



The level of administrative skills of public-school leaders in Saudi Arabia in light of the school accreditation standards

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The purpose of this study was to determine the level of the administrative skills (AS) that public school leaders possess in light to the standards of school accreditation, and to suggest ways to improve such skills from the perspective of school leaders in the city of Madinah in Saudi Arabia. The study utilized a structured questionnaire approach developed by the researchers as a tool for collecting data along with the descriptive technique. The sample of the study included all of Madinah's (315) public school leaders, with a response rate of (70%). The data collected was analyzed using the (SPSS) statistical tool. The main findings of the study indicated that the level of the AS of school leaders came with a degree of (medium); the practices associated with these AS were ranked highest for decision-making, followed by exercising of power, administrative-motivation, independence, while the professional-development ranked least. Overall, the suggested ways for developing the AS of school leaders came with a (high) degree of acceptance among participants. Furthermore, there were statistically significant differences of the responses on AS among the participants based on their educational qualification. The study recommends increasing the empowerment level of school leaders by enhancing their professional independence, and supporting their power and authority practices, and encouraging the decentralization in the decision-making processes at all levels of the educational system.



Keywords: *Administrative skills, school leaders, Saudi Arabia, public schools, accreditation standards.*

Introduction

Effective leadership is the main element for every achievement in any organization; it is the basis for meeting the ever-changing needs of today's society. School leadership represents one of the most important axes of the educational system's success, and the basis for enabling educational organizations to achieve their goals, through which school performance can be improved and the educational process can be developed. Therefore, it is necessary for school leaders to be prepared to perform their crucial role in an efficient and effective matter. Administrative skills (AS) are considered one of the components of effective school leadership, as they are practices acquired by the leader that enable the performance of a job characterized by quality. Therefore, it is necessary to develop these skills, and to enhance their practice among educational leaders in order to become leaders for change and development and secure the success of the educational process (Tayeb and Al-Washmi, 2016; Al-Ghamdi, 2016).

As are defined as the leader's ability to understand the work within the organization, and its relationship to the surrounding community, in addition to its relationship with the employees in order to achieve the desired goals (Kanaan, 2009). In the same context, Al-Lozy (2002) mentioned that AS are one of the main elements of the educational productive process. They are behavioral skills, not personality traits or tendencies, that consist of specific sets of actions by individuals that lead to specific outcomes (Whetten & Cameron, 2011). Its source may be the environment and the available education and training acquired, developed, and practiced under the supervision of more knowledgeable and experienced leaders (Al-Salami, 1999).

The school leaders' skills are the tools that help perform the four major functions of planning, organizing, leading and controlling, and are correlated to effective leadership practices such as setting priorities, analyzing and making decisions, following-up on different jobs, making effective communication, negotiating and persuasion, team building (Regulatory Guide for Public Education Schools, 1437).

Educational organizations need skillful managers and leaders who are able to deal with continuous change by establishing a clear vision and achieving its goals effectively (Whetten & Cameron, 2011). Furthermore, Al-Ajez and Al-Agha (2012) concluded that the success of the school leadership, is not limited to the experiences of the leader or his/



her personal diligence, but rather depends on a set of processes, practices, and AS that help achieve that goal.

In this regard, some studies indicated that there are shortcomings in acquiring the needed AS among some school leaders that may contribute to the success of the educational system in Saudi Arabia; since many school leaders for long periods have preferred to practice their responsibilities in a routine manner limited to carrying out executive tasks based on coordination and supervision, and have completed their administrative matters with limited use of powers (Abu Al-Nour, 2013; Al-Rashidi, 2014; Al-Othman and Al-Arifi, 2019).

The study of Al-Ghamdi (2016) recommended the need to develop the AS of school principals in the Makkah region to further its effective role in the educational process; while the study of Tayeb and Al-Washmi (2016) recommended strengthening the practice of leadership among school principals by granting them more powers, and involving school staff and the local community in the leading process. Other research highlighted the importance of building professional learning communities among the different school principals in order to contribute to the transfer of different experiences and knowledge (Drury, 2018); and Al-Sulaiman and Al-Habib (2017) called for the adoption of flexible policies based on delegation of powers, and motivation of school staff to meet the standards of the Education Evaluation Authority, while granting more diverse incentives to school leaders, and providing training before and during service.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Education paid attention to the field of developing school leaders in public educational institutions as an entry point for educational reform, in the context of Saudi Arabia's vision 2030, the National Center for Educational Professional Development was established as an initiative for the professional development of male and female teachers and school leaders. The Effective Leadership Skills Program for school leaders and agents was launched, through a package of training programs and workshops, internal and external visits; with the aim to enable educational leaders to adopt positive attitudes towards the effectiveness of school leadership and ensuring the quality of education according to international standards; thus developing school leaders' knowledge and skills in order to support their role in line with the modern era (National Center for Educational Professional Development, 2019).

As mentioned, Saudi Arabia's vision 2030 includes initiatives that enhance the effectiveness of educational leaders and highlights the importance of continuously developing the knowledge and skills of all public-school leaders in order to achieve quality



education and its desired outcomes as stated in its educational strategic goals. The results of previous research done by (Al-Othman and Al-Arifi, 2019 ; Al-Mutlaq, 2015; Al-Rashidi, 2011; Oseilan , 2017) concluded there are some weaknesses with regard to the AS of school leaders, and reported some shortcomings in delegating powers to school leaders. Other empirical research findings emphasized the importance of the gradual shift from the central decision making system to a decentralized system and granting more power and authority to the departments as an initial stage towards school accreditation (Al-Asiri, 2013; Al-Fadhli and Al-Marri, 2017).

Given the importance of developing AS that help school leaders, many researchers have emphasized the importance of continuously evaluating their performance in accordance with the requirements and standards of quality and school accreditation (Al-Qahtani, 2015; Al-Sulaiman and Al-Habib, 2017). Because school accreditation standards in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are still in the process of development (Education and Training Evaluation Commission, 2020); this study reviewed a set of school accreditation standards regarding effective educational leadership and projected them to the public-school environment.

Based on the foregoing, this study attempted to identify the reality of the current AS of public-school leaders in Madina in regard to the school accreditation standards, and identify ways to develop them. The results of this study may help the decision-makers and stakeholders at different levels in the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia in taking measures and planning programs that support the development of AS for school leaders, and may contribute to evaluating the schools' readiness for accreditation and put plans for its attainment.

The research sought to answer the following question:

RQ1. What is the reality of the AS of public-school leaders in light of the accreditation standards associated with (exercising of power, decision-making, independence, administrative-motivation, professional-development)?

RQ2. What ways do the respondents identify as important to the development of the AS of public-school leaders?

RQ3. Is there a significant difference in the level of the AS based on the respondents' demographic categories (educational qualification, school educational- stage, years of experience)?

RQ4. Is there a significant difference in the identified ways to develop the AS based on the respondents' demographic categories (educational qualification, educational stage, years of experience)?



School accreditation standards

Accreditation standards are the main reference for any educational institution through which its quality is measured. The school accreditation standards is a tool that helps measure specific practices, with the aim of continuous development, and reaching a desired level of expected performance. These standards differ from one country to another, depending on the social and cultural conditions in those countries, and the goal for which the accreditation bodies were established (Al-Omari, 2015).

The general educational standards are defined as: “Specifications that help to issue an educational evaluation judgment or opinion on an issue or subject” (Gerges, 2005, p. 508). As for accreditation standards, Middle States Association of Schools (MSA) defined them (2016) as “qualitative data that reflects a list of best practices that schools should undertake and represents a qualitative guide to potential expectations of performance”. Sharif (2011) defines school accreditation standards as “criteria issued by specialized academic bodies and organizations, whether at the local or regional level”.

Quality in educational institutions has become a necessity, this is done by paying attention to the specifications and conditions under which the international quality certificate (ISO) is obtained, and applying accreditation in these institutions in various fields (Madani, 2012).) Many research on this matter have stressed the need to work on improving quality in educational institutions and ensuring that it is controlled by applying accreditation standards (Al-Dahshan, 2007; Al-Khatib, 2013; Al-Shamrani, 2009).

The importance of applying standards in education, as mentioned, is that they are an entry point for reform and development in the administrative and educational field, especially the standards of educational institutions in developed countries. In Saudi Arabia, a set of justifications for adopting school accreditation standards in public schools according to Al-Noah et al. (2012) are as follows:

- Compatibility with modern trends towards ensuring the quality of education.
- Knowing the extent to which the school meets the quality standards.
- Contribute to the development of the human and financial resources of the educational institution and benefit from them.
- Creating a database and information that contribute to building institutional development plans.
- Developing institutional performance in its various fields, to increase learning opportunities and improve outcomes.



- Providing a mechanism to ensure the satisfaction and conviction of the local community about the level of performance of the educational institution (pp. 195-196).

There are many accreditation bodies; Singapore's experience in accrediting kindergarten schools, where the establishment and preparation for the primary stage, with the aim of supporting educational leaders to evaluate their efforts in the educational process, by the Singapore Ministry of Education, represented by a framework called the Singapore Pre-school Accreditation Framework (SPARK) (Al Rayes, 2015). The United States of America is another leading country in school accreditation and quality of education, a group of accreditation bodies was established to achieve this purpose, which now provides its services worldwide, including: AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools) (Al-Tariri, 2013).

However, the three accreditation bodies whose criteria were relied on in the current research are: AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools, the Standards of the organizational model for school accreditation by the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, and the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA). The reason for choosing these bodies included the following:

1. The American AdvancED Authority is one of the international bodies that are relied upon in many of the leading private and international schools in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including, but not limited to: Dhahran Private Schools, Al Rowad International Schools, Al Manhal Schools, Dar Al Fikr Schools, Pioneers of the Future International Schools, Private Kingdom Schools, and a group of Royal Commission schools in Jubail, such as Umm Al Qura Secondary School and Al Defi School, Al-Ahsa School, and Najd Schools.
2. The standards of the organizational model for school accreditation by the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, they represent appropriate standards for the environment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia since it is one of the Arab Gulf states.
3. Because there are no standards for school accreditation from the Education and Training Evaluation Commission in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to date; The institutional accreditation standards were based on the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA).

Previous studies related to the subject highlighted the importance of developing



As in the light of school accreditation standards. Al-Maliki (2019) concluded that the application of school accreditation in Jeddah schools came to a low degree, and that the difficulties that limit them came to a high degree, and recommended the development of a system of incentives for all workers in the educational organization in the light of school accreditation; while Al-Othman and Al-Arifi (2019) revealed that among the most important obstacles that limit the application of administrative empowerment is the strict regulations that do not encourage innovation; and Al-Ghamdi (2020) revealed the need to train school leaders on all standards of quality assurance and accreditation to increase their knowledge and understanding and further quality in education.

Based on the foregoing; There are many AS that help school leaders in developing the educational process and keeping pace with current trends, in order to ensure the quality of education. The researchers identified the AS for this study after studying the school accreditation standards, which are represented in: the standards from the American AdVanced organization, the standards from the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, and the standard for the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (NCAAA); they also analyzed the previous work on school accreditation standards identified by Al-Rayes (2015), Al-Subhi (2018), Al-Saffar (2013), Al-Otaibi (2016), Al-Asiri (2013), Al-Ghamdi (2020), Al-Maliki (2019), then identified the AS needed for school accreditation and grouped them under five dimensions.

Administrative Skill dimensions:

- **Exercising Powers:** Al-Sharqawi (2007) defined it as the legal right to take decisions, give orders to others, and the obligation of those to whom orders are given to obey under penalty of responsibility. It is considered an official and legitimate right owned by the leader, by holding an official administrative position within the organization, through which he is gaining influence and obligating others to obey and comply in implementing what he asks of them; To conduct business and achieve goals, and it is seen in modern systems as being distributed at different levels of the system from the top of the organizational hierarchy to the base.
- **Decision-making:** Tohme (2015) defined it as the process of choosing an alternative from among the many possible alternatives with the aim of reaching a goal, or solving a specific problem. Al-Feki (2012) also indicates that the decision-making process takes place through following systematic and sequential steps, in a logical and scientific manner, to reach the best solution among a set of alternatives based on specific criteria and standards.



- **Independence:** Whittington & Pany (2016) defined it as the individual's reliance on himself in performing his work and professional duties, maintaining objectivity, and avoiding conflicts that may distance him from his responsibilities; It also means the freedom of the educational institution to define its goals, work priorities, and manage its administration in the administrative and financial aspects, which allows it to achieve its goals and perform its functions.
- **Administrative Motivation:** Evans (2014) defined it as the managerial practices of the leader to influence the workers, by moving motives, desires and needs; in order to satisfy them and make them more willing to give their best; In order for the organization to achieve high levels of performance.
- **Professional development:** Jassim (2012) defined it as building knowledge and skills for the organization's members in a way that makes them able to face new responsibilities and challenges, and it is an intentional process that includes a set of planned and organized procedures with the aim of increasing the professional growth of employees. Al-Shammari (2016) also finds that professional development is an organized, planned and continuous process of qualifying school leaders and their agents. With the aim of raising professional competencies through various methods and means.

Research Methodology

Sample and data collection

The sample consisted of all the leaders of the girls' public schools in the city of Madinah, who were (315) during the application of the research; responses were obtained from (n=222) representing (70%) from the original research sample. The demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in table (1) as follows:

Table (1) Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (n=222)

Demographic categories	N	%
Educational qualification		
Bachelor	201	% 90,5
Postgraduate	21	% 9,5
Educational Stage		
Primary	115	% 51,8
Intermediate	42	% 18,9
Secondary	65	29.3%
Years of experience		
Less than 5	21	9,5 %
5 -10 years	31	14 %
More than 10 years	170	76,6 %
Total	222	100%

Instrumentation

The researchers developed the instrument after studying the school accreditation standards, which are represented in: the standards from the American AdVanced organization, the standards from the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, and the standard for the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (NCAAA); they also analyzed the previous work on school accreditation standards identified by Al-Rayes (2015), Al-Subhi (2018), Al-Saffar (2013), Al-Otaibi (2016), Al-Asiri (2013), Al-Ghamdi (2020), Al-Maliki (2019), then identified the AS needed for school accreditation.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts:

- **Part one:** It represents the general demographic data about the participants which included: educational qualification (bachelors, post-graduate) - educational level of the school they lead (primary, secondary, high school), years of experience at the current position (<5, 5-10, >10).
- **Part Two:** Measuring the reality of the administrative skills (AS) of school leaders, 31 items describing the leadership practices grouped into 5 dimensions (exercising of powers, decision-making, independence, administrative-motivation, and professional development). Sample questions included (*Nominate to leadership positions based on qualifications and competencies, delegate authority and power*

needed to accomplish the work, encourage decentralization in leadership practices, share clear and transparent regulations and procedures governing the work, encourage participation of school staff in decision-making, involve parents in setting the schools' vision and goals, encourage the development of teaching strategies and learning processes, Initiate the implementation of the work and assume its responsibility, provide the required information system to collect the data necessary for decision-making, Participation of school staff in decision-making, Parents' participation in decision-making, Decisiveness in decision-making when managing crises and emergency situations, Review the results to assess the validity of the decision taken, Decentralization when making decisions, explain the high quality-work performance standards, acknowledge and reward outstanding performance, provide a positive organizational climate and work environment, practice an evaluation system based on fairness and equality, provide effective programs to prepare and train school leaders, fair and appropriate opportunities for the professional development of school personnel, encourage participation in seminars and scientific conferences, provide continuous feedback on job performance...). The respondents were requested to indicate the degree to which they agreed with the items in this part by using a 5-point Likert-type scale; very high (averaged at least 4.20), high (averaged 3.40–4.19), medium (averaged 2.60–3.39), low (averaged 1.80–2.59), and very low (averaged <1.80).

- **Part three:** Measuring ways of developing the administrative skills of school leaders, in regard to school accreditation standards (10 items). The respondents were requested to indicate the degree to which they agreed with the items in this part by using a 3-point Likert-type scale; high (averaged 3.00-2.33), medium (averaged 2.32-1.67), low (averaged <1.67).

The questionnaire was issued via email, and the data was collected during 28 consecutive days with two reminders sent two weeks apart; voluntary and privacy participation was ensured.

Validity and Reliability

validity: To ensure the validity of the tool, the questionnaire was presented in its initial form to a number of arbitrators and experts in the field of educational administration, their number was (9) arbitrators. In light of the directions and observations made by the arbitrators, the amendment was made by excluding and adding some phrases and reformulating and abbreviating it in line with the arbitrators' recommendations and extracting the questionnaire in its final form.

Table (2) Pearson's correlation coefficients for managerial skills phrases and ways to develop them in the total degree

Skill of powers		Skill of participation in decision making		Skill of independence	
Phrase number	Correlation coefficient	Phrase number	Correlation coefficient	Phrase number	Correlation coefficient
1	**0.828	1	**0.826	1	**0.951
2	**0.801	2	**0.873	2	**0.898
3	**0.789	3	**0.725	3	**0.908
4	**0.767	4	**0.722	4	**0.923
5	**0.731	5	**0.878	5	**0.850
6	**0.805	6	**0.892		
7	**0.842	7	**0.813		
Skill of motivation		Skill of professional development		Ways of improvement	
Phrase number	Correlation coefficient	Phrase number	Correlation coefficient	Phrase number	Correlation coefficient
1	**0.835	1	**0.873	1	**0.462
2	**0.918	2	**0.911	2	**0.612
3	**0.853	3	**0.929	3	**0.673
4	**0.912	4	**0.883	4	**0.535
5	**0.919	5	**0.911	5	**0.508
6	**0.780	6	**0.886	6	**0.571
				7	**0.582
				8	**0.802
				9	**0.540
				10	**0.612

** Statistically significant at the 0.01 level

Furthermore, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for a pilot sample of the school leaders (50), results are shown in Table (2); the correlation coefficients are statistically significant and all phrases have high consistency, and it is a good indicator of the validity of the tool. And the validity of the composition was verified by calculating the correlation coefficient between each skill with the total score of the scale as shown in table (3); the correlation coefficients between skills are statistically significant at a level less than (0.01), which indicates that the scale has high construct validity.

Table (3) Pearson's correlation coefficients between each skill and the total score of the scale

Skill	Exercise of powers	Participation in decision making	Independence	Motivation	Professional development	Total degree
Exercising Power	1	**0.807	**0.764	**0.802	**0.842	**0.918
Decision making		1	**0.871	**0.762	**0.828	**0.932
Independence			1	**0.774	**0.805	**0.913
Administrative Motivation				1	**0.846	**0.904
Professional development					1	**0.937

** Statistically significant at the 0.01 level

Reliability

To ensure the stability of the research tool, the reliability coefficient was calculated according to Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and the corrected half-segment coefficient according to the Spearman-Brown equation, and the results ranged between (0.766 – 0.980) which indicates that the scale has high construct reliability.

Data analysis

This study used quantitative descriptive analysis methods. Descriptive statistics including the arithmetic averages, and standard deviations were calculated, the t-tests, and the one-way analysis of variance test were conducted to reveal the significance of the differences according to the study variables. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS and the significance level was set at 0.05.

Findings and Discussion

RQ1. What is the reality of the administrative skills (AS) of public-school leaders in light of the accreditation standards associated with (power use, decision-making, independence, administrative-motivation, professional-development)?

Table (4) Descriptive statistics for the overall perceptions on AS of the school leaders in public-schools in Madinah

AS's dimensions	Arithmetic average	SD	Rank	Degree of approval
Exercising Power	3.18	0.88	2	Medium
Decision making	3.19	0.94	1	Medium
Independence	3.04	0.93	4	Medium
Administrative Motivation	3.06	0.97	3	Medium
Professional development	3.00	0.95	5	Medium
Overall	3.10	0.82		Medium

Table (4) shows an overall medium degree of approval on the reality of the AS of public-school leaders in light of the accreditation standards associated with practices related to the following dimensions (exercise of powers, decision-making, independence, administrative-motivation, professional-development), where the total average was (3.10), with a SD (0.82).

The result of the current research agrees with the study of Al-Mulla (2011); its results showed that principals of public-schools in Al-Ahsa practice AS to a moderate degree, and they agreed with Houria's study (2013) which revealed a medium degree of effectiveness of AS, and with Al-Othman and Al-Arifi (2019) findings which concluded that the dimension of AS that contributes to the practice of administrative empowerment among the principals of primary schools in the north of Riyadh ranked last, to a medium degree, and with the study of Bolanle (2013) which indicated that secondary school principals have moderate management skills.

Other studies have findings with high levels of agreement on the AS among school leaders such as Al-Ghamdi (2016), Tayeb and Al-Washmi (2016), Oseilan (2017), Adawi



and Batayneh (2019), which all concluded that the practice of AD by the leaders of different private and public schools was high.

The results find a medium level of school leaders' practice of the powers, which may indicate that leaders of public-schools in Medina are granted an average amount of delegation to exercise their power, which may affect school leaders in performing their tasks to the optimal manner, although there is a strong call for empowering school leaders by giving them more freedom and flexibility in using powers associated with their responsibilities according to Ministerial Resolution No. 37617168 dated 1/4/1437 AH (Ministry of Education, 1437); the empowerment of school leaders have been called upon in other empirical studies, Al-Hajaji (2020) called for more flexibility in the operational processes to help school leaders achieve the desired.

The finding also revealed school leaders' the motivation skill to be ranked third with an arithmetic average (3.06) and a standard deviation of (0.97), which may indicate the need for more appreciations and recognition practices by school leaders in Madinah, which may be attributed to the lack of data that helps in creating a stimulating environment for the school leader, perhaps the lack of a clear system of incentives, which would contribute to the development of the skills of school leaders effectively. School leaders are one of the most important elements of the school's success, as they contribute to the completion of work and the achievement of educational goals in an efficient and effective manner.

Practicing-independence came fourth in the AS practiced by school leaders with an arithmetic average (3.04) and a standard deviation of (0.93), which may indicate more effort is needed from the point of view of respondents. This result may be due to some factors related to the leader, such as the lack of desire to assume full responsibility, or fear of accountability, or it may be that the senior management are worried they may lose power. The last AS was associated with practices related to the professional-development dimension, with an arithmetic average (3.00) and a standard deviation of (0.95), which represents the lowest average among other skills, and this may indicate the lack of clear plans and policies that support professional-development of school personnel and its leadership by the Educational Department in Medina. This result is consistent with the study of Al-Mutlaq (2015), where the role of school administration supervisors in the professional development of school principals in public education schools in Hail in the field of training and development came to a medium degree.

In general, the findings of this study that school leaders' AS obtained a medium degree of approval by the study participants, is a strong indicator for the need for its development.

Therefore, the answer RQ2 will shed some light to the suggested ways for upgrading the AS to school accreditation standards and improve their performance to achieve their effectiveness as leaders of change in educated professional societies.

RQ2. What ways do the respondents identify as important to the development of the AS of public-school leaders?

Table (5): Descriptive statistics to respondents' approval on the ways to develop the AS of public-school leaders

Items	Arithmetic average	SD	Rank	Degree of approval
Spreading an organizational culture that supports development and leadership in work.	2.79	0.44	8	High
Create a motivating environment for learning and exchanging experiences.	2.88	0.35	1	High
Encouraging the independence of school leaders to achieve goals and effectively manage operations.	2.81	0.46	7	High
Providing open and effective communication channels according to specific and documented mechanisms.	2.87	0.38	4	High
Encouraging the delegation of powers to prepare the second grade of school leaders.	2.83	0.42	6	High
Updating leadership roles and tasks in proportion to the changes.	2.88	0.35	1	High
Investing professional learning communities among school leaders.	2.84	0.43	5	High
Participation in attracting distinguished educational cadres.	2.88	0.39	3	High
Attention to sending school leaders to obtain higher degrees that contribute to the development of performance.	2.72	0.57	10	High
Building local partnerships to support and develop school leaders.	2.79	0.51	9	High
Overall Average	2.83	0.29		High



Table (5) shows the descriptive statistics to respondents' high level of approval on the ways to develop the AS of school leaders in the light of school accreditation standards. The overall average was high (2.83), with a SD of (0.29). It is clear from the above, that the respondents' have a high level of approval towards the suggested ways that may help public-school leaders develop their AS in Madinah.

This result is not surprising since many findings of previous empirical studies have supported the suggested ways provided in this study, the study of Al-Mutlaq (2015) which emphasized the importance of providing a participatory work environment that motivates leaders and workers to present creative ideas, and Al-Maliki (2015) concluded that one of the most important requirements for effective educational leadership is to provide a democratic climate, through appreciation and respect for others, and Al-Subhi (2018) recommended the need to improve the school environment that stimulates creativity and innovation.

Findings further assure the need for a more flexible leadership approach by school leadership in order to contribute to improving performance and continuity of school development. Respondents indicated with a high level of approval the need to motivate school leaders and encourage them to shift to multiple leadership roles to keep pace with the rapid development. This result was consistent with the study of Al-Qahtani (2015), which emphasized the need to update the criteria for selecting educational leaders, and ways to develop them to become more capable of carrying out their tasks and achieving the desired goals, and with the study of Morsi (2015), which showed that one of the obstacles of school principals that limits their achievement of education quality and accreditation standards is that responsibilities and tasks are not defined according to specializations. While the study of Al-Sulaiman and Al-Habib (2017) emphasized the important participation of school leaders in decision-making at the upper-level of the Ministry of Education, and Al-Rayes (2015) related the lack of participation in the decision-making processes to be one of the obstacles to the application of school accreditation in public education schools. Al-Budairi (2017), Ahmed and Zaki (2017), and Al-Maliki (2015) stressed the importance of effective communication between leaders and teachers at various levels, and encouraging open participation in decision-making, and related that with the improvement of school leaders' performance and considered it to be one of the requirements for applying the effective educational leadership standard in public schools.

Further findings revealed to a high degree of approval the responsibility of upper leadership and school supervisors to open the channels of knowledge exchange and



transfer of experiences through multidisciplinary work teams to further support effective leadership practices and AS development. This result is consistent with the study of the study of Tayeb and Al-Washmi (2016), which recommended the importance of building professional societies among school leaders to contribute to the transfer of experiences among them, and with the study of Mahrous et al. (2020) which indicated one of the reasons for the shortcomings of school-accreditation in Egypt is the weaknesses associated with transforming Egyptian schools into professional learning communities.

Many empirical investigations have supported the respondent's high degree of approval on empowering the school's administrative and educational cadres and prepare them as a second-line of leaders by. This study of Al-Sulaiman and Al-Habib (2017) and Al-Daysti (2013), and Oseilan (2017) recommended the adoption of flexible policies, and delegation of authority, and empowering workers. And the findings of Abdel Naeem and Abdel Lah (2016), Al-Fadhli and Al-Marri (2017), and Holland's (2019) indicated that school accreditation has an important role in the development of independent schools and recommended encouraging school leaders to take calculated risks and not hesitate to apply new methods, and not fear failure, and statistically related improving the performance of school administration and the independence granted to it.

The finding further revealed with a high degree of approval to the integration of public and private educational institutions to support and the development of school leaders as Al-Sulaiman and Al-Habib (2017) Al-Subhi (2018), Oseilan (2017), Al-Rayes (2015) all called to activate the advisory role of faculties of higher education institutions and pointed the importance of creating an integrative and cooperative partnership between schools and higher education institutions to prepare and develop educational leaders in accordance with the requirements of school accreditation.

Overall, the authors are very optimistic with the high level of approval to all the suggested ways of improvement to the AS of school leaders and hope these findings will be adopted by upper leadership of Madina educational system and are supported by the national educational development plan identified in the vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2030 (Ministry of Education, 1440).



RQ3. Is there a significant difference in the AS of public-school leaders based on the respondents' demographic categories (educational qualification, school educational-stage, years of experience)?

Table (6): The results of the (T) test to reveal the significance of the differences based on the demographic variable “educational qualification”

AS's dimensions	Bachelor n=201		Postgraduate n=21		T value	Degree of freedom	Level of significance
	arithmetic average	standard deviation	arithmetic average	standard deviation			
Exercising Power	22.59	6.18	19.33	5.65	2.31	220	*0.022
Decision making	22.61	6.48	19.52	7.15	2.05	220	*0.041
Independence	15.39	4.49	13.48	5.97	1.80	220	0.074
Administrative Motivation	18.57	5.72	16.38	6.25	1.66	220	0.099
Professional development	18.21	5.63	16.10	5.86	1.63	220	0.104

* Significant at the level (0.05) or less

Table (6) findings show that there are no statistically significant differences ($\alpha > 0.05$) between the responses of participants towards the reality of the AS of public-school leaders in “independence”, and “administrative motivation”, and “professional development” dimensions.

However the findings show a statistically significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the responses of participants towards the reality of the AS of public-school leaders in “exercising power”, and “decision-making” dimensions there are statistically significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the responses of participants towards the reality of the AS of public-school leaders in “exercising power”, and “decision-making” dimensions in regards to “educational qualification” of participants, in favor of the bachelor degree holders. The imbalance in the grouping of the sample may explain this result, a larger percentage of participants hold bachelorette degrees by 90.5%, as compared to holders of postgraduate studies 9.5%. This result may also reflect a high level of self-development

awareness among the school-principals and their AS development is based on experience and professional development rather than higher-degree qualifications.

This finding is similar to Al- Jaafrah and Tarif (2018) and Adawi and Batayneh (2019), Al-Rashidi (2011), and Piaw et al (2014), which all showed statistical significant differences in the level of LS among school principals in favor of bachelor degree holders. However, Tayeb and Al-Washmi (2016), and Al-Mutlaq (2015), and Houria (2013) all found no statistically significant differences in the level AS among principals due to the educational qualification.

Table (7) Descriptive statistics, and results of the ANOVA test for significant differences in responses towards the skill domains based on the demographic variable “school academic-stage”

AS dimensions	Primary n=115		Intermediate n=42		Secondary n=65		F value	Level of significance
	arithmetic average	standard deviation	arithmetic average	standard deviation	arithmetic average	standard deviation		
Exercising Power	22.36	6.21	22.48	4.84	22.02	6.96	0.09	0.915
Decision making	22.36	6.81	22.17	5.47	22.34	6.95	0.01	0.987
Independence	15.37	4.66	15.45	3.49	14.75	5.12	0.44	0.647
Administrative Motivation	18.21	6.04	18.19	4.93	18.75	5.91	0.21	0.814
Professional development	18.07	5.76	18.33	4.58	17.71	6.21	0.17	0.848

Table (7) finding show no statistically significant differences $\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the responses towards the level of the AS of public-school leaders affiliated to (exercise of powers, decision-making, independence, administrative-motivation, professional development) based on the demographic variable “educational stage”. This may indicate the convergence of the responses of the leaders of public education schools in Madinah, about the reality of these skills for them, in light of the school accreditation standards, and this may be due to the similarity of work environment, regulations and powers granted to female leaders in public education schools in its various primary, intermediate and secondary levels.

Table (8): Descriptive statistics, and results of the ANOVA test for significant differences in responses towards the AS domains based on the demographic variable “years of experience”

AS dimensions	Less than 5 years n=21		5 to 10 years n= 31		More than 10 years n=170		F value	Level of significance
	Arithmetic average	SD	Arithmetic average	SD	Arithmetic average	SD		
Exercising Power	20.05	5.13	22.55	6.69	22.51	6.19	1.52	0.222
Decision making	20.10	5.89	23.94	6.83	22.29	6.58	2.15	0.119
Independence	14.86	3.51	16.48	5.07	15.02	4.70	1.36	0.258
Administrative Motivation	16.19	5.43	19.68	6.37	18.39	5.68	2.31	0.102
Professional development	16.43	4.26	18.35	5.88	18.15	5.79	0.92	0.400

* Significant at the level (0.05) or less

Table (8) findings show no statistically significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the responses towards the reality of the AS of public-school leaders associated to (exercising power, decision-making, independence, administrative motivation, and professional-development) dimensions, based on the demographic variable “years of experience”.

RQ4. Is there a significant difference in the identified ways to develop the AS of public-school leaders based on the respondents’ demographic categories (educational qualification, school educational-stage, years of experience)?

Table (9) Descriptive statistics, and results of the t-test to reveal the significant differences in responses towards the AS based on “educational qualification”

Bachlor n= 201		Postgraduate studies n=21		T test	Degree of freedom	Level of significance
Arithmetic average	SD	Arithmetic average	SD			
28.28	2.83	28.38	3.89	0.14	220	0.885

* Significant at the level (0.05) or less

Table (9) findings show the results of the t-test indicating no statistically significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the averages of the responses towards the ways of AS development, in the light of school accreditation standards according to the “educational-qualification” of the respondents.

Table (10): Descriptive statistics, and results of the ANOVA test to reveal the significant differences in responses towards the proposed ways to develop AS based on “educational qualification” and “years of experience”

Arithmetic average	SD	Arithmetic average	SD	Arithmetic average	SD	F value	Level of significance
Educational stage							
Primary n=115		Intermediate n=42		Secondary n=65			
28.31	3.04	28.88	2.32	27.88	3.06	1.51	0.224
Years of experience						F value	Level of significance
Less than 5 years =21		5 to 10 years n= 31		More than 10 n=170			
28.76	2.47	28.29	3.95	28.24	2.78	0.30	0.741

* Significant at the level (0.05) or less

Table (10) findings show there are no statistically significant differences in the responses towards the proposed ways to develop the AS of public-school ($\alpha > 0.05$).



Summary of findings

- Respondents scored a medium degree of approval on the AS of public-school leaders in light of the accreditation standards associated with practices related to the following dimensions (exercise of powers, decision-making, independence, administrative-motivation, professional-development).
- Respondents have a high level of approval towards the suggested ways that may develop the AS of school leaders in the light of school accreditation standards. ($M=2.83$), and ($SD=0.29$).
- Study findings show no statistically significant differences ($\alpha > 0.05$) between the responses towards the AS of public-school leaders towards the “independence”, “administrative motivation”, and “professional development” dimensions in regards the demographic variable “educational qualification”, “years of experience”, “school stage”.
- Study findings show a statistically significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the responses towards the AS of public-school leaders towards the “exercising power”, and “decision-making” dimensions, in regard to the demographic variables “educational qualification” and “years of experience”, in favor of the bachelor’s degree holders.
- Study findings show no statistically significant differences ($\alpha > 0.05$) between the responses towards the ways suggested to develop the AS of public-school leaders according to the demographic variables (educational-qualification, school academic-stage, years of experience).

Recommendations

The present study recommendations take into consideration the needs and expectation to increase AS of public-school leaders in order to help improve their effectiveness in attaining school accreditation. These recommendations are directed towards upper-leadership at the level of the Ministry of Education, and other recommendations directed toward middle-leadership at the level of public-school principals in Madina. At the level of the Ministry of Education, the recommendations are 1. Updating the policies and regulations governing the public-school system to support further empowerment of school leadership and delegation of power and authority practices, and encouraging the decentralization in the decision-making processes at all levels of the educational system. 2. Developing a national and regional award and reward program linked to the outstanding performance of school-leaders in accordance with the school accreditation standards, 3. Increasing local partnerships with faculties of higher education and accredited training centers, such as: The Institute of Public Administration and the National Center for



Professional Development, to conduct professional training and development programs for school leaders. As for the recommendations targeted toward public school leadership: 1. Encouraging the participation of teachers and parents in setting the vision and strategies of the school through activating school councils and committees and teamwork. 2. Establishing an evaluation and accreditation unit linked to the National Center for School Evaluation and Excellence (NCSEE), to follow up on the efforts in achieving school accreditation.

Further studies to investigate the effect of AS to leadership efficiency and effectiveness while looking into some independent variable such as job loyalty, faculty creativity, and school accreditation attainment is recommended. This would add to knowledge of AS of public-school leaders in other regions of the Saudi educational system and to the scientific credibility of this model.

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