

## Assessing the functioning of government schools as learning organizations

Gasem Aail Alharbi \*, Jazan University, Faculty of Education, Jazan, Saudi Arabia <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5120-7237>

### Suggested Citation:

Alharbi, G. A., (2021). Assessing the functioning of government schools as learning organizations. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*. 16(3), 1036-1051, <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v16i3.5821>

Received October 10, 2020; revised from February 22, 2021; accepted from April 29, 2021.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Huseyin Uzunboylu, Higher Education Planning, Supervision, Accreditation and Coordination Board, Cyprus.

©2021 Birlesik Dunya Yenilik Arastırma ve Yayıncılık Merkezi. All rights reserved.

### Abstract

The present study examined teachers' perceptions of school leaders' practices towards employing the characteristics of Learning Organisations in public education schools. The research used a mixed-method research design, implying that the study conflated quantitative and qualitative data to achieve aims. Moreover, the study used simple random sampling to recruit the participants, enhancing the validity and reliability of the gathered data. Data was collected through a learning school questionnaire (LSQ) administered to two hundred and forty-seven school leaders and two hundred and twenty-one school teachers selected from the selected region's government schools. Findings showed the criticality of school leadership in enforcing and sustaining learning organisations. Also, some impediments to creating Learning Organisations were centralisation, the low level of administrative support in educational departments, and the ineffectiveness of organisational education training programs, which require financial, administrative, and training stimulation to develop schools. School actors can implement the recommendations included in this research to remodel their educational systems as Learning Organisations.

**Keywords:** Learning organisations, school leaders, teachers, learning school questionnaire

\* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Gasem, Alharbi, education department, jazn university, jazan, 6127-82912, KSA  
E-mail address: [d.k-alharbi@hotmail.com](mailto:d.k-alharbi@hotmail.com), / Tel.: +966506048999

## 1. Introduction

Schools as Learning Organisations have attracted heated debates in the educational spaces in recent years. The proponents of Learning Organisations have argued that the transformation could significantly enhance learning activities. Recent technological changes have exposed systems to a series of challenges. For this reason, researchers have argued that school systems need to change to sustain the disruptions (Riina, 2014). Shifting to incorporate the changes in the contemporary educational spaces has promoted sustainability. For instance, in Saudi Arabia and other Middle East nations, actors in the educational spaces have increasingly called for reorienting the vision and mission statements to congruent with the modern changes ("The High-Level Political," 2018). The school leadership is responsible for building functioning educational systems. The regulations and policies enforced by the school leaders enable teachers to perform at the desirable levels, enabling the school systems to cope with the challenges emerging in the contemporary educational space (Alharthi et al., 2018). School leaders play a crucial role in connecting the primary educational actors with the activities in the classroom settings (Klinker, 2006). In short, school leaders are pivotal in ensuring that learning and teaching activities in classroom settings help students achieve the set objectives. Most existing studies have explored the role of school leaders in enabling a conducive learning environment. However, hardly any study has investigated the challenges that school leaders encounter when transitioning schools into learning organisations. The present study seeks to assess these challenges, establishing findings that school leaders can leverage to enforce the needed changes while keeping abreast with the dynamic factors in the current educational landscape.

This study will use a series of research questions to investigate the identified research gap. Research questions (RQs) are essential elements of a study. Below are the RQs formulated to complete the current study:

**RQ1:** How do the school leaderships support the identified Learning Organisation characteristics in the views of some schools' teachers in Saudi Arabia?

**RQ2:** What obstacles hinder transforming Saudi schools into Learning Organizations in the schools' leadership views?

**RQ3:** What are the suggestions that might enable schools to become Learning Organizations?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Learning Organisation in School Context

For many years, the primary actors in the educational spaces have sought a model to improve the learning and teaching activities. Frameworks in the organisational and management theory have been touted to improve educational landscapes (Olivier, 2006). One of the models in this area call for schools to be learning organisations. Such organisations promote the development and training of employees, focusing on employee improvement as an investment opportunity (Erdem & Ucar, 2013).

The idea of a Learning Organization in the context of management theory was developed by Argyris and Scho"n (1978), and then it became popularised by Peter Senge (1990) and Coppieters (2005). The definitions of learning organisations have varied across authors.

(Ahonon & Kaseorg, 2008) defined a Learning Organization as one whose "implementation is crucial to the survival and development of our enterprises and our civil society. Then, Sinclair stated associated experience with knowledge and how these influence generations (Sinclair, 2017).

The following are some definitions of Learning Organizations in the literature from which we can deduce essential elements of the Learning Organization definition:

According to Kareem (2016), a learning organisation is a space or setting where the involved parties learn and acquire new knowledge that plays a central role in transforming the individuals. On the other hand, Golembiewski, 1995 recognised the Learning Organisation as "one able to sustain consistent internal innovation or learning." At the same time, Garvin introduced a more explicit definition in determining the main characteristics of the Learning Organization (Garvin, 1993; Kareem, 2016).

In the same direction, Watkins and Golembiewski (1995) stated that the learning organisation "involves creating systems that put long-term capacities to capture knowledge, support creation, and empower continuous transformation." Furthermore, Nevis et al. (1995) related the Learning Organisation to "the capacity or processes within an organisation to maintain or improve performance based on experience."

The Learning Organisation focuses on empowering people to continuously improve their competence (Ahonen & Kaseorg, 2008). Furthermore, Anders and Riina (2014) related the Learning Organization to "the capacity or processes within an organisation to maintain or improve performance based on experience." Miskel (2001) noted that educational institutions are service organisations that are dedicated to teaching and learning. The people who will take the world into the next era will be those who can move from being transformational knowledge bodies to possess, renew, employ, and sustain knowledge and development successfully. (Miskel 2001)

While Goh (2003) mentioned that a continuous Learning Organization is an organisation where employees are constantly encouraged to gain new knowledge, try new approaches to solving problems, obtain feedback and learn new behaviours because of experimentation.

From the previous definitions of Learning Organizations, we can state that their essential elements are vision, innovation, experimentation, acquiring and transferring knowledge, encouraging action research, empowerment, and Leadership commitment.

Therefore, a learning organisation is a space that supports the continual development of the involved and related parties, leading to the creation and adoption of sustainable solutions (Anders & Riina, 2014).

Thus, we can define a learning school or Learning Organization as a school that supports the processes of acquiring and transferring knowledge, encouraging learning, and creating a suitable environment that encourages practical experimentation, staff development, empowerment, and leadership commitment in the light of vision and mission clarity (Kareem, 2016).

## *2.2 Learning Organization and Organization Learning*

The Learning Organization emerged in response to concerns that American firms were unable to respond to challenges from the external environment and that bureaucratic structures had created inflexible, routinised environments where workers no longer engaged in thoughtful reflection. It focuses on creating organisations that can be adaptable, flexible, experimental, and innovative (Smith, 2008; Kezar, 2005). The terms Learning Organization and organisational learning were once used interchangeably. In the mid-1990s, authors and commentators started using these terms to imply different concepts. The authors used organisational learning to describe the learning approaches employed in firms, whereas learning organisations referred to how firms improve their operations (Jaaron & Backhouse, 2016; Ahonen. & Kaseorg, 2008).

Nevertheless, Tsang (1997) observed that some people perceive an organisation learning as a string of activities. In stark contrast, other people perceive a learning organisation as a dynamic organisation where learners acquire new skills. Furthermore, Kezar (2005) corroborated the perception that a learning organisation is an organisation. Markedly, while describing it as an organisation, Kezar (2005) held that it is a learning space where learners acquire relevant competency that supports the organisation's growth.

However, a learning organisation supports information and idea-sharing and creates, sustains, and maintains experiences that drive self-reflection among the involved staff (Silins and Mulford, 2002).

In short, organisational learning is viewed as a process. On the other hand, a learning organisation is a space or setting characterised by specific features promoting a learning culture.

### *2.3 Characteristics Inherent to Learning Organization*

School leaders must adopt attributes to transform a school into a school. The concept was initially proposed for business contexts (Jaaron, & Backhouse, 2016). Later, some authors have explained that the Learning Organization helps improve the efficacy of the educational systems (Alavi & McCormick, 2004; Brown, 2009; Senge et al., 2000). The authors have identified five attributes germane to learning organisations (AL-Waheid & AL-Fantok, 2020).

Clarifying mission and vision. A string of functional units combines to form a single system. For this reason, both the functional units and the organisation itself must have a well-defined vision and mission. According to Agaoglu (2006), the workforce must operate within the bounds of the vision and mission statement. Further, the top management avails conditions likely to motivate the employees, enabling them to act at levels that accelerate the attainment of the set objectives.

Leaders need to be sources of commitment and government. Equally important, the top management must be committed to the course, enabling heightened attention toward goals and objectives. In particular, the researchers need to incept the idea of learning. The management also employs a policy to foster gender balance and increased accessibility of her health. The organisation can create an egalitarian community where all people feel like being part of the process. Such leadership allows for free sharing of information (Moloi K C, 2010).

Experimentation and rewards. Experimenting is one of the main processes utilised by organisations to expand and grow in new markets. Moreover, the compensation system is crucial for motivating employees to perform at the highest levels, leading to achievement of the set goals (Kareem, 2016).

Effective transfer of knowledge. An efficient communication system is necessary. Members of the functional and structural boundaries must reveal the availability of better systems (Jacobson et al., 2011).

Teamwork and group problem-solving. Teamwork is an integral aspect of the workplace. People need to team and collaborate within the working space. Teamwork ensures excellent performance among the (Hamzah et al., 2011).

The present study incorporated a series of learning schools' characteristics that support well-known authors and materials. Below is a demonstration of the support by credible authors on these attributes:

Clarity vision and school mission (Coppeters, 2005; Agaoglu, 2006; Goh, 2003)

Effective transfer of knowledge (Loermans, 2002; Selen, 2000; Goh, 2003; Altman, 1998)

Innovation and Experimentation (Goh, 2003).

Empowerment and Leadership Commitment (Goh, 2003)

Supporting Learning and Research for problem-solving (Goh, 2003).

#### *2.4 School Leaderships in Saudi Arabia*

Despite the qualitative and quantitative development that the school administration has witnessed in the last decades and distinguished staff being included around school administration, the selection process still depends mainly on qualifications and work experience. However, there is a difference in the work. Also, the selection process is not preceded by pre-service training, although the Ministry of Education and all educational governorates established a department for school administration. Besides, there is a committee for school administration for selecting and setting identified terms for would-be school leaderships ("School Leaders of the Kingdom," 2019). However, the analytical aspects of the selection criteria for nominating the school leaderships, within the eighteen standard terms from which is the following:

There is no keen desire for doing the administrative duties of school leaderships; it is due to the paucity of monetary incentives and the barrier of work without the appropriate inducement and sound hierarchy in school administration. Also, lack of a scientific method for selecting school leaderships, particularly in villages and rural areas wherein some selection criteria are not adequately considered, and a lack of practical training in school administration ("School Leaders of the Kingdom," 2019).

Furthermore, there is no practical pre-service training around school administration. Also, there are no scientific and valid tests for school leaderships' nominees. Therefore, the Ministry of Education has taken action to administer studies and workshops in some regions and governorates, and this comes with King Abdullah's project for developing education in the KSA. The King's project was based upon the educational leadership of schools in the light of the modern tendencies for school administration in terms of the selection and qualification at each stage of general education (Abdulaziz, 2017).

Moreover, Saudi Arabia endeavoured to develop school leadership by setting organisational rules for school leadership in general education. The fifth item (779 on 16-17 1389) of these rules is concerned with the duties and responsibilities of school leadership. (Ministry of Education, 2000, decision: No. 1139). A ministerial decision was taken by which further multi-authorities were given to the school leadership about forming committees, remedying low-level students, disturbing students in classes, evaluating staff performance, and processing students' penalties (Louis et al., 2010).

Subsequently, the Kingdom has paid attention to the development and preparation of school leaderships and developed the functional role. This is expected to maximise the efficiency and proficiency of school leadership in the future and enhance the main characteristics of Learning Organizations at schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (Al Atiq, 2017)

### **3. Methods and Materials**

#### *3.1 Research Model*

A mixed-method *design* helped complete this research, combining quantitative and qualitative data. For this reason, this design nullifies the weaknesses of the individual methodology. Additionally, it was essential to collect textual and numeric data about how school leadership in KSA promotes practices of learning organisations.

#### *3.2 Participants*

The current research collected primary data from the teachers and leaders in the public schools in the Jazan region of Saudi Arabia. Essentially, two hundred and forty-seven school leaders and two hundred and twenty-one school teachers were selected to participate in the study. All the participants needed to have worked in the sector for a minimum of one year. The duration was essential to ensure that the participants had first-hand information about the school leaders' challenges when transforming schools into Learning Organisations.

#### *3.3 Data Collection Tools*

It was necessary to utilise an appropriate data-gathering tool. A questionnaire emerged as the most relevant tool, leading to the formulation of relevant questions in collecting valid primary data. We depended on many resources to identify characteristics that school leaderships must acquire to be able to create a learning school, for example Jerez-Go'mez et al. (2005).

The data collection tool had a five-point scale ranging from small to high scores. The initial developed tool had 42 items. This tool was piloted on 14 participants to determine clarity. Ten specialist professors at Saudi universities checked the instrument as far as its content validity. On revision, the instrument was administered to 247 leadership from schools in the Jazan region.

The reliability and validity of the data collection tools determine the credibility of the collected data. For this reason, it was necessary to use only those variables that guaranteed reliability and validity. A series of reliability tests helped expand and refine questionnaire items. A loading factor threshold of 0.40, on the other hand, was employed to eliminate those items that failed to meet the threshold. Initially, the instrument contained over 40 items. However, upon refinement, the instrument remained with only 33 items. These items were related to the attributes of the learning organisation mentioned and described earlier in the report. Moreover, tests revealed that the final coefficient alpha of the instrument stood at 0.97, proving its high reliability and validity. Moreover, the reduced instrument from the factorial analysis was applied to the sample of the teachers in Saudi.

#### *3.4 Data Collection Process*

The data collection process went through a series of stages, and they were congruent to ensure the collection of valid and reliable data. Selecting the right participants was the initial stage of the data collection process. After identifying the participants, they were provided with the learning school questionnaire (LSQ). They responded to the questions, helping me to analyse the findings and making informed recommendations.

Sampling is a crucial process used to identify and recruit study participants. The present study used a simple random sampling technique, which is essential in reducing bias. Minimised bias promotes the validity, reliability, and credibility of the collected data. 221 teachers and 247 teachers in leadership made up the sample size.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Instruments must exhibit high reliability. According to Brown (2009), high probability implies that an instrument is used for analysing data that it was designed to analyse. The present study conflated varimax rotation with principal components analysis (PCA) to validate the instrument. Validation of the dimensions of the learning organisation demonstrated that the study was congruent with empirical construct conditionalities. Also, it was crucial to determine the items to retain in the analysis. It followed that only those with eigenvalues more than one were considered in the analysis. The coefficient alpha helped to determine the internal homogeneity of all components. An alpha of 0.7 was deemed the threshold. All factors with coefficients greater than the mentioned threshold demonstrated internal consistency and validity. After confirming the factorial validity, the instrument was applied to the subjects who were in Saudi teachers and school leadership; then, the appropriate statistical techniques were used for analysing data and answering the respective research questions

## 4. Results and Discussion

Tables 1 to 5 show the outcomes of the data analysis. Table 1 contains reliability values of all components and PCA values. The values in this table show that the PCA that employed varimax rotation resulted in a 5-factor solution. The solution occupied 63.5% of the cumulative variance. As mentioned, a sample of 247 teachers provided data that helped complete the research

Table 1. Reliability results and principal component of learning school dimensions

| Factor | Eigen value | Variance (%) | Cronbach's Alpha |
|--------|-------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1      | 5.672       | 15.33        | 0.87             |
| 2      | 5.440       | 14.70        | 0.91             |
| 3      | 4.475       | 12.09        | 0.92             |
| 4      | 4.401       | 11.89        | 0.90             |
| 5      | 3.481       | 9.407        | 0.89             |

### Factor Eigenvalue Variance (%) Cronbach's Alpha

The above table shows that most components had acceptable reliability values. The values stood between 0.87 and 0.92, a range that was greater than the 0.70 thresholds. The high reliability confirmed internal homogeneity, indicating that the findings were reliable and valid. The internal homogeneity makes the findings valid, and as such, actors can use them to make data-enabled findings.

Further, both tables 2 and 3 contain the focal factors and their loading values:

The loading factors varied across the learning school constructs used in the research. Each of the constructs had varying items describing their criticality in completing the study.



Table 2. Factor Loadings

|    | <b>Item and Factor Description</b>   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
|----|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|    | <b>innovation and experimentation</b>  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 1  | People who are new in this school are encouraged to question the way things are done.                              | .754     |          |          |          |          |
| 2  | New ideas from employees are not treated seriously by the school management. (r)                                   | .744     |          |          |          |          |
| 3  | Innovative ideas that work is often rewarded by school leadership.   | .695     |          |          |          |          |
| 4  | My school encourages Experimentation and Innovation in the work.   | .680     |          |          |          |          |
| 5  | This school encourages a suitable environment for constructing an open dialogue at school.                         | .608     |          |          |          |          |
| 6  | My principal motivates a suitable environment for trailing new ideas presented by the working staff.               | .579     |          |          |          |          |
|    | <b>Supporting research and learning</b>  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 7  | Using procedural researches results for developing the school work.  |          | .772     |          |          |          |
| 8  | Training the working employees for employing procedural researches to solve problems.                              |          | .758     |          |          |          |
| 9  | Developing the staff's research skills for solving school problems.  |          | .755     |          |          |          |
| 10 | Supporting the mechanisms that help in solving problems scientifically rather than in normal and traditional ways. |          | .755     |          |          |          |
| 11 | The school leadership pursuits teachers' practices considering the results of the procedural researches.           |          | .748     |          |          |          |
| 12 | Enhancing the opportunities of the staff's continuing education.   |          | .531     |          |          |          |
| 13 | There are different mechanisms for dealing with the new employees' queries about work.                             |          | .438     |          |          |          |
|    | <b>Empowerment and leadership commitment</b>   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 14 | Management in this school frequently involves employees in important decisions.                                    |          |          | .767     |          |          |
| 15 | Making decisions with the agreement of all the staff.  |          |          | .720     |          |          |
| 16 | Encouraging team work groups that are self-operating.  |          |          | .708     |          |          |
| 17 | Expanding the authority of decision-making at school settings.   |          |          | .705     |          |          |
| 18 | Forming team workgroups for solve-problems.  |          |          | .675     |          |          |
| 19 | Accepting and discussing the consultancies and advice presented by the working staff.                              |          |          | .648     |          |          |
|    | <b>Knowledge Management</b>  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 20 | Writing down new information continuously.   |          |          |          | .667     |          |
| 21 | Encouraging the employees to transmit and exchange learning experiences among themselves.                          |          |          |          | .667     |          |



Table 3. Factor Loadings

| Item and Factor Description  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5    |
|--|---|---|---|------|------|
| 2 Failures are seldom constructively discussed in our school (r).<br>2   |   |   |   | .618 |      |
| 2 Writing down and saving knowledge via evidences,<br>3 databases, and files to make use of then within new<br>3 situations. |   |   |   | .610 |      |
| 2 Employing / using/ information freely without setting any<br>4 restrictions between the staff.                             |   |   |   | .604 |      |
| 2 Creating the school climate for acquiring new knowledge.<br>5  |   |   |   | .571 |      |
| 2 In our school, there is a system that helps us to learn good<br>6 practices from other schools.                            |   |   |   | .538 |      |
| 2 Supporting the flow of information easily among principals,<br>7 and supervisors for all staff.                            |   |   |   | .512 |      |
| 2 Using information technology in circulating knowledge inside<br>8 the school.  |   |   |   | .487 |      |
| <b>Vision and mission of the school</b>  |   |   |   |      |      |
| 2 In our school, there is clear school vision and mission.<br>9  |   |   |   |      | .701 |
| 3 Most of the school staff takes part in preparing school vision<br>0 and mission.   |   |   |   |      | .820 |
| 3 Unifying and mobilising staff efforts for achieving the vision<br>1 and mission.   |   |   |   |      | .688 |
| 3 Identifying the goals and procedural aims of school.<br>2  |   |   |   |      | .686 |
| 3 Cooperating students and their parents, and the school staff<br>3 in setting school objectives/aims.                       |   |   |   |      | .522 |

Across all factors in tables 2 and 3, the minimum loading value stood at 0.438, while the largest value was 0.772. The low loading values indicated reduced validity of the collected data on the specific item.

#### 4.1 Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation. (Brown, 2009).

New ideas were the main attribute of the first rotated factor. The factor contributed 15.33% of the variance and reported the most significant factor loadings.

This factor has thus been named innovation and experimentation. The second rotated factor – occupying a 14.70% cumulative variance and called supporting research and learning – had variables characterising the organisation's support action, researching problem-solving in school, and supporting learning. Empowerment and leadership commitment was the third-rotated factor, contributing to 12.09% variance.

The 4<sup>th</sup> factor constituted 11.89% total variance, pertained to how the employees have information and knowledge to perform their job professionally. This factor was therefore labelled Knowledge Management. The fifth factor consisted of variables that describe the school's clarity of vision and mission, so this factor was therefore labelled vision and mission of the school.

Table 4. Standard deviation, mean, and internal Correlations

|   | N. | M.   | SD. | 1 | 2            | 3            | 4            | 5            | 6            |
|---|----|------|-----|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>1- Innovation &amp; Experimentation</b>      | 6  | 3.51 | .87 | 1 | <b>0.65*</b> | <b>0.65*</b> | <b>0.75*</b> | <b>0.57*</b> | <b>0.87*</b> |
| <b>2- supporting research &amp; learning</b>    | 7  | 3.20 | .26 |   | 1            | <b>0.59*</b> | <b>0.74*</b> | <b>0.68*</b> | <b>0.87*</b> |
| <b>3- empowerment and Leadership commitment</b> | 6  | 3.48 | .63 |   |              | 1            | <b>0.67*</b> | <b>0.52*</b> | <b>0.80*</b> |
| <b>4- knowledge management</b>                  | 9  | 3.26 | .95 |   |              |              | 1            | <b>0.64*</b> | <b>0.90*</b> |
| <b>5- vision and mission of school</b>          | 5  | 3.23 | .33 |   |              |              |              | 1            | <b>0.78*</b> |
| <b>6-Total</b>                                  | 33 |      |     |   |              |              |              |              | 1            |

For 2-tailed test, 0.01 is the significance level.

All dimensions of learning school are significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) in the above table. This indicates the internal constancy of the instrument. Then, the effectiveness of the current study could be demonstrated in determining the characteristics of Learning Organizations by answering the formulated RQs.

**RQ1:** How does the school leaderships support the identified Learning Organisation characteristics in the views of some schools' teachers in Saudi Arabia?

Concerning this question, the answer was worked out via identifying the minimum and maximum value of each measurement variable and arithmetic average and standard deviation. It was done by dividing the arithmetic rate of the maximum value for each variable after working out the percentage that indicates the principals' support of the Learning Organization characteristics in their schools. Table 4 displays the answer to the question described above.

Table 5. Teachers' responses about Principals' Support to characteristics of the learning school

|  | N   | Mean | Std. | Rank |
|--|-----|------|------|------|
| 1-Experimentation & Innovation           | 221 | 3.51 | 4.08 | 1    |
| 2- supporting research and learning      | 221 | 3.20 | 4.79 | 5    |
| 3- empowerment and Leadership commitment | 221 | 3.48 | 4.44 | 2    |
| 4- knowledge management                  | 221 | 3.26 | 6.88 | 3    |
| 5- vision and mission of school          | 221 | 3.23 | 3.53 | 4    |

According to the teachers' responses, the previous Table shows that the school leaders' total ratio that supports the learning school characteristics is high. Nevertheless, this indicates the school leaderships need to identify and support these characteristics in their schools. This result is relatively consistent with the recommendations for these two studies Agandy and Algeheny (2018) and Albliwai and Tanash, (2017).

The Table shows that the knowledge management dimension is higher than the empowerment and Leadership commitment, but with the Experimentation & innovation dimension is lower than the supporting research and learning dimension,

These results can be explained in the light of some different cultural factors, especially, for example, the high income of a teacher and the availability of material resources is high, enabling the teachers to support the characteristics of a learning organisation. The central system of education made, the teachers are interested in implementing rules more than looking forward to developing creative students just following the regulations and laws. Although the overall percentage of the creation of schools as Learning communities remains low, perhaps the reason behind this is due to the legislative factors such as the central control of the educational system in the country and some of the bureaucratic complications that reduce the freedom of schools and weaken the sense of independence and school-based management. (Jacobson et al.2011)

**RQ2:** What obstacles hinder transforming Saudi schools into Learning Organizations in the views of the schools' leaderships in Saudi Arabia?

The answer was worked out about the second question via the qualitative analysis of the school leaderships' responses in Saudi Arabia.

The analysis indicated that several obstacles hinder the school leaderships from turning their schools into Learning Organizations. These impediments include centralisation in the education system and severe plutocratic that are still being practiced in the education system, paucity of financial support and possibilities regarding constructing the primary databases and communication are concerned, and weakness of organisational support of the education administration for school leaderships (Moolenaar et al., 2010). Another bottleneck was the lack of practical training courses that equip the school leaderships with constructing training organisations (Al-Naseer, 2015). Weakness of teachers' motivation to participate in the training courses with the school leaderships or get training regularly and weakness of impartiality in decision-making and circulating the decisions to schools also had a profound crippling impact (Black, 2010).

Furthermore, other obstacles to transforming schools into Learning Organisations emerged in the qualitative analysis. Some of them were constraints of the authority of the school leadership in general education, poor qualifying and training of school leadership, and having hired school teachers that restrict the achievement of educational goals. Besides, weakness in financial and abstract incentives given by education administrations for leadership and teachers, weakness of organisational support of the education administration for inefficient or troublemaker teachers (lateness, absence, behaviour), and drawback of educational experiences of most teachers the new ones were profound factors.

From the above, the sample agreed on the importance of achieving schools' development to be Learning Organizations, as illustrated by the answer to the last question as follows

**RQ3:** What are the suggestions that might enable schools to become Learning Organizations?

The question above was answered via reviewing the target literature review and considering Saudi school leaderships' suggestions. Markedly, to accelerate the transitioning into a Learning Organisation, school leaders recommended expanding the authority given to school leadership, enhancing continuing training opportunities for teaching and administrative staff at schools, and encouraging teamwork. This creates an open climate inside the school. The leaders also suggested that financial support from the side of the ministry and educational districts and improves the school environment, getting rid of hired/rent and old schools and having new well-equipped buildings, including modern labs and advanced modern equipment, and the importance of moral stimulus through having mutual respect between school community staff, as this leads to productivity and creativity are essential enabling factors. Further, motivating training programs that fulfil staff's needs and desires and encourage school leaderships to join training programs around leadership and administrative creativity. They will be able to deal with constraints and problems efficiently and apply quality assurance criteria also emerged as critical factors.

## **5. Conclusion**

The current study showed the critical role of school leadership in supporting the characteristics of the learning school. However, some likely restrictions may hinder turning Saudi schools into Learning Organizations. As stated by the principals in Saudi schools, there are similarities in these restrictions, such as the prominent centralised administration in the educational system, although there are recent attempts towards decentralisation. Furthermore, it is due to the low-level organisational support of the school from educational administrations and the lack of the effectiveness of the training programs for school leaderships, particularly those of organisational learning skills. Therefore. The Kingdom seeks to develop leadership side by side with modern trends to reach the learning organisation. Among these are expanding the authorities given to school leaderships, enhancing continuing learning opportunities for teaching and administrative staff at schools, financial support from the ministry and school districts, improving the school climate, and motivating training programs that fulfill staff's needs and desires at school.

## **6. Recommendations**

1. Future studies should advance on the findings collected from this study by selecting and examining larger samples. Although the current study used a sample size of 468, future studies can use even a higher sample size. The findings from the future studies would be essential in corroborating the current study's findings, facilitating application.
2. The study was applied in government schools in the Jazan region to school leaderships and teachers to achieve the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's vision 2030 to develop management and reach Learning Organizations. The findings can guide the application of new approaches in KSA's public schools. The new approaches should foster the transformation of public schools into learning organisations.
3. The proposed methodology was to know the school leadership level in the five dimensions of Learning Organization schools. Researchers can build on the findings established in this study to further this area of knowledge. Additionally, school leaders can use the findings to guide the transformation of school systems into learning organisations.

## Acknowledgements

All thanks and appreciation for the cooperation of school leaders and teachers who agreed to participate in this research

## References

- Abdulaziz, K. (2017). Project for the development of public education. Saudi National Portal for Government Services - GOV.SA. [https://www.my.gov.sa/wps/portal/snp/aboutksa/nationalDevelopmentPlans/download/King%20Abdullah%20Project%20for%20the%20Development%20of%20Public%20Education!/ut/p/z0/fY5BDolwEAC\\_sh8wSxG9G0SIBlv1IPZiCpRSrW3TFN4v8QEeJ5IMBjk2yK2YtRJROyvMwg--Z5JkVQkI5ReD2lyqZOSZJSty3yDNxHwiPy\\_tFTSUOe1Qu5FHFfaDg6bk7YKdm0\\_GSNGYMG9ZBdhcAHikGEvZ2mc\\_0gbwQ3AptboDop-6n5v6N\\_I\\_QuYdOQI/](https://www.my.gov.sa/wps/portal/snp/aboutksa/nationalDevelopmentPlans/download/King%20Abdullah%20Project%20for%20the%20Development%20of%20Public%20Education!/ut/p/z0/fY5BDolwEAC_sh8wSxG9G0SIBlv1IPZiCpRSrW3TFN4v8QEeJ5IMBjk2yK2YtRJROyvMwg--Z5JkVQkI5ReD2lyqZOSZJSty3yDNxHwiPy_tFTSUOe1Qu5FHFfaDg6bk7YKdm0_GSNGYMG9ZBdhcAHikGEvZ2mc_0gbwQ3AptboDop-6n5v6N_I_QuYdOQI/)
- Agaoglu, E. (2006). The reflection of the learning organisation concept to school of education. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 7(1), 132–148. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/tojde/issue/16923/176627>
- Agandy.A.M.Z.,Algeheny.A.M.Z.,(2018). The degree to which school leaders practice technical competencies in light of development strategies Development of public education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Journal of the Faculty of Education, Sohag University*, 51(6),71–112. <https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/a3/a359e571-7033-41c7-8fe7-9ba60730082e.pdf>
- Ahonen, M., & Kaseorg, M. (2008)., Learning organisation. *Theory and Practice: Case of Estonia, Conference Paper*, 170–175. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295079759>
- Ahonen. M.& Kaseorg. M.,(2008). Learning Organization – Theory and Practice: Case of Estonia. *Annual London Conference on*, 169–181
- Al Atiq. ASM,(2017). The degree of importance of developing school leadership performance in public education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in light of the dimensions of professional learning societies. *Journal of the College of Education*, 28(112), 292–382 [https://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2336&context=utk\\_graddiss](https://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2336&context=utk_graddiss)
- Alavi, S. & McCormick, J. (2004). A cross-cultural analysis of the effectiveness of the learning organisation model in school contexts. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 18(7), 408–416. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540410563112>
- Albliwai.N.K., Tanash .S.Y.,(2017). Developing performance assessment tool for public education principals within Tabuk School District, KSA. *Journal Faculty of Educational Sciences, The University of Jordan*, 44(2), 211–232. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543776.pdf>
- Al-Naseer . YM,(2015).The training needs of school principals in public education in northern borders from their perspective. *The Journal of Studies, Educational Sciences*,6(4), 277–294. <https://www.oecd.org/education/school/37133393.pdf>
- Altman, Y., & Iles, P. (1998). Learning, leadership, teams: Corporate learning and organisational change. *Journal of Management Development*. 17(1), 44–55. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621719810368682>
- Alharthi. S., Alharthi A., & Alharthi. M. ( 2018) . Sustainable development goals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's 2030 Vision. *WIT Transactions on Ecology and the Environment*, 238(40),455–456. [www.witpress.com](http://www.witpress.com)

- ALharbi (2021). Assessing the functioning of government schools as learning organizations. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*. 16(3), 1036-1051. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v16i3.5821>
- AL-Waheaid, N. M., & AL-Fantok., A. A.(2020).The requirements for the application of the Learning Organization at schools applying King Abdullah's project for the development of public education at Riyadh City. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Sciences* ,4 (11), 1–6.<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.sdl.idm.oclc.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=54755220-5543-4ebb-b64b-7ba87e8cb075%40sessionmgr4007>
- Anders, Ö., & Riina, K. (2014). Is the learning organisation idea relevant to higher educational institutions? A literature review and a "multi-stakeholder contingency approach. *International Journal of Educational Management , Emerald Group Publishing Limited , 28*(2), 173–214. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-01-2013-0010>
- Argyris, C. & Schön, D. (1978). *Organisational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Addison-Wesley.
- Black, L G.,(2010) .Correlational analysis of servant leadership and school climate, *Catholic Education. A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*,3(4),436–466. <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce/vol13/iss4/3/>
- Brown, J. D. (2009). Statistics Corner. Questions and answers about language testing statistics: Choosing the right number of components or factors in PCA and EFA. Shiken: JALT Testing & Evaluation SIG Newsletter, 13(2), 19–23. <https://hosted.jalt.org/test/PDF/Brown30.pdf>
- Brown, J. D. (2009). Principal components analysis and exploratory factor analysis &ndash Definitions, differences, and choices. *Newsletter, Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)*, 13(1), 26-30. [http://jalt.org/test/bro\\_29.htm](http://jalt.org/test/bro_29.htm)
- Calvert, G., Mobley, S., & Marshall, L. (1994). Grasping the learning organisation. *Training & Development*, 48(6), 38–44.
- Coppieters, P. (2005). Turning schools into learning organisations. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 28(2), 129–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619760500093131>
- School leaders report in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (2019). *Emkan Education*. <http://emkaneducation.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/School-leaders-in-KSA-The-Forgotten-Profession-En-2019.pdf>
- Erdem, M., & Ucar, I. H. (2013). Learning organisation perceptions in elementary education in terms of teachers and the effect of learning organisation on organisational commitment. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, Educational Consultancy and Research Center* 13(3), 1527–1534. [www.edam.com.tr/estp](http://www.edam.com.tr/estp)
- Garvin, D. (1993). Building a learning organisation. *Harvard Business Review*, 71(4). <https://hbr.org/1993/07/building-a-learning-organization>
- Goh, S. C. (2003). Improving organisational learning capability: Lessons from two case studies. *The Learning Organization*, 10(4), 216–227. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09696470310476981>
- Jaaron, A. A., & Backhouse, C. J. (2016). Activating organisational learning capabilities through service operations design. In *Proceedings of the 2016 International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management* (pp. 103–121). [https://staff-old.najah.edu/sites/default/files/35%20\(1\).pdf](https://staff-old.najah.edu/sites/default/files/35%20(1).pdf)
- Jacobson .s Johansson.o.,& Day.C.,(2011),Preparing school leaders to lead Organisational learning and capacity building. Stephen Jacobson. *Olof Johansson & Christopher chapter 6* (1), 1–42 <https://www.researchgate.net>
- Jerez-Gomez, P., Céspedes-Lorente, J., & Valle-Cabrera, R. (2005). Organisational learning capability: A proposal of measurement. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(6), 715–725. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2003.11.002>
- Kareem, J. (2016). The influence of leadership in building a learning organisation. *IUP Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 15(1), 7–17.

ALharbi (2021). Assessing the functioning of government schools as learning organizations. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*. 16(3), 1036-1051. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v16i3.5821>

<https://search.proquest.com/openview/f5c5b41b55666989bc6810be8a1bbf5d/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2029985>

Kezar, A. (2005). What campuses need to know about organisational learning and the learning organisation. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2005(131), 7–22. <https://doi.org/10.1002/he.183>

Klinker, J. F. (2006). *Principalship*, In Fenwick W. (Editor). *Encyclopedia of educational leadership and administration*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Köse.E.,& Güçlü.N.(2017). Examining the Relationship between Leadership Styles of School Principals, Organizational Silence and Organizational Learning. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 9 (1),129–140. <https://doi.org/10.15345/iojes.2017.01.019>

Loermans, J. (2002). Synergising the learning organisation and knowledge management. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 6(3), 24–35.

Louis. KS., Dretzke. B.& Wahlstrom. K., (2010). How does leadership affect student achievement? Results from a national US survey. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 21(3), 315–336

Mills, D. and Friesen, B. (1992). The learning organisation. *European Journal of Management*, 10(2), 10–24.

Ministry of Education (2000). *A Ministerial decision: No. 1139 on 17/03/1421 in relation with powers given to school principals at all education stages in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. Riyadh: Information Centre. (Arabic version)

Moloi K. C. (2010). How can schools build learning organisations in difficult education contexts? *South African Journal of Education*, 30 (4),621–633 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262551854\\_How\\_can\\_schools\\_build\\_learning\\_organisations\\_in\\_difficult\\_education\\_contexts](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262551854_How_can_schools_build_learning_organisations_in_difficult_education_contexts)

Moolenaar. N.M., Dally. A.J., Slegers. PJC, (2010). Occupying the principal position: Examining relationships between transformational leaderships, social networks position and school innovative climate. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(5), 623–670. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0013161X10378689>

Nevis, E., et al. (1995). *Understanding organisations as learning systems*. Sloan Management Review.

Olivier, Dianne (2006). *Professional Learning Communities*. In Fenwick W. (Editor). *Encyclopedia of Educational Leadership and Administration*. vol.2, (California: Sage Publications, Inc.)

Sarkar Arani, M. R., Shibata, Y. & Matoba, M. (2007). Delivering "Jugyou Kenkyuu" for reframing schools as learning organisations: An examination of the process of japanese school change. *Nagoya Journal of Education and Human Development*, 3(2), 13–24. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED506400.pdf>

Selen, W. (2000). Knowledge management in resource-based competitive environments: a roadmap for building learning organizations. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 4(4), 346–353. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13673270010379902>

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*. USA: Doubleday.

Senge, P. M., et al. (1994). *The Fifth Discipline Field book: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization*. New York: The Putnam Publishing Group.

Senge, P. M. et al. (2000). *Schools That Learn: A Fifth Discipline Field book for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares about Education*. USA: Doubleday.

Senge P.,M.(2006). *The Fifth Discipline. The Art and Science of the Learning Organisation*. London: Random House.



- ALharbi (2021). Assessing the functioning of government schools as learning organizations. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*. 16(3), 1036-1051, <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v16i3.5821>
- Silins, H. C., Mulford, W. R., & Zarins, S. (2002). Organizational learning and school change. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38(5), 613-642. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X02239641>
- Sinclair, N. (2017). Building a learning organisation in a public library. *Journal of Library Administration*, 57, 683–700. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2017.1291183>
- Smith, D. (2008). *The relationship between learning organisation and student achievement in middle schools*. Unpublished ph.D. Dissertation, University of La Verne, California, September. 10-12
- Sun, P.Y.T. and Scott, J.L. (2003). Exploring the divide-organisational learning and Learning Organization. *The Learning Organization*, 10(4/5), 202–215. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09696470310476972>
- The high-level political forum for the year 2018. Towards a sustainable development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - The first national voluntary review. *Transformation Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies*, July 9, 2018 to July 18, 2018, New York [www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org](http://www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org)
- Tsang, E. W. (1997). Organisational learning and the learning organisation: A dichotomy between descriptive and prescriptive research. *Human relations*, 50(1), 73–89. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1016905516867>
- Watkins, E. and Golembiewski, R. (1995). Rethinking organisation development for learning organisations. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 3(1), 86–101. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb028825>