



A Proposal to Enhance the Role of Educational Administration Departments in Saudi Universities in the Professional Development of School Leaders

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This study aimed to uncover several findings relating to the professional development of school leaders in an educational setting. This included (1) the degree of appreciation of the heads of school leadership departments within education regarding the importance of the role of the educational administration departments in the professional development of school leaders; (2) the degree of their appreciation upon the importance of the proposed programs to improve this role; (3) the degree of appreciation of specialists in management and educational leadership to the role of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders; and (4) presenting a proposal for enhancing the role of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders. This study employed a descriptive survey method using two questionnaires. The first was applied to all the heads of the school leadership departments in education in Saudi Arabia. The second was applied to 70 specialists in educational administration and leadership in Saudi universities. The results of the study revealed a high degree of appreciation by the heads of the school leadership departments, and a very high degree of appreciation by the specialists upon the importance of the educational departments' role in the professional development of school leaders, as well as their appreciation for the proposed programs to enhance this role. In light of



these results, a proposal was presented to enhance the role of the educational administration departments in enveloping the school leaders in public education schools.

Keywords: Departments of educational administration, Professional development, School leaders, Public education schools.

Introduction

Today's world is witnessing an unprecedented trend in the accelerated orientation towards the future, in all aspects of life. It has led societies to take care of the tools supporting this trend, and since leadership is the most important variable in institutional work, it is necessary to direct the greatest effort towards developing its competencies within the field of leadership.

In this context, Şenol (2019) believes that the role of educational leaders has witnessed many changes due to the diverse needs and expectations of stakeholders in education. This has increased the need for the continuous professional development of educational leaders, to help them to perform their new roles. Thus, it has become critical to their continued success. Additionally, educational leaders who participate in professional development programs are distinguished by updating and expanding their knowledge and improving their work performance to carry out the best educational practices in schools.

Hence, Al-Sahli (2019) indicated that school conditions responsible for the teacher's underperformance can be attributed to a group of factors. The most important is the school leadership, which confirms the importance of training programs focussed on familiarising leaders with the tasks and responsibilities of schoolwork, and how to use the available capabilities to make the educational process a success.

The increasing importance of the school leader as a major factor in educational attainment has led to the emergence of major research and training programs in many countries of the world. This has required an increased attention to leadership skills development programs for managers, in an effort to provide a deeper understanding of this area (Cáceres, 2019). Therefore, the studies of Day et al. (2016), Hernández-Castilla and Murillo (2017), and Sun et al. (2017) on school improvement projects confirmed that one of the main success factors is the sustainable professional growth of educational leadership.

Accordingly, the subject of professional development for educational leaders in general and school, in particular, has received great attention from intellectuals, researchers, and those in charge of developing educational systems worldwide. As a result of the pivotal role that school



leadership plays in achieving the quality of the educational system, school leadership is the most important component of the educational system.

The Concept of Leaders Professional Development

The Glossary of Education (Partnership, 2010) stated that the term, ‘professional growth’, in the field of education is used to refer to a variety of specialised training, formal education or advanced professional learning, which aims to help administrators and teachers to improve their professional knowledge, skills, and effectiveness.

McCauley et al. (2010) identified the professional growth of leaders as the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes. Furthermore, the professional development of school leaders is defined as a dynamic concept that means continuous lifelong training to develop and improve the efficiency of the academic and vocational school leaders. In addition, raising the level of their performance to improve the educational process through seminars, conferences, workshops, training programs, and activities available inside and outside the educational institution, meanwhile providing the opportunity for development through self-evaluation (Al-Daalan, 2019).

The beginnings of the concept of professional development for leaders was considered at Harvard University, noting that the fundamental improvement of the educational process requires the redevelopment of manpower. Thus, American universities preceded the European, and Arab universities in adopting the idea of professional development for their employees. This almost contributed to agreement on the importance of professional development, in the sense that universities prepare human capital, including leaders, which represents one of the foundations for progress in modern societies (Al-Asmar, 2009). The following sections outline the most prominent experiences of developed countries in this field, taking advantage of what was mentioned in the study of Al-Qahtani (2015).

The American Experience

In the United States of America (USA), universities focus on the diversity of types, areas, and methods of professional development for educational leaders. The University of Texas, through Kellogg College (KelloggUniversity, 2020), offers several programs for developing educational leaders to educate, equip, and enhance the capacities to build their educational organisations. This is achieved by providing them with substantial skills, and knowledge. For example, the ‘Senior Management Program’.



The University of Texas also offers two professional development projects for school leaders. Firstly, the Kellogg Leadership Project, which offers many different programs, and provides leaders with many skills, and knowledge to create lasting value for these organisations (KelloggUniversity, 2020). Secondly, the A&M System Project, which aims to identify individuals who have a high potential for advanced leadership and professional development.

The English Experience

Most universities in England offer multiple development programs for all groups, including educational leaders. Such universities include Sandford University, which seeks to develop leaders through the Strategic Leadership Program that is presented through the Business School (SandfordUniversity, 2020a; SandfordUniversity, 2020b).

Cambridge University also offers the Fellowship Program by introducing an advanced examination of theoretical and practice aspects of leadership and management art (UniversityofCambridge, 2020). The program also contributes to empowering and supporting leaders with advanced work strategies.

The Australian experience

Many Australian universities provide numerous training programs for educational leaders. For example, Victoria University, where the Ministry of Education provided a large grant to support professional development programs for educational leaders for newly appointed and current affiliates in educational systems (VictoriaUniversity, 2020).

Furthermore, Melbourne University offers programs to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of educational leaders in coordination with educational departments, where the latter requires the leaders of educational organisations to pass this type of program to become educational leaders (TheUniversityofMelbourne, 2020).

Despite the great attention that many developed countries give to develop school educational leadership, in the Arab countries, the attention directed towards developing school leaders is still below the expected level. The UNESCO (2016) report indicated that in most education systems within Arab countries, school leadership is a pre-retirement bonus for teachers, as there are no policies that require school leaders to have leadership qualifications. The report also stresses the importance of improving leadership training and program design to comply with national policies related to education, employment, and professional development, so that training is provided before and after employment.

Likewise, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Al-Sahli (2018) believes that the role of colleges of education in Saudi universities in developing the performance of educational leaders, including



school leaders, remains unclear. In addition, is the absence of visions and strategic plans that define the roles of the colleges of education and their responsibilities towards community service.

The Government of the KSA provides concrete consideration to the issue of leadership development and the attention is directed towards preparing leaders in the Ministry of Education, It is one of the targeted government agencies from the “King Salman Program for Human Resources Development”, which is intended to raise the quality of performance and productivity of human resources in the Kingdom, develop their career capabilities, prepare and build leaders, and ensures the achievement of the following goals:

1. Raising the quality of government employee performance and productivity at work.
2. Development of the work environment.
3. Establishing clear policies and procedures to implement the concept of human resources.
4. Preparing and building second-row leaders (MinistryofCivilService, 2019).

Based on the vision of the KSA (2030), the Ministry of Education adopted a program to prepare and qualify leaders. The program aimed at developing educational leaders and raising their efficiency and readiness, and preparing them for new leadership positions. This is accomplished through several steps, which have been technically programmed through an electronic portal that includes filtering tools and a leadership learning platform (MinistryofEducation, 2018).

According to a document issued by the National Centre for Measurement (2017), the professional standards for school principals focusses on leading the school in a professional manner. Wherein, standards that are in line with international standards are achieved within the framework of local requirements for all aspects of the educational process, and these standards impose upon principals to take a leadership role.

This document was prepared in light of the following: the Education Policy for the KSA, the School Leadership Manual (School Development Program/Development Project), the educational standards document for the elements of the educational process (Ministry of Education/Public Administration of Measurement and Evaluation), and the national professional standards for teachers in the KSA, as well as the powers granted for the principal of the school from the Ministry of Education, and global models for professional standards for school principals. The following summarises these criteria, as presented in the document on the professional standards of school principals, where the National Centre for Measurement identified six areas that include 17 criteria for selecting school leaders, as shown in Table 1.

In view of the criteria contained in the professional standards document for public school leaders and principals, there is an overlap between the standards mentioned in each of the six areas. The researcher attempted to focus on a set of professional competencies necessary for school leaders, taking advantage of what was mentioned in this document after analysing its fields, the criteria listed under each field, and the indicators necessary to achieve each of these criteria.

Meanwhile, focussing on professional competencies that are compatible with modern trends in leadership that can be improved in the school leaders, according to the fields mentioned in Table 1. The most important efforts made by the Ministry of Education in the development of educational and school leaders will continue to have limited impact in developing the professional competencies of school leaders, as the program for preparing and qualifying leaders is directed primarily towards those with high performance.

Table 1: Fields and criteria for selecting school leaders as defined by the National Centre for Measurement.

#	Field	Criteria
1	Environmental organization of schoolwork	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides a supportive and stimulating work environment. 2. Considers safety requirements.
2	School leadership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leads school planning process. 2. Leads the change processes. 3. Exercises the role of the evaluator supervisor. 4. Know the most prominent theories and modern trends in school administration. 5. Leads the school of the future. 6. Leads the school self-evaluation processes.
3	Support and development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supports education operations. 2. Improves and develops the learning environment.
4	Leading school self-assessments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interested in developing his knowledge and professional skills. 2. There is a professional and organizational environment that encourages development and improvement.
5	Participation and communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adheres to the principle of participation and expanding opportunities for dialogue and discussion. 2. Proficient in communicating with the school and the local community.
6	Professional values and regulations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Adheres to Islamic values and principles. 4. Knowledge of administrative and educational regulations. 5. Leads education as an ethical profession.

Moreover, the program design focusses on the technical aspect that relies on distance training, which limits its degree of effectiveness in the field. This is the case in the school management test project, which is limited in impact because its goal is confined to measuring the knowledge, skills, and values that must be available to school leaders. These programs did not exceed the level of preparation to the implementation stage. Additionally, the topic of professional development for school leaders has received much attention from many researchers. The following is an outline of several prominent studies which have addressed the topic of professional development for school leaders.



Daniëls et al. (2019)

The Study of Daniëls et al. (2019), which was a survey in Belgium, summarised the relevant literature in school leadership research. It found several professional development activities for school principals, such as:

1. Professional development curricula must be carefully designed and consider the individual development needs of the leader.
2. The professional development of school principals must be experimental.
3. Knowing the impact of leadership development activities on their practices.
4. Learning through networking and group counselling.

Hancock et al. (2019)

The Study of Hancock et al. (2019), which is a comparative study between Germany, and the USA, examined the impact of nine work-related factors that affected the motivation of 145 German principals, and 134 principals in the USA to become school leaders. Through survey data and successive interviews, the researchers identified similarities and differences in the factors that shaped the motivation of managers in both countries.

Al-Dawood (2018)

The study of Al-Dawood (2018) sought to identify the degree of achieving the professional competencies mentioned in the standard of professional competencies for school principals, in order to determine the appropriate training needed to qualify for the professional tests organised by the National Centre for Measurement. The researcher used a questionnaire which was applied to 36 supervisors. The results showed that the study members agree on the degree of achievement of professional competencies among educational leaders in schools, with an average of 3.55 out of five. The study concluded that the most important training programs that leaders require are courses related to the areas of environmental organisation of schoolwork, school leadership, support and development, and school self-assessment.

Nooruddin and Bhamani (2019)

A study by Nooruddin and Bhamani (2019) was conducted in Pakistan to explore the importance of school leaders' participation in continuous professional development by using the case study method. An elite school was chosen as a case sample, and then two school leaders (the principal and supervisor) were selected as a targeted sample for the study. The data analysis revealed that school leaders are pursuing their professional growth in a very systematic way, and directed towards the administrative process. The study also identified the basic characteristics of effective professional development, with effective strategies for policymakers, school leadership, school administrators, and teachers on how to engage in ongoing career development efforts.



Radwan (2017)

The study of Radwan (2017) aimed to identify the role of education offices in achieving the professional development of educational leaders. This was explored from the point of view of the directors and deputies in the UNRWA schools, which was 150 individuals. The study concluded that the degree of appreciation of the study sample individuals for the role of education offices in achieving professional development for educational leaders was large.

Kalooly (2014)

The study of (Kalooly, 2014) aimed to determine the reality of the need of the principals of public schools in Kuwait for professional development. A survey descriptive approach was used through a questionnaire applied to a sample of school principals in Kuwait, totalling 400 individuals. The researcher also used an open interview tool with several educational leaders in Kuwaiti schools. The results of the study showed that the need for the professional development of public school principals in Kuwait was high. The results of the study also revealed that the level of use of professional development mechanisms for the head of public schools in Kuwait was average.

Canales (2004)

The study of (Canales, 2004) aimed to identify the impact of professional development on the competencies of educational leaders in Texas, USA. The researcher followed the descriptive survey method using a questionnaire that was applied to a sample of 51 supervisors. The study concluded that working with team spirit and teamwork helps to coordinate, and plan to build more effective development programs.

Bizzell (2011)

The study of Bizzell (2011) aimed to reveal the level of professional development of school principals in Virginia, and assessed the impact of professional development on the leadership behaviors of principals. The researcher employed a descriptive investigative approach by utilising an interview method with 13 principals. Moreover, the study reached several results. The most important, that a majority of the managers interviewed had good skills and experience related to professional development. However, they do not comply with the three principles of high-quality professional development, which are continuous, linked to work, and helps achieve school goals.

From the previous presentation, it is noted that the studies that dealt with the issue of professional development for school leaders in the KSA focus upon the role of education departments and leadership supervisors in the field of professional development for school leaders. This highlights the scarcity of studies that dealt with the role of universities in this aspect, and confirms the



importance of the current study, which was directed towards strengthening the role of universities in the field of school leadership development.

Study Problem

School leadership in the KSA faces a set of challenges. The most prominent of which is related to the level of professional competencies of the schools' leaders due to the shortcomings in their preparation and qualification programs, as they are originally eligible for teaching, and not for leadership work.

For instance, the study of Al-Lehayani (2015) showed the level of leadership competencies of school principals' from the point of view of teachers and educational supervisors in Makkah, which was found at a moderate level. Furthermore, the result of the study of Al-Dawood (2018) showed the degree of professional competencies related to school leadership among educational leaders in Riyadh, and from the point of view of school leadership supervisors. The result was in the sixth order, with an average of 2.68.

Moreover, the study of Al-Anzi (2017) recommended that those in charge of school leadership training programs should focus on professional competencies for work. The results of a number of studies, such as those conducted by Al-Qahtani (2015), and Al-Omari (2014) indicated that although there are serious attempts by the Ministry of Education in the KSA to achieve professional development for educational leaders, these attempts are insufficient and ineffective due to deficiencies in the professional development of leaders. Furthermore, there is a need to develop educational leaders, hence the study of the Sulaiman and Al-Habib (2017) recommended the necessity of activating the advisory role of colleges of education and in all local universities to provide experience for school leaders.

Accordingly, despite the attention given to the issue of developing the performance of school leaders in the KSA, the efforts made by the Ministry in this field remain below the expected level. This is due to the absence of an integrated strategy directed towards the professional development of school leaders. Furthermore, this reflects what the study of Al-Mutlaq (2013) indicated, confirming that one of the most prominent obstacles facing sustainable development for directors of public education schools in the Kingdom is the lack of an integrated strategy for the sustainable professional development process.

A notable feature was the absence of the role of education colleges in Saudi universities in the projects adopted by the Ministry of Education within the field of developing school leaders, despite their direct relevance to this topic, and especially after the Ministry stopped the programs directed



at leaders of public education schools that were implemented by the colleges of education for a semester.

In light of the importance of school leadership, and the role of universities in the field of professional development for school leaders, the importance of this study is confirmed by its role in developing the performance of school leaders. Notably, the study problem concentrates on an attempt to enhance the role of educational administration departments in Saudi universities at developing the competencies of leaders of public education schools, and by presenting a proposal in light of the study results for the education offices in the Eastern Province.

Study Questions

1. What is the degree of appreciation of the heads of school leadership departments within education regarding the importance of the role of educational administration departments in Saudi universities at developing the professional competencies of school leaders in public education schools in the KSA? What is their degree of appreciation for the importance of the proposed programs for developing these competencies?
2. What is the degree of appreciation of specialists in the educational administration departments in Saudi universities regarding the possibility of the contribution of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in public education schools in the KSA? What is their degree of appreciation upon the possibility of implementing the suggested proposal to achieve this?
3. What is the suggested proposal to enhance the role of colleges of education in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in public education schools within the KSA?

Aims of the Study

1. To reveal the degree of appreciation of the heads of the school leadership departments regarding the importance of the educational administration departments' role within the colleges of education at developing the professional competencies of school leaders, as well as their appreciation for the importance of the proposed programs to develop these competencies.
2. To reveal the degree of appreciation of specialists in the educational administration departments in Saudi universities upon the contribution of the educational administration departments at developing the professional competencies of school leaders, as well as their appreciation for the possibility of implementing the proposed programs to achieve this.
3. Presenting a proposal to enhance the role of colleges of education in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in public education schools in the KSA.



Study Significance

The significance of this subject lies in its importance, which is the professional development of school leaders, as the progress of educational systems depends largely on the level of their school leadership. It is expected that the results of the study will contribute to strengthening the role of educational administration departments in the professional development of school leaders through the suggested proposal, which will be presented to help strengthen the partnership between universities, and education departments in the KSA.

The importance of the study also lies in the fact that it is the first study — as far as the researcher is aware — that deals with the role of educational administration departments in universities regarding the professional development of school leaders.

Study Scope

Objective Scope

The study was limited to studying the role of educational administration departments in Saudi universities regarding the professional development of school leaders, as well as the ways to enhance their role in the professional development of school leaders in public education schools in the KSA.

Human Scope

The study included all the heads of the school leadership departments in the education departments within the KSA, and a group of specialists in administration and educational leadership in Saudi universities.

Spatial Scope

The study was applied to all the education departments, and colleges of education in Saudi universities.

Time Scope

The study was applied during the second semester of the academic year 2019/2020.

Materials and Methods

Research Method

The descriptive survey method was used for its suitability to achieve the study objectives.

Study Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all the heads of school leadership departments in the education departments within the KSA, comprising 94 individuals. The first study tool was applied to all participants, 55 of whom responded and represented the study sample. The second study tool was applied to a group of 31 specialists in administration and educational leadership in Saudi universities.

Validity and Reliability of the Study Tools

To verify the validity of the two tools of the study, they were presented in their initial form to six specialists in educational administration and leadership. According to their opinions, the researcher made necessary modifications to the tools of the study.

Moreover, to verify the reliability of the study tools, the stability coefficient was calculated using the Cronbach's alpha equation, as shown in Table 2. It illustrates Cronbach's alpha consistency coefficients for the questionnaire which was directed to the heads of the school leadership departments regarding their degree of appreciation for the importance of the educational administration departments' role in developing the professional competencies of school leaders, as well as the importance of the proposed programs to develop the professional competencies of school leaders.

Table 2: Consistency coefficients (alpha Cronbach) for the first questionnaire dimensions.

Dimensions	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
The importance of the role of the educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders.	6	0.97
The importance of the proposed programs to develop professional competencies for school leaders.	3	0.62
Total consistency of the study tool.	12	0.90

Additionally, Table 3 illustrates Cronbach's alpha consistency coefficients for the questionnaire which was directed to specialists in administration and educational leadership within Saudi universities.

Table 3: Consistency coefficients (alpha Cronbach) for the second questionnaire dimensions.

Dimensions	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
The possibility of educational administration departments contributing to developing the professional competencies of school leaders.	6	0.88
The possibility of implementing the proposed programs to enhance the role of the educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders.	3	0.71
Total consistency of the study tool.	12	0.87

It is clear from the Tables 2, and 3, that the study tools have a high degree of consistency.

Results and Discussion

The First Question: what is the degree of appreciation of the heads of school leadership departments regarding the importance of the role of educational administration departments in Saudi universities at developing the professional competencies of school leaders in public education schools in the KSA? What is their degree of appreciation for the importance of the proposed programs for developing these competencies?

The arithmetic means and standard deviations for the responses have been calculated and addressed in Table 4 below. It is clear from the results that the arithmetic means of the responses was large, where the general arithmetic mean was 2.60, which means that the heads of school leadership departments believe that the role of educational administration departments in Saudi universities is largely important. The professional competencies associated with planning, supervision, and change processes, and the competencies associated with the environmental organisation of schoolwork were ranked first in terms of importance, with an average score of 2.64. The competencies associated with leading education as an ethical profession achieved an average score of 2.62, followed by the competencies associated with supporting education operations, and improving the learning environment, with an average score of 2.60. In last place, the competencies associated with leading the school's self-evaluation, and the competencies associated with participation and communication with the school, and the local community, achieved an average score of 2.56. These results are consistent with the results of Johnson (2016), and Kearney and Valadez (2015).

Table 4: Arithmetic means in descending order concerning the importance of the role of the educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders.

#	Statement	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Order	Degree of importance
1	The role of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (environmental organization of schoolwork).	2.64	0.59	1	Large
2	The role of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (planning, supervising, and changing processes).	2.64	0.62	1	Large
3	The role of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (supporting educational operations and improving the learning environment).	2.60	0.63	4	Large
4	The role of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (leading school self-evaluation processes).	2.56	0.63	5	large
5	The role of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (participation and communication with the school and local community).	2.56	0.60	5	large
6	The role of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (leading education as an ethical profession).	2.62	0.59	3	large
	Overall average*	2.60	0.61		large

*The Arithmetic mean is out of 3

Moreover, regarding the degree of appreciation of the heads of the school leadership departments upon the importance of the proposed programs to develop the professional competencies of school leaders, the arithmetic means have been calculated, and the dimensions were arranged in descending order, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Arithmetic means for the responses of the heads of the school leadership departments regarding the importance of the proposed programs to develop the professional competencies of school leaders.

#	Statement	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Order	Degree of importance
1	Providing a professional diploma specialized in school leadership for one academic year.	2.82	0.39	1	Large
2	Providing quarterly courses for school leaders.	2.60	0.56	2	Large
3	Providing short and varied programs for school leaders.	2.42	0.74	3	Large
	overall average *	2.61	0.56		Large

*The Arithmetic mean is out of 3



It is clear from the previous table that the arithmetic means for the responses of the heads of the school leadership departments regarding the importance of the proposed programs to develop professional competencies for school leaders was achieved to a large degree. The general arithmetic mean of the responses reached 2.61, which means that the heads of the school leadership departments believe that all the proposals are very important. Furthermore, a proposal to provide the educational administration departments with a professional diploma specialising in school leadership for one academic year was ranked first in terms of importance, achieving an arithmetic mean of 2.82. In the second place, a proposal for providing quarterly courses for school leaders achieved an arithmetic mean of 2.60, and was followed by a proposal for providing short and varied programs for school leaders, with an average score of 2.42.

***The Second Question:** what is the degree of appreciation of specialists in the educational administration departments in Saudi universities regarding the possibility of the contribution of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in public education schools in the KSA? What is their degree of appreciation upon the possibility of implementing the suggested proposal to achieve this?*

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations for the responses were calculated, as shown in Table 6. It is clear from the results that the arithmetic averages of the responses were very large, where the total arithmetic average reached 4.42. This result means that the specialists believe that the possibility is significant, where the first rank was for the possibility of professional competencies in planning, supervision, and change processes, with an arithmetic mean of 4.61. Second, was the competencies associated with the environmental organisation of schoolwork, with a mean of 4.52, and in third, was the competencies associated with leading the school self-evaluation processes, and the competencies associated with participation and communication with the school and local community, which achieved an arithmetic mean of 4.39. This was followed by the competencies associated with leading education as an ethical profession, with an arithmetic mean of 4.36, and lastly, was the competencies associated with supporting education operations and improving the learning environment with an arithmetic mean of 4.23. These results are in agreement with the results of Darling-Hammond et al. (2007), and Gumus (2015).

Table 6: Arithmetic averages for the responses of specialists in administration and educational leadership regarding the possibility of educational administration departments contributing to developing the professional competencies of school leaders.

#	Statement	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Order	Possibility
1	The possibility of educational administration departments to contribute to developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (environmental organization of schoolwork).	4.52	0.63	2	Very large
2	The possibility of educational administration departments to contribute to developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (planning, supervision, and change processes).	4.61	0.56	1	Very large
4	The possibility of educational administration departments to contribute to developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (supporting education operations and improving the learning environment).	4.23	0.67	5	Very large
4	The possibility of educational administration departments to contribute to developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (leading school self-evaluation processes).	4.39	0.67	3	Very large
5	The possibility of educational administration departments to contribute to developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (participation and communication with the school and local community).	4.39	0.62	3	Very large
6	The possibility of educational administration departments to contribute to developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of (leading education as an ethical profession).	4.36	0.80	4	Very large
	Overall average *	4.42	0.66		Very large

**The Arithmetic mean is out of 5*

In respect to the degree of appreciation of specialists in administration and educational leadership regarding the possibility of implementing the proposed programs to enhance the role of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders, the arithmetic means have been calculated and are arranged in descending order according to the responses, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Arithmetic means for the responses of specialists in administration and educational leadership in Saudi universities regarding the possibility of implementing the proposed programs to enhance the role of educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders.

#	Statement	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Order	Possibility
1	Providing a professional diploma specialized in school leadership for one academic year.	4.58	0.76	1	Very large
2	Providing quarterly courses for school leaders.	4.58	0.72	1	Very large
2	Providing short and varied programs for school leaders.	4.48	0.93	2	Very large
	overall average *	4.55	0.80		Very large

**The Arithmetic mean is out of 5*



It is clear from the previous table that the arithmetic averages of the responses were significantly large, where the general arithmetic average reached 4.55. This result means that the specialists believe that all the proposals are highly possible. First, was a proposal presenting a professional diploma specialising in school leadership by the educational administration departments for one academic year, and a proposal to present a quarterly course for school leaders, with arithmetic means of 4.58. This was followed by a proposal to provide quarterly leadership courses by the educational management departments for school leaders, with an arithmetic mean of 4.48.

The Third Question: *what is the suggested proposal to enhance the role of colleges of education in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in public education schools within the KSA?*

In light of what the study revealed about the weak role of the educational administration departments in the professional development of school leaders in public education schools; the degree of appreciation of the heads of school leadership departments upon the importance of the role of educational management departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders; the proposals to enhance the role of educational management departments within the colleges of education in developing these competencies; the degree of appreciation of the specialists in the educational administration departments in the Saudi universities regarding the possibility of the contribution of the educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders, and their appreciation for the possibility of implementing the proposed programs to enhance the role of the educational administration departments in colleges of education in developing the professional competencies of school leaders; comprehensively, the study has presented a proposal to enhance the role of the educational administration departments in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in public education schools, as follows.

Suggested Proposal: School Leadership Development Centre

Vision

To achieve leadership in developing the professional competencies of school leaders in public education schools in the KSA.

Mission

To provide programs that aim at developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the fields of the environmental organisation of schoolwork, planning, supervision, and change



processes; supporting education operations; improving the learning environment; leading school self-evaluation processes; participating and communicating with the school, and the local community; leading education as an ethical profession; and keeping pace with all that is new and emerging in the field of developing the professional competencies of school leaders.

Objectives

General objective: to enhance the role of educational administration departments in Saudi universities at developing the professional competencies of school leaders in public education schools in the KSA.

Detailed objectives:

1. Developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of the environmental organisation of schoolwork.
2. Developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of planning, supervision, and change processes.
3. Developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of supporting educational processes, and improving the learning environment.
4. Developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of leading school self-evaluation processes.
5. Developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of participation and communication with the school, and the local community.
6. Developing the professional competencies of school leaders in the field of educational leadership, as an ethical profession.
7. Enhancing the capabilities of school leaders in the field of presenting development initiatives that emanate from the feeling of necessity for them.

Conclusion

The main premises of the suggested proposal can be identified in the following:

1. The importance of the role of school leaders, as a result of the pivotal role in achieving the quality of the educational system, since school leadership is the most important element among the elements of the educational system. No matter how efficiently the inputs to the system are, their effectiveness in achieving goals depends primarily upon the existence of leadership which is able to influence, and invest available resources.
2. The KSA's 2030 vision is directed towards increasing investment in human capital, and developing leadership capabilities and competencies.



3. The attitudes of the Ministry of Civil Service towards developing human resources in all sectors of the kingdom through the “King Salman Program for Human Resources Development”.
4. The Professional Standards Document for School Principals issued by the National Centre for Measurement.
5. Global experiences in the field of professional development for educational leaders.

There are a set of requirements that must be considered when applying the suggested proposal. The most important are outlined below:

1. Establishing a specialised centre at the College of Education for the professional development of school leaders to provide a set of specialised professional programs in the field of developing the professional competencies of school leaders.
2. The structure responsible for preparing and implementing programs is the departments of educational administration or the education department in some colleges of education, where there is no separate department for educational administration.
3. Taking into account the diversity within the programs offered by the centre, so that they are in the form of short and diverse training programs in the field of leadership, which are presented continuously during the semester, such as seminars and scientific forums to exchange experiences, training courses in school leadership covering the entire semester, and professional diplomas specialising in the leadership school year term.
4. A group of distinguished faculty members in the specialisation of administration and educational leadership within the colleges of education in Saudi universities should participate in building the programs offered by the centre. This should be accompanied with the participation of a number of school leaders, provided that the centre must cover competencies that the study focussed on, which are the competencies related to planning, supervision, change processes; the environmental organisation of schoolwork; supporting education processes, and improving the learning environment; leading school self-evaluation processes; participating and communicating with the school, and the local community; and leading education as an ethical profession.
5. In the implementation of the programs, the combination of theory and application should be taken into account directly, with a focus on the practical aspects.
6. The programs should target school leaders, deputies, and school leadership supervisors, so that every program combines a group of leaders, deputies, and one leadership supervisor, where possible.
7. The programs are nominated by the Education Department represented by the School Leadership Department, taking into consideration a greater focus on the less experienced



and needy leaders in the field of developing leadership competencies, so that they represent approximately 70 per cent of those enrolled in the program.

8. Coordination takes place between the Educational Leadership Development Centre and the School Leadership Department of the Education Department regarding the procedures and requirements of the program, especially regarding its practical aspect.
9. In the quarterly and annual programs, the following criteria must be met as requirements to pass the program:
 - A. The passing of the courses depends upon the evaluation criteria that are determined by the department, provided that the focus on the targeted skills in each course is taken into account. Therefore, the degree of the course is 100 degrees and distributed as follows: five per cent for attendance; ten per cent for participation and interaction in theoretical hours; 45 per cent for practical hour outputs, to be distributed among the working hours output; 20 per cent for the report submitted at the end of each course; and 20 per cent for the written test at the end of the course, provided that the degree obtained by the trainee should not be less than 70 per cent, as a condition for passing the course.
 - B. The trainee submits a report at the end of the program that highlights the degree of his or her acquisition of the targeted professional competencies, provided that the report is a case study through which a problem is resolved or a proposal is developed considering the competencies targeted by the program.
 - C. Those enrolled in the programs will take a final test that measures the degree of achievement of the targeted competencies. It must represent 50 per cent of the program's passing degree, and it is included in the score of the trainee, provided that the program is prepared by the National Centre for Measurement and in coordination between the university, and the Ministry of Education.
 - D. Every program should result in one initiative, at least, related to the development of education, which will be submitted at the end of the program to the competent authority in the Ministry. The initiative will enhance the participation of school leaders in education development programs.



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