspect of the day-to-day operations of a school. Adam stated, "I'm responsible for overseeing teachers, students, school safety, and maintenance and I am responsible for all school guidelines. I'm also, accountable for the use of all school resources." Furthermore, ten participants mentioned that they work as a manager at their school and they ensure the school operations are efficient and effective. Nawaf explained, "Our school system follows a management culture more than a leadership culture. So management skills should be seen as an important factor in our evaluation." Omar also stated, "I spend almost 80% of my time on school management issues. My daily duties are to insure school operation, so why should the MoE not include my management skills in my evaluation?"

Twelve of the participants explained that their management roles within schools are clear and well defined, but that the management roles do not align with their evaluation system. As noted above, Hamza said, "Not of all these powers and authorities are aligned with our evaluation."

As the participants explained, according to their role in schools, the primary focus is on management and administration with less importance on leadership in their work; as a result, participants said management skills should be a component of the evaluation system. Ibrahim stated, "At the beginning of this year, my position title (principal) changed from school manger to school leader. But, I still manage more than I lead. I spend almost 90% of my time on management and day-to-day school operations." Saleh specified, "A greater balance between management and leadership needs to be developed. Until that time, I think, according to my duties, 50% of my evaluation should be related to management issues."

Twelve of the participants expressed that in order to have successful schools, principals need to be effective in both administration and management. They linked managing a school successfully to a success of the educational process. Hassan said, "My view is that management leads to more effective schools. There is no doubt that effective practices of principals are the essence for school performance and school outcomes. Principals' ability to manage and understand how a school works can improve the quality of a school and its success."

Finally, 13 participants expressed the design of a new evaluation system should focus on management functions and reflect the realities of principals' daily work. They mentioned that in their evaluation, the tasks of maximizing resources, overseeing the discipline of teachers and students, and dealing with incoming and outgoing school transactions should all be assessed under one component within the evaluation, specifically management skills. Adel explained,

Since I work to implement the MoE instructions, I think school principals should be measured on their ability to manage daily school operations. And that could be through efficiently using resources, supervision and how he protects the safety of students. Another example, financial management. How does a principal manage that? If a principal is assessed on factors related to school management, it will lead to school success.

Summary of desired components of evaluation

In summary, eleven of the participants noted professional growth should be one of the evaluation components in order to deliver well-organized training that provides principals the skills they need. All 14 participants expressed that evaluation components should include positive school culture. They explained that behind every successful school is a principal building a strong school culture among staff. On the issue of including student achievement, 12 of the participants did not support including it as part of the formal principal evaluation. They expressed that issues like shared responsibility and principals' limited power may negatively influence the principals' assessment. Two participants noted that student achievement should be included since all the responsibility for school, in their opinion, falls on school principals. Finally, all of the participants explained that the design of a new evaluation system should focus on management functions and reflect the realities of principals' daily work and that principals need to be effective in both administration and management to achieve a successful educational process.

Sixth: Strategies that Support or Improve Evaluation Criteria

At the end of each interview, I asked participants to provide suggestions for improving the principal evaluation criteria. I developed the theme regarding strategies to support and improve evaluation criteria from 16 codes that I divided into five categories (see Table 17 and Table 18). The categories included change of evaluation, improving evaluation quality, defining clear evaluation purposes, defining performance expectations, and adopting existing evaluation standards.

Table 17. Codes and categories of a priori theme six from analysis of interview transcripts concerning the views of principals with regard to Strategies that Support and Improve Evaluations

| | Codes | Categories |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | Evaluation should change | Change of Evaluation |
| 2. | Evaluation modify | |
| 3. | High standards of quality | Improving Evaluation Quality |
| 4. | Disparity between schools | |
| 5. | Include all people who are involved in school | |
| 6. | The evaluation should be suitable and easy for all | |
| 7. | Simple evaluation | Clear Purpose of Evaluation |
| 8. | Evaluation expectations should be clear to principals | |
| 9. | Clear goals | |
| 10. | Evaluation should be clearly outlined | Performance Expectations |
| 11. | Provide principal's job expectations | |
| 12. | Match evaluation to the actual work | |
| 13. | Provide guidelines for evaluation | |
| 14. | Adopting Existing Evaluation Systems | Adopting Existing Evaluation Standards |
| 15. | Benefit from other education experiences | |
| 16. | Fit education cultural system | |

Table 18. Participants' responses from theme Six categories from analysis of interview transcript

| | | Strategies that Support to Improve Evaluations | | | | |
|--------------|----------|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | Change Evaluation | Improving Evaluation Quality | Clear Purpose of Evaluation | Performance Expectations | Adopting Evaluation Standards |
| 1 | Abdullah | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 2 | Mohammed | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 3 | Hamza | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 4 | Omar | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| 5 | Adam | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 6 | Nawaf | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 7 | Ahmed | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 8 | Saleh | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 9 | Amin | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| 10 | Anwar | | ● | ● | ● | |
| 11 | Hadi | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| 12 | Ibrahim | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| 13 | Hasan | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| 14 | Adel | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Total | | 11 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 7 |

Change evaluation

Eleven participants expressed that the current evaluation should change; three stated modifying it would be enough. Ibrahim stated, "I think it is necessary to create changes in our evaluation; we need evaluation changes that could start a new stage of excellence into our school communities." Similarly, Ahmed said, "I believe my evaluation must change; I think the key change of my evaluation should meet the new education reform and challenges." Anwar explained, "I don't think there's any way to change our evaluation unless the roles of the centralized MoE change. The centralized system makes changing evaluation so difficult. But, I think modifying the evaluation would be easy, and then change the whole system."

Improving Evaluation Quality

All participants expressed that there is a lack of evaluation quality in their district. Ahmed said, "Evaluations must have built in high standards of quality; what we have is not adequate. I mean evaluation of principals is essential for quality schools."

Ten of the participants expressed that a quality assessment should consider differences between schools. Participants commented that external factors might influence school success and thus reflect negatively on a principal's evaluation. For example, six participants mentioned two factors that contribute to the success or failure

of school outcomes: parents and the nature of the local community. Anwar stated, "Parents' educational background can help children succeed in school. Conversations about what children learned or helping them with their assignments can also improve their skills, and vice versa." Abdallah noted,

Do you remember our old learning days when the neighborhood was a place where students, teachers, parents, and school administrators knew each other very well? An education where every student was monitored not only by the school staff but by the neighbours and how the community supported our school efforts.

Participants explained that only the MoE was involved in the creation of their current evaluation. However, four of the participants pointed out that a quality evaluation should include the voice of all people involved in school activities, including teachers and parents. Hadi stated, "Evaluation standards should develop from many sources, including all key people involved."

Six participants stated the instruments for principal evaluation would be more effective and be of better quality if principals assisted in the building of the evaluation. Hadi stated, "In my view, educational policy makers need to ensure that in a new design, they involve principals who can help facilitate evaluation change." In addition, Omar said, "The principal should work with policymakers in building a new evaluation system. Their involvement in the evaluation design is essential for the success of our evaluation and the use of the evaluation results."

Eleven of the participants noted that the design of a quality evaluation should be simple, clear, and easy to carry out. Hamza stated, "The evaluators should not be side-tracked with difficult forms, procedures, or calculations of scores. They should only focus on my core activities." Amin stated, "Design wise, all efforts should be made to keep evaluation activity easy-going and simple."

Clear Purpose of Evaluation

All participants stated the main reason for creating a new evaluation, or at least modifying it, is to ensure expectations are clear to principals and that no discrepancies exist between the purpose of the evaluation and the measurement tools; they expressed this would lead to more successful evaluations.

Participants expressed it is essential for the principal evaluation system to have clear expectations about its goals; moreover, evaluation features and elements must be easy-to-understand. Ibrahim stated, "Before we design an evaluation, the purpose must be determined, and we have to ask if it will support principals' learning and how feedback will be given. What works and what doesn't for principals in different circumstances regarding their evaluation?" Anwar stated, "To avoid ambiguity and confusion about our evaluation results, a principal must know what the purpose of his evaluation is." Similarly, Mohammed expressed, "It is important that the main intent and purpose of my evaluation is clear. For example, I have to know, is my evaluation to develop my skills? Or, is it just to judge my work"

Performance Expectations

Twelve participants explained that when building a new principal evaluation system, one of the main concerns should be ensuring that the principals' performance expectations are outlined clearly for principals. The participants stated that the principal's job description should be detailed, include guidelines for all procedures related to a principal's work, and be tied to their evaluation. Omar said, "To know what I will be assessed on, and using procedural evaluation guidelines that describe in detail my duties and how these duties will be assessed, I think this will make my evaluation easy and clear." Adel commented, "When a principal's job description is detailed and includes guidelines, I'm sure that the link between performance and evaluation will increase the link between evaluation feedback and training principals for their real needs in the future." Hadi explained, "Evaluations should have a clear purpose that provides a framework for assessment. It should also include performance expectations that are clearly outlined so principals can have positive feedback."

Adopting Existing Evaluation Standards

Seven participants noted that adopting existing evaluation standards from other education environments could improve the evaluation quality in Saudi Arabia. However, five of them also pointed out that any newly endorsed evaluation standards must fit their particular cultural system. Four of the participants noted specifically that standards and elements included in a new evaluation model must fit within the Saudi school education context. As Hamza stated, "Why would we begin to build a new evaluation system when

there are many successful evaluation models in the education field! Let's start from where others have ended.”

Summary of Strategies that Support or Improve Evaluation Criteria

To sum up, the theme strategies to support and improve evaluations criteria included participants’ opinions about how to improve evaluation criteria. Eleven of the participants expressed that the current evaluation should change completely, three noted it should only receive modifications. All participants stated the MoE’s current evaluation is of poor quality. They said assessment should consider difference between schools, should include all people who are involved in school activities and should be simple and easy to carry out. The participants emphasized ensuring the evaluations expectations are clear to principals and that no discrepancies exist between the purpose of the evaluation and the measurement tools. Moreover, participants stated the MoE should outline principals’ performance expectations clearly. Finally, seven participants suggested adopting existing evaluation standards from other education environments to facilitate an improved evaluation in Saudi Arabia.

Seventh: Strategies that Support or Improve Data Collection

Theme seven includes participants’ opinions about how to improve methods for collecting information. The participants stated the evaluation of principals should consider many options in order to ensure that evaluation outcome meet the principal’s needs. Participants also remarked that by incorporating multiple data sources, such as school observations and use of a software or apps that facilitate communication between supervisor and principals, the evaluation would become more beneficial for improving the educational process as a whole. I identified 10 codes from participants’ responses, which I divided into three categories; they included the method of evaluation, data collection process and number of school visits (see Table 19 and Table 20).

Table 19. Codes and categories of a priori theme seven from analysis of interview transcripts concerning the views of principals with regard to Strategies that Support and Improve Evaluations.

| | Codes | Categories |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1. | Measure the level of principal success | Evaluation Methods |
| 2. | Provide ongoing feedback | |
| 3. | Identify principals’ strengths and weaknesses | |

| | Codes | Categories |
|-----|---|-------------------------|
| 4. | Using many resources to evaluate principals | |
| 5. | School observations | Data Collection Process |
| 6. | Interview techniques | |
| 7. | Technological support | |
| 8. | Limited time | |
| 9. | Staff shortages | Number of School Visits |
| 10. | Visit school more than once | |

Table 20. Participants' responses from theme seven categories from analysis of interview transcript

| Strategies Support to Improve Method of Collecting Evaluation | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Evaluation Methods | | | | Data Collection Process | | | | |
| | | Summative | Formative | Both S & F * | school observations | personal interviews | synchronic communication | Number visits |
| 1 | Abdullah | | ● | | ● | | | ● |
| 2 | Mohammed | | | ● | ● | ● | | |
| 3 | Hamza | | | ● | ● | ● | | ● |
| 4 | Omar | | | ● | ● | ● | | ● |
| 5 | Adam | | | ● | ● | ● | | ● |
| 6 | Nawaf | | | ● | ● | ● | | ● |
| 7 | Ahmed | | | ● | ● | ● | | ● |
| 8 | Saleh | | ● | | | ● | | ● |
| 9 | Amin | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 10 | Anwar | | | ● | | ● | ● | ● |
| 11 | Hadi | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 12 | Ibrahim | | | ● | | ● | ● | ● |
| 13 | Hasan | | | ● | ● | | ● | ● |
| 14 | Adel | | ● | | | ● | ● | ● |
| | Total | 0 | 3 | 11 | 10 | 12 | 6 | 14 |

* summative and formative

Evaluation Methods

Throughout this study, all of the participants stressed that the current system is a summative one; and as such, they expressed this style of evaluation must change.

Adam stated,

We need to move towards measurements that ascertain the degree to which I meet my expected work position requirements so that the system delivers trustworthy evidence and feedback that we can apply to our school performance, and then show improvement in professional development and growth.

Nine of the participants communicated that the evaluation should be as formative as possible in order to provide principals with ongoing feedback that would lead to appropriate professional learning. They expressed that a formative evaluation process would help them to get the right professional development, which in turn would lead to improvements in principals' performance and the entire learning process. Ibrahim explained, "Ongoing feedback during the year would allow me to know my weaknesses in my work. That type of process would motivate me to engage in related training courses that improve my abilities, increase my knowledge, and reduce my weaknesses so my skills would improve." Lastly, Ahmed explained the principals' evaluation and follow-up feedback should be consistent with specific learning goals related to lifelong learners. He said, "I would prefer if my evaluation provided me with immediate feedback about the best ways to improve my work."

Five of the nine participants who expressed evaluation should be as formative as possible also commented the summative process should only occur occasionally, and should not be required for all principals. Amin noted, "For a professional growth plan to work, we should have continuous assessment, however principals have to be evaluated occasional in order to differentiate between efficient and unsatisfactory principals."

Four of the nine participants who expressed evaluation should be as formative as possible, also commented a summative process must be conducted at the end of each year. Hadi explained the purpose of the formative element would be to "compare principals for training and promotion to administrative positions." According to Mohammed, "Evaluation is also important because principals who work hard would like to feel some appreciation." Omar noted, "The evaluator would see all my work as a whole and could then judge me." Finally, Anwar said, "Summative is necessary for accountability and quality control."

Two participants suggested formative and summative processes to be separate; different evaluators should complete the formative and summative evaluations. The participants explained this might encourage principals and administrators to work more collaboratively. They expressed that a formative process could assist in the improvement

of their skills as well as help them deal with the changing nature of their work. Hamza stated, "Evaluation is supposed to inform principals about where they should focus on for professional development. Giving the right kind of feedback, and in a timely manner, is something evaluation should be providing."

For the summative process, these two participants explained it could be helpful at the end of each year. Nawaf said,

Focusing on principal's outcomes at the end of each year is significant; I think the right person to evaluate principal at the end of the year is the superintendent or the vice superintendent (In SA, currently principal are evaluated by the supervisors not by superintendents or the vice superintendent). The goal of this evaluation in my opinion would be to make decisions related, for example, to sanctions, promotions, or rewards for principals.

Finally, only three participants expressed that evaluation should be only a formative process. Abdullah said, "Evaluation should serve only as formative process. It should not include any summative results or result in consequences for us (principals). If the performance of a principal is unsatisfactory, he needs comprehensive feedback and additional training, followed by a reassessment of his work." Adel explained, "Our evaluation has to be as an ongoing process of assessment which provides principals with feedback that can help them to improve."

Summary of Improving Evaluation Methods

To sum up, nine of the participants communicated that the evaluation should be as formative as possible in order to provide principals with ongoing feedback that would lead to appropriate professional learning. Only three participants expressed that evaluation should be only a formative process. Finally, two participants suggested formative and summative can be part of principal evaluation but stated the processes must be separate and done by different evaluators.

Data Collection Process

All participants agreed that supervisors should use a wider variety of diagnostic tools in order to achieve quality evaluation data. Adam said, "To achieve quality evaluation, supervisors must be able to gather data about principals from many angles and as many resources as possible." Similarly, the participants expressed that evaluators should collect information from as many sources as possible, including school observations, personal interviews, and synchronic communication.

Ten of the participants stated that school observations by an evaluator were a key tool for collecting data. The participants noted that school observations could be direct or indirect; they further commented that the current system uses only direct observations. Abdullah said, "Through our evaluation, direct observation of school practices and principals' actions may support our assessment and provide additional evidence for the evaluation and measure us in a proper way." Hadi stated,

I think my evaluator can collect evaluation data in an indirect way by visiting classrooms to see how a school works, see my school day planning, and participate in some of school meetings. Indirect observations can give accurate information to assess the school that I manage.

Twelve of the participants expressed that the MoE needs to develop new interview techniques. Moreover, they explained there needs to be a link between the interview and any additional evaluation tools. Participants noted during an interview, there should be an opportunity to provide the evaluator enough information to deliver feedback immediately. Mohammed said,

Personal meetings or interviews with our evaluator should give the richest and most specific details and data. Face-to-face contact between us (principals) and our supervisor must give principals insights about their work; it is an opportunity to provide and explore our performance in depth.

Finally, five of the participants indicated that the principal evaluation system would benefit from taking advantage of existing technology due to the shortage of supervisors in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. The five participants noted that synchronic communication tools, such as Skype, could help both evaluators and principals communicate more easily and often and thus facilitate the evaluation and follow-up process. Hadi said, "The use of technology has been growing in our workplace but not in relation to our evaluation. I think our evaluation should take advantage of current technology." Hasan acknowledged, "Technology will facilitate the offering of evaluation materials that allow us to obtain information quickly, connect with other principals, and get instant satisfaction and frequent feedback."

Number of School Visits

All participants expressed that a lack of educational supervisors in relation to the number of schools they supervise has a negative effect on the evaluation process. In the Eastern Province, every school district has just one person responsible for all school principals and vice principals. Ahmed stated, "It (shortcomings of the evaluation) could

be because of a lack of time for education administration supervisors. When they visit a school, time is often an issue for them so the aim of the supervisor becomes more about how to end the evaluation as soon as they can.” Adam stated, “All principals I know recognize that supervisors get busy through the year, and that influences what the process looks like. In addition, we also know that the supervisors, according to the MoE, must evaluate all school principals. So, they are always in a hurry.”

Summary of Improving Data Collection

Participants’ overall opinion on how to improve the MoE’s current evaluation methods for collecting data is that the MoE should include many information sources. All participants expressed that in order for evaluators to gain a comprehensive understanding of a principal’s leadership skills and role in a school, they must visit each school more than once. Furthermore, the amount of time spent at the school should be longer. With respect to obstacles to the current evaluation process, participants explained the duration of school visits and a shortage of educational supervisors in each district acted as a barrier that leads to a lack of time for supervisors to accomplish everything in their job.

Summary: A Priori Themes

In this section, I have included the findings from the two research questions, what are the perceptions of high school principals in Saudi Arabia regarding the process and criteria for their evaluation? And, what are principals’ opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature? I identified 22 categories that clustered under seven a priori themes. Across all areas, it seems fair to say that principals were neither fulfilled by, nor satisfied with, their evaluation. As a result, participants stated that changing the evaluation is necessary and they provided suggestions for new criteria and methods that they feel will lead to a successful evaluation design and process for principals.

4.3.2. Emergent Themes

In looking at the participants’ comments, I noticed that they had many ideas about their evaluation. Some of their major discussion topics related to the area of my research; however, I had not included them in the original scope of my research. For me,

these ideas and opinions became important data because of their relevance to the principal evaluation. Since this information was not part of my research goal or part of my research questions, I consider these ideas and opinions as open-ended data. I addressed this new data under one emergent theme, character traits of the evaluator.

Character traits of the evaluator

The participants pointed to something beyond the evaluation instrument itself, which was the evaluator. Participants identified the evaluator as being an important factor to the success of the evaluation. Participants recognized the professionalism of the evaluator and their character within their job as being significant. Issues participants mentioned were often the result of their personal experiences with educational supervisors. I identified 8 codes that fit into two emerging categories regarding the evaluator (see Table 21 and Table 22), evaluator’s qualifications and human factors.

Table 21. Codes and categories of emergent theme from the analysis of interview transcripts concerning the views of principals with regard to character traits of the evaluator

| Codes | | Categories |
|--------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. | Inexperienced supervisors | Evaluator’s qualifications |
| 2. | Evaluator rehabilitate | |
| 3. | Supervisor’s accuracy | |
| 4. | Credibility of supervisors | |
| 5. | Leadership behaviour | |
| 6. | Relationship between supervisor and principal | Human factors |
| 7. | Supervisor’s Beliefs | |
| 8. | Supervisor’s Value | |

Table 22. Participants' responses from the theme character traits of the evaluator

| | | Character traits of the evaluator | |
|-------|----------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| | | Evaluator's qualifications | Human factors |
| 1 | Abdullah | | • |
| 2 | Mohammed | | |
| 3 | Hamza | • | • |
| 4 | Omar | • | • |
| 5 | Adam | • | |
| 6 | Nawaf | • | • |
| 7 | Ahmed | | |
| 8 | Saleh | • | |
| 9 | Amin | • | |
| 10 | Anwar | | • |
| 11 | Hadi | • | • |
| 12 | Ibrahim | • | |
| 13 | Hasan | • | • |
| 14 | Adel | | • |
| Total | | 9 | 8 |

Evaluators' Qualifications

When discussing the evaluator, nine of the participants noted a lack of qualified evaluators who understand the true complexity of a principal's role. Hamza stated, "How can he (supervisor) evaluate the work of the school principal if he does not know the actual work. There is a problem beyond the assessment model - it is the inexperience of the supervisor himself." These participants specified that unqualified evaluators might influence the evaluation outcome. Saleh stated, "My problem is not with evaluation itself but with unqualified evaluators who are careless and inexperienced. They provide an inefficient evaluation which negatively affects the of quality work of some principals." Hadi stated, "The most difficult situation for me is when I feel the person in front of me (evaluator) does not have the capacity and knowledge about some areas of my work. Also, it is frustrating when the supervisor gives me wrong information about the mechanisms of how school administration works."

Four of the nine principals who noted that there is a lack of qualified evaluators also noted unqualified evaluators cause additional problems. First, they explained there was a lack of accuracy about the expectations of principals' work. Another issue was evaluators' unfamiliarity with the school operating systems. Omar stated, "When dealing with the evaluator, he often fails to provide sufficient information to facilitate and assist

my work. In my opinion, a lack of continuous training of evaluators makes their performance weak.”

Human Factors

Participants discussed human factors such as leadership behaviour, beliefs, values, and pre-existing judgements as important; they expressed these factors might affect the evaluation process.

Eight of the participants stated these factors are the main elements that influence the evaluation. These participants expressed that the process would improve if educational supervisors understood appropriate leadership behaviour when collecting evaluation data, including the best ways to ask questions and link observations with evaluation practice. Abdullah commented, “Supervisors may facilitate the evaluation by his perception, ownership, interests, dedication, and commitment.”

Six of the participants expressed that warmth in the relationship between principals and the supervisor was an important factor for supervisor leadership behaviour. Omar stated,

In my opinion, it’s difficult to effect any change based on the evaluation if my evaluator doesn’t have a decent relationship with me. The relationship I have with my supervisor may increase the level of trust between us, as well as his credibility, which may help me become more comfortable communicating and working with the supervisor.

Finally, three of the participants noted that the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the evaluator play a role in their evaluation. They explained that the traditions, beliefs, ideals, and customs that are so deeply entrenched in Saudi society influence the supervisor during an evaluation. Hasan shared, “This is strange, but last year, the supervisor did not give me a full mark on one of the evaluation elements because I shaved my beard! Here is how a belief and cultural value affected my supervisor’s assessment of me.” Anwar specified, “Due to the complex role of the principal in our current era, and due to multiplicity of human factors involved in our evaluation process, such as beliefs and values, the evaluator should be aware of these factors during our evaluation.” Participants stated that the process would improve if evaluators received training on how to avoid biases based on their personal beliefs. Hadi said, “Our evaluation must depend on the quality of evaluators training. Every principal has right to

be evaluated by trained and qualified evaluators, in order to improve their administrative skills.”

Summary: Character Traits of the Evaluator

I identified one emergent theme during data analysis because participants discussed the character traits of the evaluator frequently. Participants expressed that there are influencing factors related to the supervisor’s character including leadership behaviour, beliefs, and values. Nine of the participants commented about the lack of qualified evaluators within the MoE, the importance of having evaluators who can deal with the changing role of the principal, and ensuring evaluators understand the complexity of a principal’s role. Finally, they expressed that reliability, leadership behaviours, and beliefs as well as how supervisors use their pre-existing beliefs to make judgements, are important traits for supervisors.

4.4. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the analysis of the 14 written transcripts from the high school principal interviews along with the results. When organizing the results, I divided the data into two main parts, a priori themes and emergent themes.

In the first part of my report on findings, I presented the seven a priori themes, which I identified from the literature: purpose of evaluation, characteristics of evaluation, feedback from evaluation, evaluation tools, desired evaluation components, strategies to support and improve evaluation criteria, and strategies to improve evaluation methods. These themes were the result of 79 codes that clustered under 22 categories.

In the second part of the report on findings, I introduced one emergent theme, character traits of the evaluator. This theme was the result of 8 codes that clustered under two categories.

In order to further my understanding of the data, I created tables to highlight my research process and present information; for example, themes and categories identified in a particular finding, samples of some preliminary codes, and demographic data. I provided detailed summary profiles of the participants; these include a summary of each

participant's background and main thoughts about evaluation as well as their ideas for how to improve it.

The final section is a report on the findings from this study. I explain the findings from my comparison of the principals' descriptions of the current evaluation system in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, I present their opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods supervisors use during evaluation.

In the next chapter, I present the findings as a whole in order to provide a summary of the main findings. I offer a comparison between the participants' recommendations and those advocated in the literature. I also discuss the implications for policy and practice, the limitations of my study, and suggestions for future research on principal evaluation.

Chapter 5.

Research Summary and Conclusion

In Chapter 4, I presented the findings from my data about the MoE's evaluation process and tools; I also presented principals' suggestions about how to improve their evaluation. In this final chapter, I present a summary of the main findings and discuss how these findings compare to the literature on principal evaluation. Finally, I discuss the implications for policy and practice, the limitations of my study and suggestions for future research on principal evaluation.

I decided to conduct this study because of the importance and complexity of principals' roles. Since the Saudi government introduced major education reforms related to administration in 2011, there have been growing expectations and responsibilities for school principals; their role is now more complex and demanding than ever before. They are responsible for a greater number of tasks covering a broad range of educational practice. Suggestions for additional research in existing literature and a lack of information directly related to principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia further confirmed the need for this study.

There is a necessity to take serious action with respect to principals' evaluation due to the increase in principals' responsibilities. At present, principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia does not depict the real picture of the principals' tasks. Evaluation, however, should offer a clear picture of principals' job responsibilities through the evaluation components it includes. For the Saudi education system to advance further, the MoE should learn about the current state of evaluation research so that it can take steps to improve the evaluation process and procedures. This would need to include changes to the feedback process so that principals receive guidance on the types of training they should pursue. Until the Saudi government and the MoE take action, there is going to be little improvement, even in the face of great change, to Saudi Arabia's education system. As a result, I believe a study about the Saudi evaluation process was long overdue.

I used a qualitative research design to gather data from fourteen high school principals to begin filling in the gap about principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia; there was no existing direct research about Saudi's principal evaluation at the time of this study. I concentrated on the differences between principals' suggestions on how to improve the

criteria and methods used in their evaluation with the recommendations advocated in the literature.

Through examination of the current evaluation system, leadership's knowledge will increase regarding the impact and influence evaluation has on principals' practice and improvement possibilities. My hope is that the research findings provide guidelines for principals' evaluators on how to improve evaluation practice. Moreover, I hope findings provide policymakers suggestions that they are able to apply to the evaluation process so that principals can achieve long term of success.

5.1. Summary and Discussion of the Findings

In this section, I provide my findings and explain how they compare to the findings found in the literature. I present the research findings and the literature findings in three separate summaries.

The first summary includes information related to question one, what are high school principals' perceptions of the process and criteria for their evaluation? The second summary outlines the results stemming from the second question, what are principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature? The final summary describes the findings from an emergent theme discovered during data analysis.

5.1.1. Summary and Discussion: Research Question One

In this section, I present findings related to question one of this study, what are high school principals' perceptions of the process and criteria for their evaluation? I also discuss how the findings compare to existing literature.

All the participants described a similar evaluation process; one unscheduled visit each year from the supervisor that lasted between one and three hours and included a face-to-face meeting followed by a written report.

The results from this study show this style of principal evaluation to be ineffective from the perspective of participants. Moreover, they suggest that the current evaluation does not provide useful results to educational leaders. None of the high school principals

expressed a positive attitude toward the evaluation system. This clearly indicates that participants view their evaluation as neither useful nor beneficial. Furthermore, all the principals were dissatisfied with their evaluation and its process because they felt that it failed to be implemented successfully.

The summary of question one, what are high school principals' perceptions of the process and criteria for their evaluation? includes four areas related to the evaluation process: purpose of evaluation, evaluation characteristics, evaluation feedback, and evaluation procedures.

Purpose of evaluation

There are three findings about the purpose of principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia: it is vague; it is to meet a routine requirement; and it is primarily to remove ineffective principals.

First, the findings show principals do not see a clear purpose to their evaluation because the MoE fails to explain its goals. Omar explained, "I do not know why principals receive an evaluation. There is no guidance, no clear goals." This result is similar to Reeves' (2009) conclusion that evaluation processes are usually "inconsistent, ambiguous and counterproductive" (p. 2).

Researchers have commented on the importance of having a clear evaluation purpose (Gullickson & Howard, 2009; Ernest, 1985). Ernest (1985) stated, "The purpose of evaluation should be clearly established, understood, and accepted by everyone involved" (p. 291). However, findings show that the current system in Saudi Arabia does not meet this standard. When I asked participants a direct question about what they saw as the purpose of their evaluation, all expressed feelings similar to Hasan, who stated, "Clearly, there are no simple answers here! I do not know."

All participating principals expressed that they feel they do not know what they are supposed to learn from their evaluation and evaluator. Additionally, high school principals are frustrated because their evaluation lacks clear objectives; they also communicated that the uncertainty principals feel can also lead to unnecessary anxiety. As Saleh stated, "It is sometimes very stressful to not know more about my evaluation and why it exists."

Stronge (1991) addressed the issue of evaluation purpose when he noted, “Evaluation systems that lack clarity of purpose are virtually meaningless exercises and rarely contribute to the accomplishment of the organization’s goals” (p. 79). In looking at Stronge’s (1991) finding alongside the findings from this study, it is clear that participants’ indication that there is not a specific purpose to their evaluation highlights one of its weaknesses; it also confirms participants’ opinion that the evaluation is a waste of time.

While participants clearly felt that their evaluation lacks a clear purpose, they did identify some general goals. First, it is to meet a routine requirement and legal obligation set out by the MoE. Hadi explained, “The evaluation of principals is a perfunctory task within the MoE.” Similarly, Adel noted, “It is something that is done as a routine requirement for the MoE.”

This is in line with Anderson’s (1991) finding, “the evaluation methods used by many districts are not designed to enhance principal performance, but to satisfy accountability requirements that make principal evaluation mandatory” (p. 77). Other researchers also identified principal evaluation as merely a work tradition (Fuller et al., 2014; Kimball et al., 2009). Findings from the literature show that MoE is similar to other organizations with respect to an identified purpose of evaluation.

Second, my findings indicate that some principals think their evaluation is to remove ineffective principals from their position. Saleh explained, “When someone is being evaluated for the purpose of removing them from their position, it doesn’t matter what is in the evaluation. The evaluator will find something, anything, that will cause the principal to be removed.”

While it appears that the MoE uses evaluation to remove ineffective principals, findings from the literature suggest that this may not be a useful purpose for evaluation. According to the literature, the main purposes of principal evaluation should be to improve principals’ practice and performance and identify which principal performance expectations are being met (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Clifford & Ross, 2014; Davis et al., 2011; Fuller & Hollingworth, 2014; Lashway, 2003; Reeves, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000). McCleary (1979) stated that “current theory holds that the primary purpose of evaluation is to establish a basis for change of individual behaviour such that both personal

satisfaction and organizational effectiveness is improved” (p. 46). In addition, Guerra-Lopez and Leigh (2009) confirmed the idea that results from evaluation should be primarily a source of information about the qualities of principals, the challenges they face, and as a resource for providing recommendations.

As seen, participants’ responses to questions about their evaluation system expressed thoughts similar to Abdullah, “It is not taken as seriously as it should be.” While participants expressed the evaluation is for fulfilling an MoE requirement and identifying ineffective principals, the existing literature does not support these uses for evaluation.

Evaluation characteristics

When looking at the characteristics of evaluation, I identified the following findings: the current evaluation is not effective for measuring principals’ performance because it is not tied to their tasks and there is a lack of reliability of the evaluation results.

First, according to participants, the MoE’s evaluation process is not in line with expected evaluation practices; Ibrahim stated bluntly, “Our actual real work is not aligned with current evaluation standards.” All participants stated the evaluation is not effective because it is not in line with their actual duties or the current standards. Saleh stated, “Most of time, the evaluation I receive does not reflect my work performance. In short, my evaluation does not align with my actual work.” Similarly, Omar stated, “The evaluation is not related to the actual principals’ daily duties; the results do not accurately describe our work.” This has resulted in an evaluation that does not capture principals’ performance.

This finding is in line with several researchers who have found that evaluation methods for assessing principals do not effectively measure job performance. For example, Gaziel (2003) reported that 75% of principals see their evaluation as unconnected to job performance. Brooks & Voss (2008) found that principal evaluation methods fail to have a strong influence on the behaviour or performance of principals because many of the current methods and tools are not in line with markers that express effective principal characteristics. Moreover, Goldring, Cravens et al., found

“assessments of principals are conducted with no clear norms or performance standards” (2009, p. 35).

Many scholars recommend tying performance expectations to the evaluation processes. Anderson (1991) expressed that principal should know the criteria of their evaluation in the form of clear performance expectations. Reeves (2009) expanded saying that expectations should not cover the superficial tasks but concentrate on an in-depth assessment of the most important principal responsibilities.

However, within the finding that the current evaluation is not effective for measuring principals' performance, results show that in Saudi Arabia, evaluation components do not align with principals' tasks. This finding is similar to Peterson (1991) and Zepeda et al. (2014) who noted there are discrepancies between principal duties and performance elements in evaluation systems. Likewise, Clifford & Ross (2012), Reeves (2009) and Thomas et al. (2000) all found that evaluations do not take a broad view of principals' performance nor align with practice of professional standards. Furthermore, Miqdadi et al. (2014) and Qazi and Mubarak (1993) pointed out that the evaluation cannot assess the performance of educators in Saudi Arabia because there are differences between evaluation elements and the actual work of education employees.

The second major finding related to evaluation characteristic from this study shows the principal evaluation in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia is not a reliable form of assessment. Most of participants commented explicitly about the lack of reliability of their assessment. For example, my findings suggest that the evaluation results are when a principal receives an evaluation more than once on the same work. Adel stated, “I get the same score no matter when or where or who visits me and no matter what I'm doing.”

As mentioned above, the evaluation lacks consistency because it is not tied to principals' performance expectations; this inconsistency adds to the weak reliability of the evaluation. Research about assessment reliability is limited; Goldring, Cravens et al. (2009) found there is little information about evaluation reliability and validity from school districts. However, there is concern about the lack of reliability as reported in studies by Condon & Clifford (2012), Davis et al. (2011), Miqdadi et al. (2014), Moussawi (2001),

Qurashi (2000) and Yarrow (2008). Furthermore, other researchers have reported that when evaluation lacks consistency (Davis & Hensley, 1999; McAdams & Barilla, 2003; Reeves, 2009) the result is a lack of reliability.

To summarize, the evaluation process in Saudi Arabia is not in line with principals' best practice as found in the research literature. The findings indicate that the current evaluation is not effective for measuring principals' performance because the current evaluation system does not capture the real elements or tasks of principals' work. Moreover, there is a lack of consistency and reliability in the evaluation process. The findings support the opinion that the evaluation process in Saudi Arabia must change. Hamza concluded, "Alignment between principal present evaluation and principal real act is missing. As such, in order to principals' success, change to a system like this is needed."

Evaluation feedback

The findings from this study highlighted two important areas about evaluation feedback, the effects of the evaluation timeline on the accuracy of the data, and the effects of feedback on professional development. The findings show feedback is rarely a part of evaluation in Saudi Arabia because of the barriers supervisors face and the current system is not conducive to providing feedback for professional development. Three of percipients summarized this part of finding. First, Hassen explained, "Professional development is my choice; it is not linked to my evaluation at all." Hamza viewed the reason why the feedback is not linked evaluation "“Not all of our authorities and duties are aligned with our evaluation.” Therefore, Hadi noted, "Evaluations should ensure that performance expectations are clearly outlined for principals to have positive feedback." To achieved successful feedback Mohammed stated, "Evaluation process should be used as a formative tool to shape principals' leadership capacity with ongoing, relevant professional development."

Effects of time on evaluation. The majority of participants expressed that feedback is not part of their evaluation. The lack of feedback is in part the result of the barriers supervisors face. For example, findings show educational supervisors in Saudi Arabia do not have enough time to provide feedback concerning a principal's progress. Amin explained, "We do not have regular feedback that supports the core elements of

our work; I feel short changed in this regard. If you ask me why we don't have feedback, the answer is six words - there's not enough time for it!"

However, a small number of participants expressed that feedback is part of their evaluation, particularly for new school principals. For instance, Ahmed recalled, "When I started working as a new principal, my skills were improved by beneficial feedback." It is important to note that those who expressed this all came from the same school district. This finding suggests that there are some differences between school districts concerning how supervisors carry out evaluation; clearly, some supervisors are more efficient at conducting evaluation and are better able to provide feedback that helps principals.

This study's findings suggest that principals rarely get feedback despite their wanting to; Adam noted, "Helpful feedback can create conditions that allow us (principals) to become better school leaders." However, the literature shows that feedback is not always helpful. For example, Reeves (2009) noted that evaluation is not always productive or meaningful. While principals may use feedback in a positive way to improve their practice, when feedback is negative, the receiver may ignore it because he/she resents the information. Providing feedback in a timely matter, and ensuring time is available for appropriate feedback, could be a core component of an effective evaluation system. If supervisors provided feedback based on their own experience immediately, principals could benefit from the feedback even when the assessment tools are not efficient or useful. I discuss this in more detail during the examination of evaluators' qualifications.

The amount of time supervisors spend on evaluation is a concern of many researchers (Lashway, 2003; Normore, 2004). Scholars recommend that evaluation include adequate time for feedback in order to facilitate the improvement of educational leaders' performance (Davis et al., 2011; Gullickson & Howard, 2009; Jacques et al., 2012; Kimball et al., 2009; Portin et al., 2006; and Reeves, 2009). Without adequate time for feedback, it seems likely that the performance of principals will remain stagnant in Saudi Arabia.

The findings from both this study and the literature suggest that supervisors need to provide adequate time for meaningful feedback. However, the current evaluation

process is unable to provide appropriate feedback, in large part because of a lack of time available to supervisors.

Effects of Feedback on professional development. This study's findings indicate that participants want feedback to encourage, as well as guide, professional development; however, the findings show the current evaluation in Saudi Arabia fails to do this. Since there is no link between feedback and professional development, the result is little improvement in principal performance resulting from evaluation. In discussing this issue, one participant described the relationship between his evaluation and his development as "an empty vessel". Abdullah explained,

The same professional development is often covered in three or four different workshops because no weakness are identified in our evaluation and no suggestions for appropriate training is suggested. As such, many principals I know call our training program as an empty vessel.

This is in line with Portin (2009) who criticized current principal evaluation systems for not providing significant information to principals on how to improve their leadership skills. Moreover, researchers suggest that principal evaluations should provide guidance for pursuing professional development (Lashway, 2003; Parylo et al., 2012; Reeves, 2009).

Findings in this study suggest that an absence of appropriate feedback directly affects the professional development of principals; this was a concern of many of the participants in this research. Mohammed explained, "There is need for more attention on improving our education system in this fast paced world. Continuously updating of our jobs skills requires a well-developed professional development plan." In the literature, Jacques et al., (2012) noted, "Principal evaluation systems that clearly identify effective principals and provide performance-based feedback to promote improvement can help to ensure that all students attend schools that can truly help them achieve" (p. 1). This shows the findings of this study and in the literature highlight that receiving feedback and implementing suggestions would improve principals' performance in their daily work.

While there is limited data available regarding the type of feedback principals receive from their evaluations (Goff et al., 2014), much literature supports the belief that an evaluation process may obtain essential information supervisors can use to provide feedback. Researchers have also noted that feedback would support and assist

principals improve their performance (Aloathyanee, 2014; Davis et al., 2011; Gullickson & Howard, 2009; Hvidston, et al., 2015; Lashway, 1998; Parylo et al., 2012; Reeves, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000)

According to the literature, opportunities for professional development would be obtainable if principals received appropriate feedback, as it would offer information about the best types of professional development to pursue. Moreover, feedback from evaluation should deliver explicit recommendations to principals on how to improve their performance; without appropriate feedback, principals lack the guidance that can point them in the right direction for improving their skills (Matarazzo, 2014; Parylo et al., 2012). Furthermore, Davis and colleagues (2011) found that "evaluation should stimulate and guide a principal's professional development" (p. 33). In the absence of direct feedback from evaluation, school principals will continue working without a clearly identified goal.

Findings from this study stress the importance of beneficial feedback for improving principals' performance. Findings also suggest that because of recent education administration reform in Saudi Arabia, useful evaluation feedback is more important than ever. Education reform has resulted in principals having new powers and responsibilities, and evaluation should be a source for providing feedback that encourages principals to pursue appropriate professional development. Ibrahim explained, "How am I doing? I want an answer to this question. I want feedback that helps me improve my performance. Feedback is essential for helping me grow, especially with the new authority and power that principals have."

Evaluation procedures

The findings about evaluation procedures show there are no major differences across the school districts in Eastern Region in Saudi Arabia. All principals in the Eastern Region described receiving an annual summative evaluation that includes one visit from the supervisor, a requirement set by the MoE, and a short face-to-face meeting in the principal's office. Supervisors do not schedule the evaluation in advance. The evaluation concludes with a written short report about the principal.

First, the findings show that there are limited steps included in the evaluation and the absence of a variety of evaluation tools; participants expressed this results in an evaluation process they perceive as inaccurate. Moreover, participants did not think their

evaluation thoroughly measures their performance. Hasan stated, "A lack of resources and tools to carry out our current evaluation is something obvious about our evaluation. Tools and data sources to evaluate us our performance are limited." This suggests that Saudi evaluation procedures are not in line with research on best practice.

Brown and Irby (1998) concluded evaluation must include multiple procedures and steps for it to be effective; "procedures must include a system for communication, a strategy for ongoing monitoring, and provisions for a continuous feedback loop between evaluators and principals" (p. 11).

Furthermore, findings indicated that the supervisors do not schedule the evaluation in advance. Anwar recounted, "All the visits I have had from evaluators were surprise visits."

Researchers do not support the practice of unscheduled evaluations. Stine (2001) stated, "Dates should be established in advance and the format needs to be clear to both parties" (p. 4). Stine (2001) noted advanced scheduling allows principals to organize their day so that there are no interruptions during the visit and materials such as logs and reports can be gathered and prepared in advance. Furthermore, when the principal and supervisor know the time and date of a visit, they can communicate to establish the priorities. Nawaf gave the following analogy to stress this point; "An unscheduled visit is like taking a last minute trip! The trip will be rushed and disorganized. The possible troubles will be less obvious than if you plan your trip."

The research discussed above clearly shows that an evaluation system with a weak procedural base and minimal supervisor visits does not promote effective leadership development. Evaluators cannot address principals' work performance in just a few hours. Moreover, a single, short, face-to-face meeting may not effectively identify issues related to principals' work. However, an underlying issue to address is the supervisor's inability to complete all their work due to a lack of time. All participants echoed a version of the sentiment expressed by Amin, "Time is money. So, because there are not enough supervisors in our district, and therefore they don't have the time to really provide us with a full evaluation, what's the point of the visit?"

In summary, the findings of this study suggest there is a lack of consistency and reliability in the evaluation process. As a result, participants see the outcomes of

principal evaluation as rarely helpful. The causes of the evaluation being weak for providing helpful feedback include: (1) Issues with the school visits by the supervisor. Supervisors do not have enough time to complete their job in a timely manner because of a shortage of staff in the position. This time issue results in short school visits and longer lag time between a visit and a follow up on the information from the visit. When evaluation does not happen in a timely manner, changes can occur, making the findings no longer accurate; (2) It is difficult for the evaluator to give helpful feedback because the current evaluation system does not capture the true value of principals' work. As a result, there may be much valuable information that goes undiscovered that could more accurately guide principals' professional development.

5.1.2. Summary and Discussion: Research Question Two

In the next section, I present findings related to question two of this study, what are principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature? In addition, I discuss how the findings to question two compares to existing literature.

The overall findings to this question indicate that participants were interested in the issues related to changing and improving the evaluation process and system. I present the summary findings in four parts. The first consists of participants' thoughts on specific components of evaluation systems discussed in the literature. The second includes a comparison of the participants' opinions about what criteria would improve the current evaluation system in Saudi Arabia against suggestions provided in the literature. The final section is a discussion of participants' views about the methods of collecting evaluation information with researchers' suggestions on the best methods for collecting evaluation data.

Desired Components of Evaluation

I discussed four evaluation components from the literature with participants: (1) professional development, (2) positive school culture, (3) student achievement, and (4) school management.

Professional development

The first finding related to question two indicates that professional development should be one of the evaluation components for principals' evaluation. Mohammed said, "In this ever-changing world, we need to provide a practical education. It is in the best interest of the MoE to develop an evaluation that can help the entire MoE staff grow." This finding underlines that including professional development as an element of principals' evaluation would lead to higher standards for the evaluation system and improve principals' performance.

This finding is consistent with what existing research shows. Many researchers have identified professional development as an important factor in evaluation (Gullickson & Howard, 2009), but a factor that current evaluation processes frequently fail to include (Woulfin et al., 2016). Sun & Youngs (2009) noted that if evaluation practices included assessment of professional development, principals would be more invested and involved in learner centered leadership practices.

According to the literature, principals need constant professional development (Davis et al., 2011; Stewart & Matthews, 2015; Stringer & Hourani, 2016). Since there is a correlation between professional development and evaluation performance and proficiency, it is necessary to include professional development in evaluation systems (Hvidston, et al., 2015; Sun & Youngs, 2009; Sun et al., 2012). Davis and colleagues (2011) found that "evaluation should stimulate and guide a principal's professional development" (p. 33). Furthermore, they confirmed that when designing evaluation systems, it is essential to incorporate the future professional development of principals because it acts as a motivator.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the MoE does not link principal evaluation to professional development; the linking is not possible due to the weak feedback provided from the evaluation process. However, opportunities for professional development would be obtainable if principals received appropriate feedback.

According to participants, evaluation instruments must clearly identify the responsibilities of a principal and provide information that principals can use to make decisions about professional development. This could involve providing appropriate feedback to principals from information collected during evaluation (Clifford & Ross,

2012; Goldring, Cravens et al., 2009; Fuller & Hollingsworth, 2014; Sun & Young, 2009; Reeves, 2009). This was a priority of many of the participants in this research, and was best summed up by Amin; “Improving principals’ capabilities and abilities, by using accurate measuring tools for a professional development plan, will lead to successful principals, and will thus lead to school success.”

This study’s findings suggest professional development should be a component of principals’ evaluation and evaluation tools should help principal to identify their development need. These findings are consistent with what existing research shows; professional development should be connected to evaluation and the evaluation tools should provide information about where principals should focus with respect to professional development (Hvidston et al., 2015; Kimball et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2000). Therefore, if the MoE incorporates professional development in their evaluation system, the result would be improved school success.

Positive School Culture

The findings of this study indicate that Saudi principals see building school culture into principal evaluation as the most important component for achieving accurate results about a principal’s success and effectiveness. Anwar said,

Culture is intangible, but it’s essential; the bottom line is positive school culture can improve school results. A strong foundation of support among staff can help in achieving a positive school community and may lead to school success. School culture is an important part of the principals’ job and it has to be done well if school are going to achieve at high levels.

The literature indicates that creating positive school culture is one of the most important skills of leaders (Habib, 2005; Murphy et al., 2007). Moreover, researchers have noted positive school culture and effective leadership lead to successful schools (Dhuey & Smith, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Marzano et al., 2005; Stronge, 2013). According to Deal and Peterson (2016), including school culture in principal evaluation results in stronger efforts, higher productivity, clearer communication, and better problem solving.

My review of the literature uncovered several evaluation models that focus on the development and efficacy of principal evaluation instruments. The most commonly cited evaluation models include the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale, the

Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education, and the Marzano School Leadership Evaluation; all these models contain school culture as a component of assessment. Likewise, these models consider the principal responsible for developing an in-school climate that is conducive for learning.

This study's findings highlight the need to develop expectations for principal behaviours that enhance the overall culture and climate of the school. Suggestions on how to do this include using multiple data sources during evaluation that include providing insights to potential opportunities for principal's to target behaviours that influence school culture. For example, as part of school culture, Abdullah stressed the importance of a principal's ability to develop collaborative relationships between staff members; "I try to create an environment where my teachers feel comfortable discussing their problems with me so they can get appropriate feedback on a regular basis. No matter what difficulties we are facing, a comfortable environment makes the education process easier." Reeves (2009) emphasized the importance of leadership because one person can have huge influence across the organization. Many researchers have concluded that the capacity of the principal leadership is critical to influence school outcome (Branch et al., 2013; Geraki, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005).

As seen, much research highlights the importance of positive school culture and its inclusion in principal evaluation. The findings from this study, where participants highly stressed the importance of including school culture in evaluation, provide additional support to the existing research for including school culture as a component of evaluation. With these findings, it is important that policy makers find ways to include school culture in evaluation so that it is regularly encouraged within schools.

Student achievement

The findings from this study indicate that there is little support for including student achievement as part of the formal principal evaluation system in Saudi Arabia. Omar explained, "I'm working in a centralized work environment, where I have no hand in a lot of what is happening in my school. I only carry out the instructions of the MoE." This finding is the result of principals believing there are many contributing factors. Other influences associated with student achievement include shared responsibility, trust and self-assurance, delegation of decision-making, personal and professional respect,

respect for quality of teachers, classroom practices, quality of school buildings, curriculum policy, student population, and school district administrators. Nawaf expressed the participants' concerns about adding student achievement to their evaluation well in his comment, "Learning is collaborative. There are many factors clearly not related to a principal. For example, parents' education and economic background." Moreover, on the topic of the influence of past educators, Adam explained, "If a grade 8 student has a weakness in his learning skills in a specific subject area, it is possibly because a weak foundation from previous grades."

Research results from McMahon et al. (2014) are consistent with this study's findings; they noted that it is hard to document a direct link between principal leadership and student achievement. Other studies have also shown that improvements in student performance are not solely the result of a principal's efforts (Jacob, Goddard, Kim, Miller & Goddard, 2015; Leitner, 1994). Furthermore, Dhuey and Smith (2014) stated, "A student's family background can influence learning directly by shaping the educational culture of the community and school or by shaping the family's assumptions, norms and beliefs related to the importance of academic learning" (p. 638). In this study, Nawaf reverberated Dhuey and Smith's finding in saying, "The variation of the social class of children and their families in our schools today affects students."

This study includes a finding that suggests including student achievement might be a useful component of the principal evaluation. Some participants expressed there is a relationship between principals' behaviour and school effectiveness, which can influence student achievement. For example, Abdullah commented, "Student achievement should be included in my evaluation; everything that happens in the school has been influenced by what I do every day."

As previously mentioned, there has been an rise in the number of studies centring on the relationship between principals' behaviour, school effectiveness, and student achievement (Cotton, 2003; Goldring et al., 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis, et al., 2010; Marzano et al., 2005; Sammons et al., 2011;; Zepeda et al., 2014). Researchers have found in many of the studies that effective school leaders are vital for an education system where student achievement and accountability is the focus. Moreover, many researchers have concluded that school leaders can have a significant, if tangential, influence on student achievement

(Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005; Sousa, 2003). As a result, many recent evaluation systems, such as the Marzano School Leadership Evaluation Model (2013), Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (Murphy et al., 2007), have incorporated student achievement in principal evaluation.

However, while some researchers have found that principals have considerable indirect influence, they also noted their impact on student achievement is a marginal direct effect (Radinger, 2014; Robinson, 2007). Others confirm that “to date, however, this discussion has been largely uninformed by systematic analysis of principals' impact on student outcomes” (Branch et al., 2013, p. 69). Furthermore, recent studies have shown that evaluation cannot accurately connect students' test results to principals' influence (Grissom et al., 2015; Fuller & Hollingworth, 2014).

Research has shown that principals contribute to a variety of areas within a school. Clifford et al. (2014) explained, “Principals can directly influence school conditions, district and community contexts, teacher quality and distribution, and instructional quality.... Principals indirectly influence student achievement and instructional quality by creating conditions within schools” (p. 3-4). Additionally, principals can influence student achievement through the hiring and firing of teachers, monitoring instruction, and maintaining student discipline. For example, Louis et al. (2010) observed, “The effects of school leadership directly influence school and classroom conditions, as well as teachers themselves, and indirectly influence student learning” (p. 5). Furthermore, Leithwood et al. (2004) pointed out that principals can also influence classroom factors including class size, student-teacher ratios, student placement and classroom practices and content; the decisions principals make regarding these areas greatly influence student achievement. On this topic, Ibrahim, who was one of two participants who supported adding student achievement to principal evaluation, commented, “Absolutely, principals' indirect leadership effects are important to the improvement of students' learning. For example, when I address teachers' educational needs, teachers will be more successful doing their job.”

The findings from this study suggest that Saudi principals do not support the inclusion of student achievement in their evaluation because they feel they have no control over many of the influencing factors. As such, a good starting point may be to focus on the indirect influences principals have on student achievement. For example,

evaluation can focus on whether a principal is successful in creating a positive school culture that focuses on student achievement. The outcome would be improved principal abilities and successes resulting from evaluation results.

School Management

The findings of this study indicate that the MoE should add organizational management to its evaluation as an assessment component. Hadi stated, “In order to design an evaluation that aligns with the principals actual duties, it should include our administrative tasks.”

From the findings, I identified specific criteria that participants felt evaluators should use when assessing aspects of organizational management. These criteria include the ability to organize a school, an aptitude for delegating work amongst staff, strong problem solving skills, a capacity for strategic resource management, and good time management. They also include the ability to support and monitor teachers and students, allocate resources, maintain a safe school setting and facilities, and manage a school budget. Adam explained, “I’m responsible for overseeing teachers, students, school safety and maintenance, and I am responsible for all school guidelines. I’m also accountable for the use of all school resources.”

This finding is in line with research suggesting evaluation should include assessing the management skills of principals in order to improve principals’ administration practices (Glasman & Martens, 1993; McCollum, Kajs & Minter, 2006). In addition, earlier research on effective management concluded that effective leaders could improve the learning process in schools by having strong management skills (Cotton, 2003; Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Stronge, 2013).

Effective school management should identify principals who can manage the day-to-day school operation efficiently, including operations and facilities, in a way that capitalizes on school resources. The findings of this study indicate that even though the management role of principals is well defined and clear in the Saudi education system, the evaluation system elements do not align with this role. However, participants expressed that school management should be a component within evaluation that accurately measures their managerial skills. Omar explained, “I spend almost 80% of my time on school management issues. My daily duties are to insure school operations, so

why should the MoE not include my management skills in my evaluation?" This view aligned with Riggio, Murphy, and Pirozzolo (2001) who stated leaders' work in the routine procedures is what guarantees the success of day-to-day school operations.

Further findings indicate that an evaluation process that measures principals' administrative talents would help a school to become more successful. Anwar stated, "Good management in schools can lead to the improvement of students and teachers."

There is widespread agreement in the literature that a principal's ability to manage and support learning and teaching indicates that education leaders are responsible for the success or failure of the school system they administer and guide (Abu-Nasser, 2010; Brooks & Voss, 2008; Louis et al., 2010; Marzano et al., 2005; Oyinlade, 2006).

Likewise, there is strong evidence from this study's findings and the literature that organizational management should be a component in all principal evaluation systems. For the Saudi system to have an effective evaluation, components that measure management skills are essential especially being principals spend more time managing daily school operations than leading a school. Hassan summarized this point by explaining, "Principals' ability to manage and understand how a school works can improve the quality of a school and its success."

Strategies that Support or Improve Evaluation Criteria

The findings from this study provide recommendations for strategies that would best support the improvement of principals' evaluation related to its criteria and procedures. These suggestions include changing the current system so that it focuses on improving evaluation quality.

First, necessary changes to the current system

The findings from this study demonstrate that there is strong desire for change to the current Saudi evaluation system. Findings show that supervisors implement the current evaluation poorly and use ineffective measurement tools; as a result, the evaluation lacks credibility. Furthermore, principals are seldom aware of the goals and purposes of their evaluation. The result of the weak evaluation process and methods is it

does not result in promoting change that could improve school outcomes or principal performance.

The findings from this study show that Saudi Arabia is experiencing a similar situation as revealed in the other studies. According to the literature, school leaders hold a complex and demanding role (Allheaniy, 2012; Catano & Stronge, 2007; DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Ediger, 2014; Fullan, 2014; Khalil & Karim, 2016; Meemar 2014). Researchers have noted that the responsibilities of leaders have recently increased, and principal performance has more of an effect on school outcomes (Cotton, 2003; Dhuey & Smith 2014; DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Marzano, et al., 2005; Reeves, 2009).

In this study, some participants described how principals have more responsibilities than before; Hamza explained, "Principals have been given more authority since 2011 and every year we have new power." Additionally, Ibrahim described how principals affect school outcomes at a higher rate than in the past. "These days, principals face complex tasks every day. Principals play an essential role in the success of the school."

Moore (2009) noted to cultivate school leaders who are more effective and successful, educational establishments need to rethink the current evaluation process. The literature suggests that for school principals to become more successful, education organizations that oversee principals must implement changes to their evaluation processes (Davis et al., 2011; Elliott & Clifford, 2014). In this study, all participants expressed that the evaluation needs to change. Some suggested it be changed completely while others preferred it only be modified. All participants expressed similar thoughts or feelings to Adam's comment, "For principals to become more successful, the evaluation must change so that it supports principals and provides feedback."

Second, improving evaluation quality

Findings from this study show that there is a strong need to improve the quality of the current evaluation system in Saudi Arabia; this could include creating a completely new evaluation or modifying the current evaluation. This is consistent with evaluation research that found it is essential to ensure the quality of evaluation is high and highlighted the importance of having quality evaluation methods and leadership

standards that are linked to the real performance of principals (Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Harper, 2015; Moore, 2009). Miqdadi et al. (2014) asserted that quality assurance should be fundamental in the design of successful evaluation systems.

The findings from this study indicate that in order to assure quality assessment, the design of the evaluation should be simple, clear, and easy to carry out. Amin stated, "Design wise, all efforts should be made to keep evaluation activity easy-going and simple." This is in line with recommendations in the literature that suggest principals are better able to achieve success when they have a clear understanding of evaluation criteria (Davis & Hensley, 1999; Goldring et al., 2009; Sun et al., 2012).

The findings from this study regarding evaluation quality also indicate that the design of an evaluation should consider differences between schools. Adam explained, "Individuals have differences, school have differences too. A one-size-fits-all principal evaluation is an impossible task! That style doesn't consider different experience levels or skills of the principal or the school context." The literature supports this participant's perspective that evaluation should take into account the different characteristics of schools in order to ensure quality (Portin, 2009). Moreover, Goldring, Cravens et al., (2009) stated, "Contextual factors should be considered in interpreting leadership accomplishments" (p. 24); this could include taking into account elements such as the level of experience of principals, differences in school policies among schools, geographical characteristics, and the student population.

Researchers such as Fuller et al. (2015), Leithwood et al. (2004), and Muenich (2014) discussed the importance of varying evaluation methods because of differences in educational contexts. Furthermore, Rammer (1991) emphasized the need to modify evaluation for different settings. He stated,

The notion of "one size fits all" does not apply to administrator evaluations. As the characteristics of districts and administrators are different, so are and should be the characteristics of evaluations. They must be tailored to and compatible with the individual and the organizational needs of the participants. (p. 77)

In my opinion, a "one-size fits all" evaluation approach will not work in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is a vast country with wide variations from region to region. For example, what works well for rural or suburban areas, may not work within an urban

context. Furthermore, uniformity will not work when addressing high school and elementary school principals' work. The issues in both schools are different and principals need to approach them differently. This is not to suggest principals in one school works less than principals in another school do; it is simply that general evaluation of their leadership models should be different because their goals are different. As Mohammed explained, "The administrative functions are different. For example, elementary principals have to deal with young students who are just starting school, while secondary principals have to ensure that their students' focus on vocational preferences."

A further finding about how to improve evaluation quality suggests including principals in creating a new evaluation would lead to a more valuable and better quality evaluation system. As Nawaf asserted, "Ask me first! I know how to evaluate myself." Previous research supports the belief that evaluation would be more effective if creators included principals in the building their evaluation system (Amsterdam et al., 2003; Muenich, 2014; Sun et al., 2012).

With respect to evaluation having a clear purpose, this study's findings indicated that identifying the purpose of evaluation is the most important step towards achieving successful and accurate evaluation (Gullickson & Howard, 2009, Reeves, 2009). It is essential that expectations are clear to principals and there are no conflicts between the purpose of the evaluation and the evaluators' measurement tools.

In this study, findings suggest purpose of evaluation should include an assessment of the principal's performance in completing or achieving personal goals; this information could be used for additional professional development opportunities for further growth and improvement. In this sense, Adel summed up his colleagues point of view when he said, "Successful evaluation should avoid judgement or assigning of blame; helping our professional development with helpful feedback would be the best method to improve principals."

As referenced in the literature, the most frequently named purposes for evaluation were to make recommendations for improvement and assessing educators' effectiveness (Amsterdam et al., 2003; Anderson, 1991; Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Guerra-Lopez & Leigh, 2009; Portin, 2009; Sun & Youngs, 2009; Stronge, 2013), ensure

performance accountability (Harper, 2015; Reeves, 2009; Stronge, 2013), and address unique objectives (Lashway, 2003). Goldring et al. (2009) concluded, “Leadership evaluation holds great promise for providing educators with much-needed information to improve leadership practices and serve accountability purposes” (p. 26).

Similarly, Normore (2004) noted, “One of the necessary steps in developing an evaluation system is to clarify the objects, purposes, and standards that will be used” (p. 286–87). Clear purpose of evaluation provides confirmation of the importance of determining the aim of evaluation.

Furthermore, findings related to improving evaluation quality indicate evaluation should have a clear outline of the performance expectations for principals. The principals’ job description should explain in detail the expected tasks and include guidelines for all procedures related to a principal’s work; the job description should then be tied to principal evaluation. The information in the literature strongly supports this finding. Principal performance has to have clear expectations and must be described in relation to the data that evaluators collect and use during assessment (Strong, 2013; Voge & Weiler, 2014).

Researchers see aligning principals’ performance expectations with their evaluation as a difficult task. Catano and Stronge (2007) concluded, “The complexity and lack of clarity surrounding the role of a principal makes the formulation of appropriate performance assessment a daunting task” (p. 382). As referenced in the literature, the performance of a principal must be linked to evidence about what principals actually do on a daily basis and be tied to principal evaluation (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Kimball et al., 2009).

Findings in the literature and this study suggest principal evaluation should provide a framework of expectations of principal performance; principals’ performance should be based on what they are expected to do. It is normal that school leaders seek to meet the job expectations framed within evaluation instruments and vice versa. When supervisors evaluate principals on defined expectations, they will be able to determine the actual strengths and weaknesses of principals’ performance and provide effective feedback for training goals. In this study, Ahmed showed agreement to this finding from the literature when he explained,

When evaluation aligns with expected performance, it's helpful in many ways. If a principal understands the job's expectations, he will work to meet these expectations. In this case feedback, it will be helpful and guide my work. The helpful feedback would improve the skills of school principals.

The literature review presented in this dissertation confirms that evaluation processes should provide opportunities for professional development and not only accountability. Moreover, the purpose of all evaluations should be to build a principal's leadership capacity and encourage professional development. The participants in this study also commented on evaluation needing to be for building leadership skills and professional development. Omar shared the following description to support this idea, "School leaders often lack training, so to develop leadership in our school there is a need to use formative evaluation results to guide principals toward professional development."

The review of the literature uncovered many models that focus on the development and efficacy of different principal evaluation instruments. For example, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale PIMRS (Hallinger et al., 2013), Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education VAL-ED (Murphy et al., 2011), and The Marzano School Leadership Evaluation Model (2013). The aim of evaluation models is to provide a base for effective evaluation of the performance of principals and enhance leadership practices (Condon & Clifford, 2012). The findings from this study about improving evaluation quality indicate that adopting existing evaluation standards from other education environments would facilitate an improved evaluation in Saudi Arabia. Saleh explained, "Starting from zero when building an evaluation is hard because knowledge is accumulated over time! I strongly support taking advantage of the previous experiences of others on evaluation."

To sum up so far, the findings from this study suggest that the current Saudi evaluation must change or be modified to become more effective. Recommendations to improve the evaluation quality include considering the difference between schools, including a variety of individuals in an evaluation design, and ensuring it is simple and easy to carry out. Additional suggestions are ensuring evaluations expectations are clear to principals and verifying there are no discrepancies between the purpose of the evaluation and the measurement tools. Moreover, evaluation should outline principals' performance expectations clearly. Finally, findings suggest adopting existing evaluation

standards from other education environments to facilitate an improved evaluation in Saudi Arabia.

Strategies Support to Improve Methods of Evaluation Data

The findings from this study suggest that evaluation designers should consider many areas when planning a new evaluation system in order to ensure supervisors and evaluators use multiple data sources. The findings reveal three areas of data collection methods that require improvement: methods for principal evaluation, data collection processes, and the number of school visits.

Methods for principal evaluation

The first strategy identified in the findings related to improving the methods used for principal evaluation and assessment. The findings showed some disagreement among participants; some suggested including formative and summative methods. However, others suggested using only formative methods.

Participants who stated evaluation should be both a formative process and summative process expressed summative components would provide assessment of the effectiveness of a principal through focused monitoring and accountability. The formative aspects would provide the ongoing feedback that is crucial for principals to improve their performance, meet school goals, and lead a school to success. As noted in the literature, formative and summative feedback is significant for improving principals' performance through the evaluation process (Cullen, 1995; Davis & Hensley, 1999; Gordon et al., 2014; Matarazzo, 2014; Parylo et al., 2012). This finding suggests that the structure of principal evaluation could include combining formative and summative processes; however, under one condition, formative and summative processes must be separate.

The separation would mean that formative assessment is for identifying specific needs for professional development while summative evaluation would focus on goals, rewards, promotions, and sanctions. Furthermore, it would be essential that different people do the formative and summative processes. An expert who can identify the needs of principals with a goal of development should complete the formative evaluation; the evaluator for the summative process would only measure the outcomes of a principal's work. Nawaf explained, "A variety of evaluation methods should be used to

improve principal's evaluation. Summative evaluation can be at the end of each year by a completely different person; however, the best evaluations include ongoing feedback to improve my skills during the year.”

Researchers have noted to ensure feedback, assessment must include a formative process. In addition, researchers have noted that summative methods have to be treated as completely different processes than formative to avoid conflict and confusion (Radinger, 2014).

Moreover, the first suggestion in the findings suggests that an effective evaluation system is formative in nature rather than summative. The finding suggests evaluation should include only formative process, and thus be more accurately labeled an assessment. The findings show that principals want formative feedback to improve their job performance, especially with their new powers and authority. Adel explained, “Our evaluation has to be as an ongoing process of assessment which provides principals with feedback that can help them to improve.”

Results from this study suggest that principals want formative evaluation methods that would provide ongoing feedback that lead to appropriate professional development. Participants stressed feedback that helps principals improve their performance should be an important purpose for evaluation.

This result aligns with the most frequently named purpose of evaluation in the literature. Thomas et al. (2000) noted, “Formative purposes relate to expected improvement of principals’ performance following evaluation and identification of ways in which principals can change their administrative style and improve their skills, attitudes, and knowledge” (p. 216). Parylo et al. (2012) and Clifford et al. (2014) remarked that evaluation would be more useful to school leaders if assessment included formative evaluation methods that provided effective feedback. Brown-Sims (2010) commented that principals’ professional development, including future aims, training and strategies, should be connected to evaluation findings resulting from both formative and summative assessment tools. Furthermore, Parylo et al. (2012) concluded that evaluators could more easily address problems and concerns when using a formative evaluation that also includes opportunities for principals and evaluators to work in partnership, discuss things openly, and employ reflective practice during the complete evaluation process. In this

study, these two quotes summarise this idea. First, Anwar said, “Summative is necessary for accountability and quality control.” Second, Ahmed stated, “I would prefer if my evaluation provided me with immediate feedback about the best ways to assess and improve my work.”

Data collection processes

The second finding related to improving methods of collecting evaluation data is evaluators should collect information from as many sources as possible, including school observations, personal interviews, synchronic communication, and the school community. Adam’s comment, “Supervisors must be able to gather data about principals from many angles and as many resources as possible,” was echoed by all participants. They expressed that the result would be a more beneficial evaluation for improving the educational process as a whole. This finding is in line with recommendations from the literature; evaluation should include a variety of sources for collection data including interviews, observations, and document analysis (Davis et al., 2011; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Stronge, 2013;).

Number of school visits

The last suggestion regarding strategies to improve the evaluation is for the MoE to provide a sufficient number of qualified educational supervisors, with sufficient time for comprehensive visits, in each school district. Ibrahim explained, “It is logical to think that a greater number of supervisors would lead to more time spent at each school.” This finding is consistent with Reeves (2009), who noted for the evaluation process to be meaningful there is a need for the evaluator and principal to spend a substantial amount of time together during the school year.

In the Eastern Province, every school district has just one person responsible for all school principals and vice principals. For example, the Alkhobar School District includes 154 schools but only one supervisor. In order for evaluators to gain a comprehensive understanding of a principal’s leadership skills and role in a school, they must visit each school more than once; however, this is not possible when the number of evaluators is not sufficient, and supervisors do not have the time for multiple visits with each principal. Anwar stated, “Supervisors need to spend time in schools during the

year, but they (supervisors) have a busy schedule. During a one-time site visit, it can be difficult for them to give us an effective evaluation.”

Current evaluation techniques fall short on collecting useful information about principals’ work. The current data collection methods do not work with today’s principals because of the variety of duties they perform. There is a need to improve the method of evaluation to achieve a just and fair principal evaluation that is credible. Moreover, it needs to be a formative process; the collection of evaluation information must come from multiple resources and have clear standard procedures. In addition, supervisors have to visit several times during the year to achieve formative results. Finally, a sufficient number of qualified educational supervisors are required for the success of an evaluation process.

5.2. Further Findings

In looking at the participants’ comments, I noticed that they had ideas and opinions regarding their evaluator; however, the evaluator was not an area I had included in the original scope of my research. For me, these opinions about the evaluator became important data because of its relevance to principal evaluation. Since this information was not part of my research goal or part of my research questions, I consider these ideas and opinions as an emergent theme, which I called the character traits of the evaluator.

Within the findings on character traits of the evaluator, I identified two categories that affect the evaluation process related to evaluators directly, the evaluator’s qualifications and human factors that influence evaluation.

5.2.1. Evaluator’s qualifications

The first finding indicates there is a shortage of qualified evaluators who understand the true complexity of a principal’s role; furthermore, a lack of evaluator training threatens the reliability of the evaluation process. Hassan’s comment supports this finding; “A successful evaluation requires a well-trained and fully qualified evaluator. So far, we don’t have either!”

According to the literature, the evaluator himself/herself is an important part of the success of principal evaluation (Davis et al., 2011; Goldring, Cravens et al., 2009; Gullickson & Howard, 2009; Kimball et al., 2009; McAdams & Barilla, 2003). Researchers have pointed out that the evaluator is as important to successful evaluation as the tools used. Finally, researchers noted that achieving successful evaluation is not possible without qualified evaluators.

The literature stresses the importance of having qualified evaluators (Gullickson & Howard, 2009). Kimball et al. (2009) saw that weak evaluator training might lead to a poor evaluation. Clifford et al. (2014) noted evaluators' training is an important way to support principal evaluation because a lack of evaluator training might lead to problems with the effectiveness of the evaluation including, but not limited to, evaluator bias and inadequate knowledge of appropriate evaluation methods. Faubert (2009) suggested that evaluators complete several years in the field of principalship. However, Goldring, Cravens et al., (2009) concluded, "There is little discussion of psychometric properties, evaluation procedures, or evaluator training among the sampled assessment instruments and procedure" (p. 35).

5.2.2. Human Factors

This study's second major finding about the characteristics of the evaluator revealed there is a negative impact due to human factors related to the supervisor. Amin specified, "Due to the complex role of the principal in our current era, and due to multiplicity of human factors involved in our evaluation process, such as beliefs and values, the evaluator should consider these factors during our evaluation."

This finding is in line with previous research findings. Davis et al. (2011) noted from their own review of the literature that, "The quality of the conduct of principal evaluation may be more important than its content. Strong, trusting, and collaborative relationships between principals and their district office evaluators is especially critical to the success of the evaluation process" (p. 35). Furthermore, Kimball et al. (2009) saw that evaluators' conduct is as important as the instruments used.

The findings from this study also pointed to the subjective feelings of the evaluator affecting principal evaluation. This finding is in line with the literature that

shows evaluators' subjective opinions and views may affect principals' evaluation (Reeves, 2009;) as well as reduce evaluator credibility during the evaluation process (Goldring, et. al., 2009; Gullickson & Howard, 2009).

In addition, this study, along with previous research, identified beliefs, values, and pre-existing judgements as having an impact on principal evaluation. Thomas et al. (2000) commented, "Regardless of how carefully policies and practices dealing with evaluation of principals have been enunciated in school systems, human judgment is heavily involved" (p. 235). Findings of this study indicated there is often failure on the part of the evaluator to remain objective; an evaluator's background usually influences evaluation in Saudi Arabia. For example, Hasan recounted, "The supervisor did not give me a full mark on one of the evaluation elements because I shaved my beard! Here is how a belief and cultural value affected my supervisor's assessment of me." Likewise, Johnson (1998) considers background as one factor that affects evaluation outcome. Moreover, Gullickson and Howard (2009) concluded, "If judgments are made about an individual based on bias, lack of evidence, or misuse of the instrument, the organization may stand lose someone who could have been a positive asset." (p. 117)

The literature mentions the importance of evaluator credibility as influential on evaluation (Alkin, 1985; Goldring, et al., 2009; Gullickson & Howard, 2009). As such, evaluators should be well qualified to carry out evaluation in order for it to maintain credibility. Hadi said, "Our evaluation must depend on the quality of evaluators training. Every principal has a right to be evaluated by trained and qualified evaluators so that I can improve my administrative skills."

To summarize, the findings of this study highlight the shortage of qualified principal evaluators who understand the true complexity of a principal's roles. The findings suggest this is in part because of a lack of evaluator training. These findings support the belief about the weak reliability of the evaluation process. Moreover, the findings show human factors a have negative impact on the outcome of the evaluation process. Due to the complex nature of the role of the evaluator and variety of human factors involved in Saudi principals' evaluation process, there is a need to look carefully at how human factors impact evaluation and how prevent or manage these influences and issues.

5.3. Concluding Discussion about Findings

In summary, this study examined the present process used to evaluate principals as experienced by high school principals in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it explored principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation and compared them with the recommendations advocated in the literature.

There are many reasons researchers and those in the field of education have concerns about the evaluation system for principals used in Saudi. First, there are no clear evaluation purposes. Yet, research has shown clear evaluation goals may lead to more effective school leaders.

According to the findings from this study, the inability to identify the strengths and weaknesses of school principals is a significant flaw of the evaluation system. Furthermore, evaluation feedback is very weak and therefore not suitable for guiding principals' professional development. In addition, the procedures and tools for data collection are outdated and not in line with the job principals currently do. Finally, findings indicate the failure to train supervisors adequately to deal with the complexity of principal work leads to negative results from principal evaluation.

The evaluation techniques used to evaluate Saudi principals must change. This study provides suggestions for creating a framework that may support the improvement of principals' evaluation regarding criteria and procedures. These suggestions include focusing on improving evaluation quality so that the design is simple, clear, and easy to carry out; identifying a clear purpose; and ensuring performance expectations are well-defined for principals. In addition, the findings suggest the evaluation should consider the different characteristics of schools and avoid a one-size fits all evaluation approach. Finally, principals must assist in the building of a new evaluation that also considers existing evaluation models and research.

In the findings, the participants suggest using either a formative or a combined formative and summative process; however, for a truly formative system, the formative and summative processes must be separate. Furthermore, evaluators should collect information from as many sources as possible, including school observations, personal interviews, synchronic communication, and the school community. Additionally, the MoE

must take measures to hire a sufficient number of qualified and well-trained educational supervisors for each school district.

5.4. Limitations

I have successfully completed this research and yet, as with all research, there are limitations. The limitations of this study include the homogeneity of the participant sample, gender issues, inexperienced participants, problems with translating participant interviews, and the availability of existing research literature. Next, I discuss each limitation in detail.

First, as previously noted, this study includes only high school principals in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. Since there were geographical limitations during the selection of participants, the results may not be significant or relevant in other regions of Saudi Arabia.

The second limitation is all participants were male; this is because of cultural norms that restrict the interaction of men and women in Saudi Arabia. As a male researcher, I had to focus my study on Saudi male principals to ensure access to participants. As a result, the findings may not be relevant or applicable to female principals in Saudi Arabia.

The third limitation is most participants had no previous experience with research interviews; this limitation is the result of researchers in Saudi Arabia rarely using a qualitative approach. Some of the participants expressed fear, confusion, and worry during their interview; furthermore, some participants were uncomfortable when sharing information during the one-on-one interview.

The fourth limitation is I conducted the interviews in Arabic and then translated the interview recordings into English. The nuances in Arabic may not be completely translatable to English and therefore, there may be some misinterpretations in the data. Upon reflection, hiring an expert translator may have increased the accuracy of data; however, time and financial limitations prevented doing so for this study.

Finally, the lack of research studies in Saudi Arabian available in the field of education leadership is another limitation. It was difficult to get recent resources

connected to a Saudi Arabian education context. As a result, I used studies from other countries; these studies provided the foundation and conceptual framework for this study. However, using research from outside Saudi Arabia may have had a significant influence on the data discussion because of substantially different contextual and cultural contexts.

5.5. Differences in the Findings

There are four areas where findings the findings from the literature differ significantly from the findings of this study. These areas are: evaluation process, purpose of evaluation, evaluation feedback, and student achievement.

First, the evaluation process in Saudi Arabia is not in line with expected principals' best practice as found in the research literature (Davis & Hensley, 1999; Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Goldring et al., 2009; Hallinger et al., 2013; Marzano et al., 2005; Murphy et al., 2011; Reeves, 2009; Sun et al., 2012). The principal doesn't have a role-specific evaluation. The MoE uses the same evaluation model and standards for all education districts, organizations, and employees.

Second, this research showed one of the purposes for evaluation in Saudi Arabia is to remove unqualified principals from their position. However, according to the literature, the main purposes of principal evaluation should be to improve principals' practice and performance and identify which principal performance expectations are being met (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Clifford & Ross, 2014; Davis et al., 2011; Fuller & Hollingworth, 2014; Lashway, 2003; Reeves, 2009; Thomas et al., 2000). This discrepancy could be the result of cultural differences as all existing research on this specific theme took place outside of Saudi Arabia; there were no studies set in Saudi Arabia about this theme at the time of this research.

Third, the literature focused on evaluation feedback that directly affects the professional development of principals. For example, several researchers (Lashway, 2003; Parylo et al., 2012; Reeves, 2009) suggested that principal evaluations should guide the pursuit of professional development. However, this study found an absence of feedback for guiding or encouraging professional development in the current evaluation process.

Finally, findings from this study indicate that most participants do not support including student achievement as part of the principal evaluation. However, there is much support in the existing research to include student achievement as part of principal evaluation (Cotton, 2003; Goldring et al., 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis, et al., 2010; Marzano et al., 2005; Sammons et al., 2011; Zepeda et al., 2014).

5.6. Gaps in Leadership Literature that this Study Fills

This study provides an understanding of the evaluation process and concepts as reflected in the views of fourteen Saudi high school principals. It begins to fill a gap in the literature about education leadership research in Saudi Arabia regarding principal evaluation. This is an important step as leadership research studies in Saudi Arabia are limited. Areas where the findings will be most useful are evaluation purposes, process, design, and principals development programs.

5.7. Differences in Findings Among Participants

The findings, when compared between participants', are mostly similar; however, there are some differences. The differences are limited to the areas purpose of evaluation, evaluation feedback, professional development, student achievement, formative and summative process, and whether the evaluation should change or only modified.

While all participants described that their evaluation lacks a clear purpose, differences emerged about the general goals of evaluation. For example, some participants indicated that one of the purposes is to meet a routine requirement; others stated the purpose is to remove unqualified principals from their position.

Secondly, there are differences in the findings about evaluation feedback. Although the majority of participants expressed that feedback is not part of their evaluation, a small number of participants communicated that feedback is part of their evaluation.

Third, while all participants described how to improve methods for evaluation processes, differences emerged about what the general process should be. For example, most of participants communicated that the evaluation should be as formative as possible in order to provide principals with ongoing feedback. Some of those participants expanded to say a summative process should be also conducted at the end of each year. Only a minority of participants expressed that evaluation should be only a formative process.

The fourth difference arose when participants described their perspectives and beliefs regarding specific desired components of evaluation. For example, there is a range of acceptance of the idea of including professional development as part of the principal evaluation. The majority of participants support this idea fully; however, other participants did not support including professional development within their evaluation.

The final difference emerged on the topic of whether the MoE should replace or only modify the current evaluation methods. While all participants provided suggestions for improving the principal evaluation criteria, differences emerged about whether the evaluation should change or not. Most of participants expressed that the current evaluation should change completely; however, a minority of participants expressed that modifying the current evaluation would be sufficient.

5.8. Further Research

This study provides an understanding of the principal evaluation process as described by high school principals in the Eastern Region in Saudi Arabia. My hope is that the results of this study lead to increased interest for further research about principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia.

The literature directly connected to Saudi Arabia was very limited at the time of this study; my search of the literature resulted in no studies directly on principal evaluation in Saudi literature. For that reason, research is still needed on the subject of principal evaluation that can continue to fill the gap in this area. My suggestions for further research based on this study's findings include:

- Future researchers should expand data collection to include more school districts and regions. The inclusion of schools outside the Eastern Region

would provide a larger sample population, which may lead to a deeper understanding of principal evaluation.

- Future researchers should consider including the perspectives of principals' evaluators as well as female principals. Researchers should explore different views this study did not address.
- Further study about principal evaluation should examine the growing number of evaluation models such as the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education VAL-ED and The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale PIMRS. The goal should be to identify a variety of tools that policymakers could adopt or modify to measure principal performance accurately.
- Future researchers should expand the scope of studies on formative assessment to include the views of supervisors and principals.
- Future researchers should explore the relationship between principals' leadership style in Saudi Arabia and its effects of student achievement.

5.9. Implications for Policy and Practice

Since the beginning of the 2011 education reform in Saudi Arabia, there has been a growing focus on school leaders' ability to affect and apply change. Many research studies have shown that an effective principal is one of the main factors contributing to the success of a school (Ginsberg & Thompson, 1992; Marzano et al., 2005; Murphy, Elliott, et al., 2010). As such, there is an increasing need for a more comprehensive principal evaluation that reflects the complex nature of a principal's work.

The findings of this study have many implications regarding the development and implementation of new principal evaluation systems in Saudi Arabia. I present the implications related to changing evaluation, improving evaluation criteria, improving evaluation procedures, and conducting educational research as suggestions for how to improve principals' evaluation in Saudi Arabia.

The first implication of this study is that the MoE needs to make changes to its current evaluation process. As highlighted in this study, the majority of high school principals view their evaluation as outdated; they are also highly dissatisfied with their evaluation. Indeed, the evaluation of principals appears to have little to do with their work. It is just a routine that has to be done by the school district and evaluation has no direct or indirect benefit to principals. The evaluation has no clear purpose, delivers no

professional feedback that can improve principals' practice, and does not influence their professional development.

As mentioned in chapter one, there appears to be no official evaluation related directly to the work of school principals; the findings confirm this. There does exist, however, an official evaluation called "Evaluation Form for Education Employees." The MoE uses this evaluation form to evaluate all education workers in Saudi Arabia, including teachers, trainers, supervisors, vice principals and principals.

Education policymakers in Saudi Arabia are constantly looking for ways to deal with the complex challenges facing public education by adopting education reform (1975, 2003, 2007 and 2011). Reform to improve the quality of education has thus far been a series of quick fixes such as small changes to textbooks, curricula, employment opportunities for teachers, and school supplies. Minor modifications also include limited in-service training; however, these changes have not reached enough people involved with the education system. None of the education reform has taken into consideration reform of leadership.

In order to meet the goals of the Saudi education reform, it is essential that principals become more effective. The MoE must establish evaluation standards that will increase evaluation accuracy, credibility, and reliability. Supervisors need to ensure they are knowledgeable about how to provide feedback and guide principals on professional development.

The second implication of this study is that change to the current MoE evaluation will need to address how to improve principal evaluation criteria. Designers of a new evaluation will need to take into account several factors that will increase the quality of the evaluation tools and methods. Based on the findings, I recommend that a new evaluation should meet the following standards:

- The design of the evaluation should be simple, clear and easy to carry out.
- The purpose of the evaluation should be clear. The purpose should include two elements, supporting improvement in principals' performance and accurately documenting actions of principals.
- The evaluation should be focused on improving principal professional development—for example, a section where principals must outline/describe their recent training (anything since the last evaluation) and a section where

principals must set goals for training to accomplish before their next evaluation. In order to ensure principals continue to improve their skills so they can meet and address new school challenges, professional development must be determined yearly.

- The evaluation components should include questions that assess actual principal performance as related to personal goals for improvement.
- Principal performance expectations need to be established and must be clearly outlined and aligned with the evaluation in order to determine principals' accountability and prevent conflict between supervisors and principals. When principal performance aligns with an evaluation, the evaluation can help identify areas of strength and areas for improvement. When working with principals, an evaluator should be able to accurately determine areas for development.
- The evaluation outcomes must include a formative process where regular feedback occurs throughout the year. Formative evaluation would help principals improve their skills. However, there is a need for a summative process to measure a principal's performance, and it should happen at the end of the year for accountability and quality control. It could also incorporate recognizing principals for meeting goals. It is important that a different person conduct the summative and formative processes when both are in place within one organization.
- Design should avoid a one-size-fits-all evaluation and must take into consideration differences between schools because of the wide variations in the nature of each school community and environment.
- School culture should be one of the evaluation components; a principal's ability to foster a positive school culture should be evaluated.
- Management skills should be included in principal evaluation as a single assessment component. Principals in the Saudi education system manage more than lead and therefore, focusing on management skills in their evaluation would help a school to become more successful.
- Creation of a new evaluation should include the ideas from principals as well as other members of the education community. Since principals have a more accurate picture of the day-to-day school operations, their feedback is crucial to build an effective evaluation, which can influence their practice.

The third implication of this study is that change to the evaluation system must be connected to improvements in the evaluation procedures; any new or modified evaluation tools and procedures should replace outdated versions.

Principal evaluation procedures have the potential to be a powerful tool to foster and ensure the success of the evaluation itself. Elements for an improved evaluation process according to this study's findings and the recommendations advocated in the literature include:

- Design should include multiple sources for collecting evaluation information. Sources may include school observations, improved personal interviews, and synchronic communication. To achieve a comprehensive overview of the work of the principals, each of procedure must be clearly defined. The description should include procedures, objectives, requirements, and the rating methods.
- Evaluation systems require a sufficient number of qualified educational supervisors for each school district so they have enough time to follow up on school principals' work.
- Supervisors must receive adequate evaluation training. Evaluators should be well-trained, monitored, and supported so that a new evaluation system is consistent in all schools. This will help to achieve effectiveness in principal practices and focus on school success outcomes.
- The number of school visits must increase. This will give principals more support, feedback, and direction to improve their work.
- Supervisors need to place more focus on the value of a visit. Before arriving at a school, they should plan and organize for the visit; this may lead to an increase in the in quality of principals' performance.

The final implication of this study is the MoE should focus on a distributed model. A distributed model may provide the most success. Such a model would strengthen principals' skills, which they would then use to strengthen the skills of other staff members. Supportive and shared leadership should include a principal who invites staff input on decision-making that addresses staff skills and school issues and challenges. This type of team approach would lead to increased positive outcomes. Finally, this would lead to a wider impact on the education system as a whole than more targeted reforms.

The MoE needs to adopt or build a uniform and highly objective evaluation standard that reflects on the performance of principals. It should measure multiple aspects and layers of principals' performance and focus on addressing evaluation criteria and procedures. Moreover, it must take into consideration the qualifications and training of evaluators as they are important tools in principal evaluation. Moreover, the best way to start building a new principal evaluation system in Saudi Arabia is by

adopting, and adapting, existing evaluation models such as the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education VAL-ED and The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale PIMRS. Additionally, the MoE must involve principals and other stakeholders in its creation. The MoE must pilot the new evaluation model to learn its strengths and weaknesses prior to implementation across the Kingdom. Finally, the MoE should explore all strategies that may help principals in their new role; this should include exploring the use of a distributed model for principals.

In this chapter, I provided a summary and analysis of the research and implications for policy and practice. I recognized the limitations and provided suggestions for further research. I gained a better understanding of current high school principals' evaluation procedures in Eastern Region in Saudi Arabia as well as discovered principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation. Finally, I compared these opinions and suggestions with the recommendations advocated in the literature.

5.10. Concluding Statement

Leithwood et al. (2004) stated, "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 5). Since school leadership is so important, rethinking the framework of principal evaluation in Saudi Arabia will set the stage for gaining a better understanding school leadership practices and improving education as a whole.

Evidence from this study established that there is no effective principal evaluation system across school districts in Saudi Arabia. The current evaluation is not in line with principals' work, and the evaluation does not consider how to improve principals' skills. In fact, when I compared the evaluation process for principals in Saudi Arabia with the existing literature, it became clear there is no true evaluation and assessment process for principals in Saudi Arabia; it is merely a routine procedure that was not even created for principals specifically.

However, leading a school is complex and challenging. I recommend strongly that the MoE act to make changes to its current evaluation process to meet the goals of the Saudi education reform. Changes to the current evaluation must be grounded in

research that highlights the characteristics of effective leadership behaviours. There is a need to invest in high quality professional development for the supervisor and school principals using best leadership practices based on research. The MoE must place its focus on creating an evaluation that is formative so that principals become more effective.

It is my belief that the MoE needs to place more emphasis on how principal leadership is measured and evaluated using the opinions and feedback from supervisors and principals about the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation system. Moreover, the MoE should work with supervisors and principals to develop a list of performance expectations, which must be clearly outlined and aligned with the evaluation. The efforts to determine and outline clear expectations of principals would be in the best interest of the MoE for reaching its long-term goals. I believe these steps will improve school principals and make them more active participants in their professional environment; these actions will ensure school principals have long-term success and increase the success of the educational process.

With all the efforts of education reform in Saudi Arabia, and with the hope for using education as the instrument to achieve the goals of the Saudi Vision 2030, it is time to improve principal performance through accurate evaluation. The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia needs to develop a principal evaluation framework that reflects the views from the field of education and that can inform and influence the reform agenda in meaningful ways. This will advance the profession and make sense of the complex nature of the job of a principal. Thus, while developing a comprehensive principals' evaluation approach may be a hard mission, it is critical to improve the quality of principals in Saudi Arabia's education system.

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Appendix A.

Standard Evaluation Format for Education Employees

First: preliminary information:

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|------|
| School Name | Grades Levels | School District | Area |
| | | | |

| | | | | | |
|------|------------|--------|-----------|---------------|--------------------|
| Name | Nationally | Salary | Job Title | Date of Birth | Year of Experience |
| | | | | | |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|------|----------------|------------------|------|
| Level of Educational | Date | Specialization | Training Courses | Date |
| | | | | |

Second: evaluation elements:

| | | The Items | Upper Limit for Ratings | Grade |
|--------------------|----|---|-------------------------|-----------|
| functionality | 1 | Using Traditional Arabic | 6 | |
| | 2 | Ability to Make Decisions | 5 | |
| | 3 | Cognitive Growth | 5 | |
| | 4 | Ability of Development of School Plans | 5 | |
| | 5 | Work Attendance | 7 | |
| | 6 | Organization Skills | 7 | |
| | 7 | Knowledge of Educational Foundations | 5 | |
| | 8 | Ability to Organize School Activities | 5 | |
| | 9 | Ability to Monitor Staff | 7 | |
| | 10 | Understanding of The Integration of Education | 5 | |
| | 11 | Respect for The School Environment | 6 | |
| | 12 | Knowledge of Lesson Preparation | 5 | |
| | | Total | 68 | |
| personal qualities | 13 | Communication Skills | 4 | |
| | 14 | Good Conduct | 4 | |
| | 15 | Sense of Respects of Responsibility | 4 | |
| | 16 | Accepts Guidance | 4 | |
| | 17 | General Behaviour | 4 | |
| | | Total | 20 | |
| Relationship | 18 | Relationship with The Superiors | 4 | |
| | 19 | Relationship with The Coworkers | 4 | |
| | 20 | Relationship with The Students & Parents. | 4 | |
| | | | Total | 12 |

Third: evaluation scores

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Final Overall Score | Functionality | Personal Qualities | Relationship |
| | | | |

| | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|
| | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
| Employee Ratings | 90 To 100 | 80 To 89 | 70 To 79 | 60 To 69 | Less Than 60 |

Appendix B.

Interview Protocol Template

Name of Study: Evaluation of School Principals: Responses from Education Leaders in Saudi Arabia.

Date: / / 2015

Location:

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

Thank you for coming today

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine the current evaluation process as experienced by high school principals by inspecting the effectiveness of evaluation tools and practices used in the evaluation of principals in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it will compare the evaluation process of principals as it is currently set up in Saudi Arabia with the findings described in the literature about what constitutes effective evaluation. Moreover, I will examine principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation and compared them with the recommendations advocated in the literature.

My main goal is to better understand the perceived effects of the current evaluation in Saudi Arabia on principals' practices in order to offer recommendations to education leaders that are based on high school principals' experiences and existing literature about evaluations to achieve more focused outcomes.

Purpose of the Discussion

The purpose of today's discussion is to learn about your experiences with the Saudi evaluation process and hear your opinions about the criteria of evaluation and how it can be improved.

Informed Consent

Please sign the Informed Consent Form (Appendix C) which states:

Key points:

Your identity will not be linked to your responses. That is, I will not report any information that could potentially make you identifiable, like your name or personal characteristics.

The data I collect will remain confidential only and the faculty supervisor and I will have access.

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

You can choose to leave or not answer any question should you feel uncomfortable at any time during our discussion.

Do you have any questions about the informed consent document?

Ensure participants retains a copy.

Collect:

I have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover in principals' evaluation.

I am interested in principals' evaluation and I would like you to discuss your experiences with the evaluation process here in Saudi Arabia.

The main point of interview is to have you describe an evaluation process you have experiences and your opinion about that process to build an effective principals evaluation frameworks for Saudi schools.

To facilitate note-taking, I would like to audio digitally recording our conversation today. The audio will be destroyed after they are transcribed.

I will use pseudonyms in the transcripts rather than names in the transcripts.

As I reflect on, summarize, and report about what you have shared, I will never share information that would that would identify you.

When all interviews are complete, you will receive a written transcript of our interview via email. I will ask you to review the transcript to ensure that you feel it captures what we talked about. If there are any elements you believe are not true to our conversation, I would like you to make changes so it better reflects your ideas and then return the transcript with changes to me.

Do you have any questions at this time?

6- Review of background context of the Saudi evaluation from.

Research Questions

Main questions

What are high school principals' perceptions of the process and criteria for their evaluation?

What are principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature?

Interview Content

| Research Question One | | What are high school principals' perceptions about the process and criteria for their evaluation? | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| # | a priori themes | Probing Question | |
| 1 | Purpose of evaluation | A | In your own words, can you define the purpose of principal evaluation in your district? |
| | | B | Is the evaluation process consistent with the purpose and definition you specified? |

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| 2 | Characteristics of evaluation | A | Does principal evaluation capture the performance of principals? |
| | | B | Do you feel that the characteristics by which performance is judged are clearly defined and accurate indicators of ability? |
| | | C | Do you believe that principals fully understand the organizational outcomes they are meant to accomplish? |
| | | D | Do you think principals understand the evaluation criteria evaluators use with respect to achieving specific goals and objectives? |
| 3 | Feedback from evaluation | A | How would you describe your evaluation feedback experience? |
| | | B | Does the assessment tool provide information that the evaluator can use to offer constructive and positive feedback? |
| | | C | Do you have a clear understanding of the expectations and professional skills required for your job? |
| | | D | Are meetings held between evaluators and principals as soon as possible following an evaluation? |
| | | E | Are professional growth goals related to deficiencies noted in prior evaluations? |
| | | F | Describe what resources and support your district currently provides principals to improve their performance as a school leader based on evaluations? |
| 4 | Evaluation tools | A | How would you describe the tools used during evaluation? |
| | | B | What kinds of methods are you currently evaluated with (interviews, observations, etc.)? |
| | | C | Is accumulating data for principal evaluation an ongoing process throughout the year? |
| | | D | How often are you evaluated (yearly, monthly, etc.)? |

| Research Question Two | What are principals' opinions on how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature? | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| 5 | Desired components of evaluation (Principals' opinions about the components of evaluation) | <p>A According to much of the research literature, principals should demonstrate professional growth. Can you talk about whether you feel professional growth should be taken into account on principals' evaluation?</p> <p>B According to much of the research literature, principals should focus on creating a positive school culture in order to succeed in reaching school goals. Can you talk about whether you feel that school culture should be take into account on principals' evaluation?</p> <p>C According to much of the research literature, many researchers confirm that student achievement is deeply affected by the principal that leads a school. Can you talk about whether you feel that student achievement should be take into account on principals' evaluation?</p> <p>D According to much of the research literature from Saudi Arabia, principals should demonstrate and have school management skills. Can you talk about whether you feel that the current system assesses this? Do you think it should be included in a principal evaluation?</p> |
| 6 | Strategies that Support or Improve Evaluation Criteria | <p>Can you give your opinion about how to improve the criteria used in evaluation? Example:</p> <p>A According to much of the research literature, many of education policy maker around the world applied change to the principal evaluation. Do you think it should happen here?</p> <p>B What discrepancies do you think exist between the expectations of principals and the MoE's purpose for using an evaluation tool? Do you think including an outline of evaluation purposes would improve the quality of the evaluation?</p> <p>C Do you think principals' performance expectations should be outlined clearly for principals? Do you think providing clear guidelines for evaluation would improve the quality evaluation?</p> |

- D In looking at the existing literature, there are many models that focus on the development and efficacy of principal evaluation and assessment instruments. In your opinion, should the MoE adopt one of them? If so, how might the MoE apply these models?
- E Do you think including principals in the creation or modification of their evaluation instrument would improve quality evaluation?
- F Do you have any suggestions for how to improve evaluation quality?

7 Strategies that Support or Improve Data Collection

Can you give your opinion about strategies to improve the methods used in evaluation?

- A What do you think is more helpful for improving principal evaluation, a formative or summative process?
- B Why do you think formative is better than summative?
Why do you think summative is better formative?
- C Do you think the number of school visits from the evaluator should increase?
- D Do you think the methods for evaluation data collection should be improved? If yes, how might the MoE improve these methods?

Do you have any suggestions regarding the principal evaluation criteria, procedures, or methods?

Appendix C.

Participant Recruitment Meeting

(10-15 minutes)

Date:

Procedures of first meeting:

Introduction:

First, I would thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me today. I understand that you are very busy so will make sure our meeting is no longer than 15 minutes.

My name is Khaled Alajlan and I am a doctoral student at Simon Fraser University. As part of my doctoral program, I'm conducting a research study on the current evaluation process of high school principals in Saudi Arabia. While there is much research on this topic in Canada and the United States, Saudi Arabia lacks information about this important area. My goal is to gain insight into how high school principals are evaluated in Saudi Arabia and compare the evaluation process of principals as it is currently set up in Saudi Arabia and the literature on evaluation best practice. My hope is that this research study will shed light on how evaluation takes place, which is something important in our rapidly changing society in Saudi Arabia. Your descriptions, comments and opinions about the current evaluation system will help me in my research.

Because of your expertise/experience, I would like to include your perspective as I pursue this research topic. Your experience and responses to the principals' evaluation process can contribute much to the understanding and extend knowledge in principals' evaluation.

Therefore, I would like to formally invite you to be part of my research study. Before you decide, let me tell you a little bit more about what it would entail.

Our interview will last no longer than one hour.

While we are together, I will begin by asking you to work with me to answer some questions regarding my research goals. Your information will provide an understanding of how evaluations are conducted and used in the Saudi education system.

At the end of the data collection, I will send you my interpretation and interview transcript of our work together for your review and feedback to ensure I understand your comments correctly.

If you agree to participate, I ensure you that your contributions will remain completely confidential. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study with respect to participants' names and contributions to the extent allowed by the SFU ethics department. I will use pseudonyms in place of your name. All data will be read only by the principal investigator of this study and the faculty supervisor. As I reflect on, summarize and report on what you have shared, I will never share information that would allow you to be identified. To facilitate note-taking, I will audio digitally record our conversation. Only I will be privy to the audio recordings, which will be destroyed after they are transcribed.

Do you have any questions? Are you willing to help me with my research?

Notes to self/not part of protocol

If yes, I will check the time. If I am out of time, I will schedule the interview and leave as soon as possible. If there is time remaining, I will bring out the informed consent form.

If the answer is no, I will try to find out why to help minimize future "no's" from other potential participants. If the reasons for saying no are based on any misunderstanding of what I am asking, I will readdress those areas and ensure that the potential participant fully understands the process and how confidentiality will be maintained.

Thank you.

| Participant Name | Date of interview | Location |
|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| | | |
| Notes | | |
| | | |

Appendix D. Informed Consent by Participants in a Research Study

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent by Participants in a Research Study

Research Title – Evaluation of School Principals: Responses from Education
Leaders in Saudi Arabia

Principal Investigator – Khaled Alajlan

Faculty Supervisor Dr. Daniel Laitsch

If you have any additional questions about the study, please contact the
researcher, Khaled Alajlan, by email at khaleda@sfu.ca or phone at or
contact the researcher supervisor, Dr. Daniel Laitsch, by email at@sfu.ca or
phone at

The University and the researcher conducting this research study subscribe to
the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort,
and safety of participants.

Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in
research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions,
concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please
contact the Director of the Office of Research Ethics by email at@sfu.ca or phone
at 778-.....

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which
describes the procedures, whether there are possible risks and benefits of this research
study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the
documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the
study.

Research Title: Evaluation of School Principals: Responses from Education Leaders in Saudi Arabia

Principal Investigator Name: Khaled Alajlan

Investigator Department: Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Having been asked to participate in the research study named above, I certify that I have read the procedures specified in the "Information Document for Participants in the Research Study" describing the study. I understand the procedures to be used in this study and the personal risks to me by taking part in the study described below:

Goals/purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine the current evaluation process as experienced by high school principals. Furthermore, my goal was to describe principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods the MoE uses in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature. The main research questions for this study are:

What are high school principals' perceptions of the process and criteria for their evaluation? And, what are principals' opinions about how to improve the criteria and methods used in evaluation compared with the recommendations advocated in the literature?

Volunteer to participate

You are free to decide if you wish to participate in the project and you can withdraw at any time either verbally or by written request to the principal investigator. Furthermore, please note that you can refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer, and you have the right to end the interview at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, collected data will be removed immediately and destroyed, including the Consent Forms and any other documentation associated with this study.

What is expected of the participants?

You have been invited to participate in this study because of your experience in a school administration position. The interview will take 45 minutes to one hour to

complete. You will be asked to discuss your experience as it relates to my research topic. The interview will take place in your regular work office or an alternative location of your preference.

The interview is designed to encourage you to talk about your past and present experience. The interview will focus on your previous experience, on details of your current experience and it will include a reflection on the meaning of your current experiences. I will write notes during the interview. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded digitally. If you do not wish to be audio recorded, I will write notes regarding the information discussed during the interview. I will give you the interview questions in person at the participant recruitment meeting or I will send them to you by email before the formal interview. Please note that email is not considered a confidential medium, and as such I will not be collecting data using e-mail. In the event that I need more than one interview, I will conduct the interview by telephone or by internet using a secure medium such as Skype. Telephone to Telephone and Telephone Skype is not considered to be a confidential medium. Skype to Skype is considered to be a confidential medium.

Security of Data

All data from audio-recorded interviews will be kept in a secure location under my direct control. I will hire someone to transcribe the interviews directly into word documents (.docx). I will destroy audio recordings as soon as they are transcribed. All transcripts will be kept in a password protect folder on the hard drive of my password-protected personal computer. If I print out any transcripts, they will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home in Burnaby, B.C., Canada. Only I will have access to this cabinet. I will keep all data for a period of two years from the date of collection, at which point it will be destroyed including the consent forms and any other documentation associated with this study. Other countries may not have the same confidentiality data rules and regulations.

Anonymity/confidentiality

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study with respect to the names and contributions participants make to the extent allowed by the law. I will use pseudonyms in place of the names of places and participants. Data containing personal

information will only be available to the principal investigator of this study and the faculty supervisor.

Benefits of the study to the participants

There is no direct benefit to you as a participant of this study. You will not receive financial remuneration or author's rights. However, your participation will not only improve the body of literature, which directly influences the field of education in Saudi Arabia, but will also help with suggestions and guidelines for principals' evaluators on how to improve their evaluation practice.

Furthermore, it may help determine and improve evaluation criteria for future principal assessments.

Risks of the study

The risks to you are minimal and do not exceed what they would be in the normal course of your regular day.

Permission obtained from organization/school

I have sought and received permission from the General Directorate of Education in the Eastern Province in Saudi Arabia to conduct this study.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time. I also understand that refusal to participate or withdrawal after agreeing to participate will have no adverse effects on my employment with the Ministry of Education. Lastly, I understand that I may register any complaint with the Director of the Office of Research Ethics.

Jeff Director, Office of Research Ethics, Simon Fraser University

8888 University Drive, Multi-Tenant Facility Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6

The results will be used for the purpose of my dissertation. Participants may obtain copies of the results of this study upon its completion by contacting the researcher named below:

Khaled Alajlan

Khaleda@sfu.ca Canada Cellphone Saudi Cellphone

Graduate Student

Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

I may obtain copies of the results of this study upon its completion by contacting the researcher named below:

Khaled Alajlan

Khaleda@sfu.ca

Canada Cellphone Saudi Cellphone

Graduate Student Faculty of Education Simon Fraser University

I understand the risks and contributions of my participation in this study and agree to participate. The participant and witness shall fill in this area. Please print legibly.

Participant Last Name: Participant First Name: Participant Contact Information:

Participant Signature

Date (use format MM/DD/YYYY)

Appendix E. Arabic translated of the consent form

معلومات أولية للمشاركة في دراسة تقييم مديري المدارس

افيدكم انا خالد بن صالح العجلان احد زملائكم من منسوبي الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بالمنطقة الشرقية انني حالياً طالب دراسات عليا (دكتوراه) في كندا جامعة سيمون فريز وذلك في مجال القيادة التربوية. محتوى هذا الايميل عبارة عن تعريف بأهداف بحثي ومادور المشاركين في الدراسة؟

عنوان البحث: تقييم مديري المدارس : استجابات من مدراء مدارس التعليم العام في المملكة العربية السعودية .
(Evaluation of School Principals: Responses from Education Leaders in Saudi Arabia)

المشاركون: مدراء المدارس بالمنطقة الشرقية

الهدف العام من الدراسة:

الهدف من هذا البحث : تحقيق بحثي متقدم مع مدراء المدارس خلال خبرتهم المهنية فيما يتعلق بعملية التقييم التي يخضعون لها وذلك من خلال:

- تحديد ودراسة سير عملية تقييم مدراء المدارس في المنطقة الشرقية.
- مقارنة عملية تقييم مديري المدارس كما هي حالياً في المملكة العربية السعودية مع نماذج التقييم الفعالة لمدراء المدارس الموجودة في السياق العالمي من خلال الاراء التربوية و الأبحاث حول عملية التقييم. بصفة عامة يهدف البحث الى معرفة فعالية نموذج التقييم الحالي ومدى مواءمة عناصره مع العمل الحقيقي لمدير المدرسة. و البحث عبارة عن بحث نوعي . وهو دراسة يمكن القيام بها أو إجرائها في السياق او الموقف الطبيعي، حيث أنني سأقوم ان شاء الله بجمع البيانات عن طريق مقابلات مطولة مع عينة من مدراء المدارس ، ثم سوف اقوم بتحليلها بطريقة استقرائية مع التركيز على المعاني التي يذكرها المشاركون مما يزيد فهمنا لنظام تقييم مدراء المدارس وفعاليتها بناء على وجهة نظر المدراء انفسهم. . وهذا النوع من البحث يعتمد على سؤال رئيسي و عدة اسئلة فرعية أو اي اسئلة جديدة مناسبة لموضوع البحث وذلك حسب مسار المقابلات الشخصية مع العينة المختارة.

سؤال البحث الرئيس:

- (1) ما هي تصورات مديري المدارس لعملية التقييم ومعاييرها؟
- (2) ما هو مستوى الاتساق القائم بين ممارسات التقييم الرئيسة في السعودية وبين ماهو معمول به في ممارسات التقييم الرئيسة الفعلية في المملكة العربية السعودية؟
مع مجموعة من محاور سوف تشملها المقابلة منها:

i. عملية التقييم

كيف تصف العملية المستخدمة لتقييم أداء مديري المدارس؟

- ✓ ماهو الغرض من التقييم الرئيسي من وجهة نظرك؟
- ✓ هل عملية التقييم المعمول بها في المدارس تتفق مع الغرض والتعريف الذي حددته؟
- ✓ هل تشعر أن عملية التقييم المستخدمة حالياً من قبل وزارة التربية تميز بدقة ما يفعله المدراء؟

i. التغذية الراجعة

كيف تصف تجربتك بعد عملية التقييم؟

- ✓ هل تشعر بأن هناك جودة في التغذية الراجعة؟
- ✓ هل الاجتماعات التي عقدت بين المقيمين ومديري المدارس بعد عملية التقييم مفيدة؟
- ✓ هل ملاحظات أوجه القصور في التقييمات السابقة تعالج في عملية التقييم الجديدة؟

ii. أدوات التقييم

كيف تصف الأدوات المستخدمة أثناء التقييم؟

- ✓ ما هي أنواع أو أساليب التقييم (مقابلات، ملاحظات، الخ)؟
- ✓ هل عملية التقييم عملية مستمرة على مدار السنة؟
- ✓ كيف يتم تقييمك غالباً (سنوياً شهرية وغير ذلك)؟

iii.

آراء مدراء المدارس حول المعايير المستخدمة في التقييم

- ✓ هل تعتقد ان مدراء المدارس على دراية وفهم لمعايير التقييم و استخدامها وذلك فيما يتعلق بتحقيق الاهداف والغايات التربوية؟
- ✓ وفقاً لكثير من الآراء التربوية و الأبحاث حول عملية تقييم مدراء المدارس، انه يجب أن يشمل التقييم معيار القيادة التعليمية. يمكنك التحدث حول ما إذا كانت تشعر بأن النظام الحالي يشمل هذا؟ مثلاً (الإدارة التنظيمية، الخطة التعليمية تقييم الجودة تطوير الموظفين)
- ✓ وفقاً لكثير من الآراء التربوية و الأبحاث حول عملية تقييم مدراء المدارس ، ينبغي أن يعمل مدير المدرسة على خلق مناخ وثقافة تعليمية ايجابية - داخل وخارج المدرسة. مثلاً (بناء مناخ آمن وصحي المدرسة التي تركز على وتدعم تعلم الطالب والنجاح - انتشار الممارسات القيادية- العلاقات الاجتماعية الداعمة)
- ✓ وفقاً لكثير من الآراء التربوية و الأبحاث حول عملية تقييم مدراء المدارس يوجد مايسمى تقييم مدير المدرسة وفقاً لتحصيل الطلاب الدراسي: هل يمكنك التحدث حول ما إذا كانت تشعر بأن النظام الحالي يقيم مدير المدرسة بناء على نمو الطلاب التحصيلي؟
- وفقاً لكثير من أدبيات الأبحاث، حول النمو المهني والتعلم، هل يمكنك التحدث حول ما إذا كانت تشعر بأن النظام الحالي يقيم هذا؟

ملاحظات عامة:

- المشاركة في هذا البحث هي اختيارية.
- مدة المقابلة سوف تكون 45 دقيقة.
- كل المعلومات التي سوف تقدمها تعتبر معلومات خاصة ولن يطلع عليها غير المختصين بالدراسة.
- تستطيع ان تنسحب من الدراسة في أي وقت تشاء كما لك الحق في عدم الاجابة عن اي سؤال يرد من الباحث.
- للمشارك الحق بعد انتهاء المقابلات الرضا في استخدامها للبحث دون الحاجة الى ابداء الاسباب.
- في هذا البحث في توسيع المعرفة في عملية شكراً مقدماً لقبولك المشاركة معي في هذا البحث العلمي. لن نتوقف مشاركتك بتقييم مدراء المدارس في السعودية مما سوف تساهم وتثري المعلومات في مجال القيادة التربوية لكن أيضاً سوف تساعد

لمزيد من الاستفسارات حول هذه مشاركتك في تطوير مفهوم لنظام تقييم حيوي يساعد في رفع مستوى القيادة في المدارس .
الدراسة رجاء استخدم معلومات الاتصال ادناه: خالد بن صالح العجلان

بريد الكتروني // هاتف // Khaleda@sfu.ca

Appendix F.

Letter of approval to conduct this study from the MoE in Saudi Arabia

الرقم: ٢٧٣٦٣٥٢٤
التاريخ: ١٨/٢/١٤٣٧هـ
المرفقات: ٣



المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم
(٢٨٠)
الإدارة العامة للتعليم بالمنطقة الشرقية
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

| | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| القيم: المواطنة- الإلتقان- العدل- العمل بروح الفريق- التنمية الذاتية- المسؤولية الاجتماعية | الرسالة: تقديم خدمات تربوية وتعليمية ذات جودة عالية وفق معايير عالمية بمشاركة مجتمعية | الرؤية: الريادة لبنا، جبل مبدع |
|--|---|--------------------------------|

الى : المكرمين/ مديري مكاتب التعليم (شرق الدمام – غرب الدمام –الخبر) حفظهم الله
من : مديرة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
بشأن: تسهيل مهمة الباحث / خالد العجلان

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، ، ،

بناءً على موافقتنا بشأن تسهيل مهمة الباحث / خالد بن صالح العجلان طالب الدراسات العليا لمرحلة الدكتوراه من جامعة سيمون فريزر بكندا ، والذي يجري بحثاً بعنوان (تقييم مديري المدارس : استجابات من مدراء مدارس التعليم العام في المملكة العربية السعودية) ، حيث يتطلب البحث اجراء مقابلة على عينة من مديري المدارس. عليه فلا مانع من تسهيل مهمته ، علما ان التطبيق سيكون من قبل الباحث نفسه وفق اللوائح و الأنظمة خلال سنة من تاريخه .

يسعدني شكركم على عنايتكم وتجاوبكم مع ظروف الباحث.
والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، ، ،

نوال بنت عبد الرحمن التيسان



م/الجبر
١٤٣٧/٢/١٨هـ