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# Resistance to Educational Change from the Perspective of Teachers in Al Ain Educational Zone in UAE.

Wafaa Mohammed Ali El Zaatar.

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**United Arab Emirates University  
Faculty of Education  
Master of Education Program**

**Resistance to educational change from the perspective of teachers in Al-Ain  
Educational Zone in UAE**

By

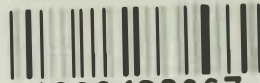
Wafaa Mohammed Ali El Zatar

A Thesis Submitted to

United Arab Emirates University  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of  
Master of Education  
**Educational Leadership**

**May 2011**

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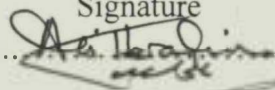
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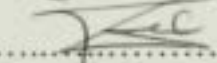
Dr. Ali Ibrahim

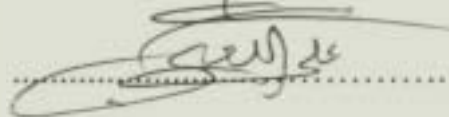
Dr. Abdel Rahman Al Nuaimi

Dr. Ali Al Kaabi (Advisor)

Signature

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United Arab Emirates University

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Dr. Ali Ibrahim

Dr. Abdel Rahman Al Nuaimi

and supervised by

Dr. Ali Al Kaabi

### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the factors for teacher resistance toward the educational change in government schools in the U.A.E. The factors that this study investigated are the: psychological, personal, school culture, and organizational factors. The study was guided by one research question and used the descriptive research method. Data for this study were collected through a survey using a Likert Scale. It was sent to 414 teachers in public schools who taught in different grade levels. Teachers selected were males and females, from different age group, years of experience and qualifications; and they were UAE national and foreign teachers. Only 255 teachers responded. Statistical tests including means, percentages, and standard deviations, and Chi-Square Test were applied to analyze the quantitative part of the questionnaire. The answers to the open-ended questions in the last part of the questionnaire were interpreted by tallying the answers. The results of this study showed that teachers felt the need for change and they trusted the change agents and principals. However, they needed to be prepared psychologically because they feared the unknown consequences of change and they were exhausted from frequent changes that were imposed on them. Further, teachers faced difficulty in teaching students who were not grasping the new curriculum because of the language problem. What they needed was a well planned change, supportive principals, effective staff development that relate to change, and good training programs and rewards. Above all, they asked for a change that fits the UAE culture.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all, I would like to acknowledge Allah, who has been with me to accomplish this work. With Allah, everything is possible.

I would like to acknowledge my sincere gratefulness to many people who assisted in helping and supporting me to accomplish this thesis.

My deepest gratitude to Dr. Ali Al Kaabi, who encouraged, helped and guided me to find my own way. To my committee members Dr. Ali Ibrahim for his guidance, feedback and patience and Dr. Abdel Rahman Al Nuaimi for his valuable feedback.

I offer a special thanks to Prof. Abd El Moneam Hassan who was always ready to support and answer my questions.

I also thank Dr. Ismail Zembat for his valuable information that enlightened my way.

Finally, I thank my family and especially my husband, whose support, encouragement and tolerance enabled me to proceed in completing my study.



## DEDICATION

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to the blessed soul of my father Mohammad Ali who passed away after a long struggle with his illness while completing my Master Degree. He believed in my potentials to continue my studies and supported me to make this journey possible. His unconditioned love will always stay in my heart.

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# Resistance to Educational Change from the Perspectives of Teachers in AL Ain Education Zone in the United Arab Emirates

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

#### *1.1. Background and Problem*

In the recent years, the business world has become more and more competitive and unpredictable. Changes in the societies, markets, customers, competition, and technology around the globe are forcing organizations to develop new strategies, and learn new ways of operation. As a result, success in educational organizations is no more guaranteed through the use of old practices. H.H. late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan declared that "Future generations will be living in a world that is very different from that to which we are accustomed to. It is essential that we prepare ourselves and our children for that new world". Accordingly, to respond to the global development and be recognized as one of the best countries who value education, the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) educational organizations are undergoing several educational changes. Abu Dhabi Education Council<sup>1</sup>(ADEC) (2011) mentioned that in order to facilitate the change process, the Ministry of Education has delegated the

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<sup>1</sup> ADEC "was established in accordance with law No. 24 of 2005, issued by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the UAE President, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi. The Chairman of ADEC is H.H. Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces and the Vice-Chairman is H.H. Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Minister of Presidential Affairs" ( Abu Dhabi Education Council, 2011).

responsibility of the educational change in Abu Dhabi Emirate including that in Al Ain City to ADEC.

"In September 2006, the pilot program of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative was launched by the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) to improve the standards in public (government) schools in Abu Dhabi with the aid of private education providers." (Abu Dhabi PPP school project, 2011). The planned changes undertaken aimed to improve education and educational institutions in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, apply new educational policies, plans and programs that intend to raise students' performance and education delivery to international standards.

Al Ain city is part of the Abu Dhabi emirate. The process of development and change included the curriculum, teaching methods, assessment and scoring scheme, approaches to manage students and govern classrooms, classroom environment, and the school leadership. However, several and frequent changes have been taken place especially in the curriculum and assessment scheme all over the period from the start of change in 2006 till the present time.

Even though there has been a tremendous effort on the part of the policy makers to increase the level of education in the UAE, such efforts for change face many obstacles that arise from different parties such as students, parents, teachers, administrators, and supervisors. One of the most important obstacles in this process is teachers' resistance to such change as will be further detailed below. This resistance stem from the system of initiating and administering change. In this system, school principals are responsible for the implementation of decisions taken by ADEC. Accordingly, the principal expects teachers to act in compliance with the imposed decisions and policies. However, teachers might resist the implementation of such pre-determined requests that are outlined by ADEC. In this regard, there is resistance to

change on the teachers' part as declared by Troudi & Alwan (2010). Troudi & Alwan (2010) investigated the teachers' perceptions about change in the U.A.E. Teachers had opposing emotional reactions to curriculum change. They supported parts of the change as they became more acquainted with the new curriculum but they were distressed from other aspects. These aspects were attributed to having many teachers that have been excluded from the decision taking regarding the change. Teachers felt having low self esteem since they viewed their function in curriculum change as insignificant, inactive and inferior. Several teachers thought that they did not have their input about the change because of the dominating and centralized education system in the U.A.E.

As explained before, the problem being addressed in this study is that not all teachers accept all the educational changes that are currently in progress. The resisted change varies among teachers according to their resistance towards different areas of change: For example, if we consider the teaching methods:

Not every teacher embraces new interactive teaching methodologies that promote creativity and innovation in teaching. Some believe in traditional methods and old-fashioned teaching styles. This creates conflicts among educational administrators and policy makers on what, how, and when children should be taught (Al Ateeqi, 2009).

As suggested by Al Ateeqi (2009) there is resistance toward adoption of new teaching methods. Such resistance, in addition to the ones in other areas, will in turn hinder the progress of the change.

Change in teaching methods is based on recent developments in teaching and learning that make students the center of learning. Although this kind of change is worthwhile, still some teachers resisted it. Therefore, the problem does not seem to be

with the change but with some factors that might affect teachers to resist the change. These factors will be investigated in this study.

### *1.2. Purpose and Research Question*

As highlighted above, one of the major obstacles in improving educational system of UAE is teacher resistance. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the factors for teacher resistance toward the educational changes in public schools in Al Ain. More specifically, it aims to investigate the following research question:

What are the underlying (psychological, personal, school-culture, organizational) factors for teacher resistance to educational changes that are currently underway in Al Ain public schools in the U.A.E.?

### *1.3. Significance of the Study*

Resistance to educational change among teachers is a significant problem that is globally recognized. It creates one of the challenges to successfully implementing the change. Investigating the underlying factors behind the resistance in U.A.E. will add to the body of knowledge concerning the causes of resistance to educational change. This resistance is prevailing in an environment which is unique and different. The U.A.E. is one of the conservative countries whose educational system is administered and carried out by national and foreign teachers and administrators. Moreover, the changes that are processed are developed by the UAE educational team in collaboration with foreign experts. The threat is that major changes may weaken the native Arabic language and the established culture of schooling.



At a time with rapid educational changes that are currently occurring in the UAE government schools, scarce research has been developed to find out how the changes in U.A.E. are proceeding. Nearly, the progress and development of those schools are affected to a certain degree by the prevailing resisting attitudes among teachers. This study will detect those factors in Al Ain government schools and help clarify the picture. This may provide policy makers and change agents with evidence about the factors for such resistance that they may encounter during their journey with the change. Moreover, it will assist them in developing the best ways to accept and deal with resistance in a constructive way to move change forward. This could be achieved by planning ahead to manage and overcome those problems as well as planning to prevent their occurrence.

In addition, this study could be of great help for teachers. When the psychological and personal resisting factors are identified, teachers may develop a sense of self awareness. This might in turn help teachers in changing their perception about change and making them more receptive of change that is based on international trends.

#### ***1.4. Theoretical Background***

##### ***1.4.1. Need for Change***

Change is one of the most commonly used terms in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Flamholtz & Randle (2008) defined change as the creation of something unusual in various particular ways. It entails anything that is different from the norm. Moreover, Hammonds (2002) added that change is an unsure stability between constancy and stimulation and success depends on coping with variability, divergence and changeability.

Changes are inevitable in an era with rapid growth of technology. They become fast and make the values less relevant as they demand new roles, values, behaviors and approaches from people to work in organizations. Whelan-Berry & Gordon (2000) explained that organizations are continually changing as a result of major shifts in the environment to obtain increase in profitability, effectiveness and quality (as cited in William, 2010). Therefore, "politicians, academics, planners, reformers and citizens at large stress the need for change in various socioeconomic, political, and administrative sectors" (Khassawnah, 2005, p.15).

Increasingly, the world becomes more complex and interrelated and its rapid changes might have effects on all the sectors including education which actually can be considered as a starting point for all changes. Education helps the society to pass on its major characteristics to the next generation and keeps society alive. But each generation is different from the one from which it sprung as education help change the knowledge and skills of generations based on what happens in society. (Motlotle, 2000, p 31)

#### ***1.4.2. Change and Related Concepts***

To recognize how change leads to resistance, it is essential to understand the reasons, forces, types, phases and the strategies of change. Understanding these concepts may help in figuring out some factors that contribute in creating resistance to change.

For any change to take place, there should be reasons behind it. Flamholtz & Randle (2008) indicated that there are two reasons behind having change. Change occurs due to proactive or reactive reasons. Proactive change is the change that occurs as a consequence of its assessment of the predictable future environment or

organization's condition. While reactive change is the reaction to changes in the surroundings or organizational situation that have previously taken place rather than those that are expected in the future.

As for the types of change, Motlotle (2000) indicated three types of change: evolutionary, spontaneous and planned. Evolutionary change is a slow process of ongoing development from one status to another. Spontaneous change is unintentional and it happens quickly. It is the change that takes place as a result of an unanticipated event such as a strike in a school. Planned changes are the changes that are intended and directed towards particular goals.

Regarding the forces for change, Motlotle (2000) explained that schools, like other organizations, may experience demands that force them to have a planned or unplanned change. The force could come from diverse sources from inside or outside the educational system. External forces could be governmental, societal, economical or political. Lunenburg & Ibery (2006) added market, technology, and government laws and regulations are also external forces of change. The internal forces for change could be related to processes like communication, decision making, type of leadership, or might be related to people's problems like poor performance, low level of job satisfaction and high teacher turn over.

For change to take place, it is important not to be introduced all of a sudden. It has to pass through different phases. Joseph & Reigeluth (2005) explained that change process has to pass through five phases. The first phase is to assess readiness and negotiate an agreement. During this phase, the facilitator assesses his or her point of willingness to direct a complete change effort in a school and evaluate the staff members' readiness and capacity for change. To accomplish this stage, several

meetings have to take place with the principal, administrative staff, teachers, parents, the school board and managers in order to assess and agree on a compromise.

The second phase is to assign a Core Team for the change process. The Core Team should be small, preferably one leader from each of the major stakeholder groups such as an administrator, a board member, a parent, and the teachers' association president or representative. The main role of the Core Team is to assess the ability for change, develop an understanding of the nature of systemic change and build up a culture for change among their team.

The third phase is to form expanded teams for the process. During this phase, the Core Team is divided into two teams. One team is from highly valued representatives (opinion leaders) of various stakeholder groups that are responsible for taking decisions. The other team is accountable for creating a shared vision of the change and working out details to ensure its success.

The fourth phase is to engage employees in the design of a new educational system. This phase is possibly the most rigorous of all the phases, because it requires all those involved to share their beliefs about education. Here, stakeholders must come together to envision their ideal educational change. Because each member will have diverse visions, it is significant that the initial set of common beliefs about education must be developed and agreed upon by all the members who plan for the change.

The fifth phase is to implement the new system. The implementation process would guarantee the continuous development of the current system to reach ideal standards. In fact, not only a plan is needed for improving the existing change toward the ideal one, but also a vision for the ideal change should be known. Therefore, evaluation is an essential part of both procedures.

To convince people of the change, it is important that change agents choose the best strategy to prevent the possibility of having resistance when approaching the staff. Per (2004) suggested three main strategies. The first strategy is the rational-empirical strategy, which considers the human being to be a rational being that can be convinced by objective knowledge. Staff members will be persuaded because the change is superior to the old system. The second strategy is the normative – re-educative strategy. This strategy is based on the idealistic view of humanity and from positive ideas about how the individual can add to significant change. The third strategy is the power coercive strategy where power is used to control others and bring them back to work for implementing the change.

#### *1.4.3. Change and Resistance*

Resistance to change is not easy to define. In literature, many definitions exist. Gravenhorst (2003) considers resistance as a natural reaction to organizational change. He described resistance as an "almost inevitable psychological and organizational response that seems to apply to any kind of change, ranging from rather modest improvements to far-reaching change and organization transformation." (p3). Every school has different cultures and different responses to change, some might accept, others may resist. Such reactions are expected since "change is a double-edged sword. Its relentless pace is difficult to adjust to, yet when things are unsettled, we can find new ways to move ahead and create breakthroughs that are not possible in stagnant societies." (Fullan, 2004, p.1).

The change agents and staff members have to understand the reasons behind having resistance. De Jager (2001) indicated that resistance can be rational or irrational. In rational resistance, reasonable explanations are presented for any resistance to the proposed changes. Rational resistance includes resisting because of

lack of involvement with the process of change, having fear to learn something new and doubting the ability to adapt to it, and being comfortable with what they are currently doing and that have been proven to be successful. However, irrational resistance to change takes place when there is no amount of verification, evidence, or persuasion sufficient to convince them of the change. They simply do not want to change. However, both types of resistance are managed depending on the organizational culture.

Usually staff members in any organization differ in their willingness to change. Islam, Ali & Wafi (2010) asserted that "employees with high authority were less resistant to change since they somehow felt secured with the authority that they had in the organization. This is in the sense that their job was perceived as "safe" after the change took place" (p.242). They added that the first line management is willing to accept the change because they are involved in the change process and they are aware of all the information needed to implement the change. Additionally, Gravenhorst (2003) in his study clarified that not only management teams and line managers are willing to change but also employees have the willingness to change. Yet, the members of the management teams were the most willing groups to change. He added that resistance appears to pertain to every person in an organization, except to top managers. This is because they are generally the ones who come to a decision about the change. They have initiated, developed and lead the change. Likewise, the line managers supported the change. This is attributed to being close to the change mediators. They are the implementers, while the employees are the recipients of the change that others have developed. Consequently, the employees resisted being excluded from the progression of the change that had great effect on the organization,

including their work. Moreover, the needs for stability created resistance to change. Because of that, teachers are more likely to resist change than other staff members.

To avoid resistance, White (1990) asserted that it is important to consider the teachers' perception because their attitudes are vital to the reform program (as cited in Norman, 2010). Norman added that teachers need to know about the reason for the change and what exactly needs to be changed. Moreover, they need to know "how change will affect their personal space; what changes are teachers expected to make or what is expected from them; and what will they have to give up to manage change; what behaviors need altering." (p.5). Further, it is essential that teachers believe in the importance of the change so that they will be willing to change their behavior. Therefore, their emotions, relationships, interactions, needs, and wants must be considered before the process of change will be effective (George, & Jones, 2001).

#### *1.4.4. Causes of Resistance*

Gravenhorst (2003) pointed out that "change and resistance go hand in hand: change implies resistance and resistance means that change is taking place" (p.3). In addition, Palmer, Dunford, & Akin (2009) declared that people do not always resist change, and there are lots of reasons that encourage people to adopt the change and such reasons are security, money, authority, status, responsibility, better working conditions, self satisfaction, better personal contacts and less time and effort. They added that resistance to change has three dimensions: the affective (how the person feels), the behavioral (what a person does), and cognitive (how a person thinks).

Gravenhorst (2003) added that the main causes of resistance are due to different factors that are generally classified as individual factors, organizational factors, and group factors. However, the prevailing analysis is that people do not want to change or are not capable to change even if the change has to meet the demands of the

surroundings. For the sake of developing this study, the researcher classified the main causes of resistances into four categories of factors. These categories are the psychological, personal, school culture and the organizational factors. The psychological and the personal factors are more related to teachers. While the school culture and organizational factors are more related to principal behavior and change agents.

The teachers' psychology and personal factors can affect change either in a negative or a positive way. George & Jones, (2001) mentioned that the psychology of change can be the key for understanding the disinterest and the inability to change in organizations. Important causes of inactivity may be due to individual and group cognitive and emotional judgment and understanding. The personal opinions and perceptions of teachers can contribute to resistance to educational change. Hinde (2002) indicated that the teachers' values and norms influence their views of education and change. Consequently, any change that is different from the teacher's already developed culture and philosophy will be resisted (as cited in Hinde, 2004). Moreover, people resist change when they consider change more risky than maintaining with the present situation. People may also feel attached to those they already know. They find it difficult to accept new members to help them implement the change. Furthermore, they resist because they are exhausted and overwhelmed. They view change as being contrary to their concerns or as threatening to their "sense of identity". They just feel that the change is a terrible idea. (Schuler, 2003)

The most difficult task of a leader in affecting change is mobilizing people throughout the organization to adapt to change. This is because major "school cultural change is always difficult to initiate and achieve when existing behavior and dispositions are based on deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and



teaching that may have been shaped over prolonged periods of time" (Dellar, Cavanagh, & Silcox, 2004, p.4).

The prevailing school culture can facilitate or hinder the change process. The principals are the ones who help in directing and shaping the school culture. Per (2004) explained that the prevailing culture of the school has a great effect on its performance. It is how norms and values are shaped, how the work is organized, how interpersonal relations are created and how the idea for change and renewal is interpreted in the school. The norms and values represented by the change should be in agreement with the organization's basic values due to the fact that culture has a great effect on the change process. Schweiker-Marra (1995) indicated the importance of twelve norms that can assist in achieving change in schools. These school cultural norms are "collegiality, experimentation, high expectations, trust and confidence, tangible support, referring to a knowledge base, appreciation and recognition, caring and humor, involvement in decision-making, [protection of the educational needs of the students], traditions, and honest, open communication" (as cited in Hinde, 2004, p.9). Schweiker-Marra added that not only these norms are important to facilitate change, but the norms progress as change steps forward.

One of the essential facilitating factors for teachers to accept change is the behavior of the principals. The principals are not only creating the school culture, but also helping in facilitating, organizing and managing the change. Hammonds, (2002) indicated what Michael Fullan (2000) explained that the major moderators of change are the principals that can develop interactive communities of practice and widen the schools and individual teacher's competency to build up an effective change process.

However, with every change, resistance has to occur. This resistance should be accepted as something natural so that leaders can plan to deal with it. An effective leader values resistance and considers it as a foundation of new ideas and advancements. In a matter of fact, the absence of conflict can be a sign of decay. Successful changes originate from respecting diversity of the staffs, ideas, and experiences while at the same time creating ways to restructure, integrate and take action on the new patterns (Fullan with Ballew, 2004). Effective leaders know how to build the trust that is necessary for effective change by "providing developmental opportunities and creating environments in which people are encouraged to learn, interact, share, take risks, and tackle problems all help to create trust." (p.102).

Moreover, Maurer (1996) argues for an approach that helps principals in getting use of the power of resistance in order to maintain the change. He mentions five fundamental hallmarks: maintain clear focus on the objective, embrace resistance by finding out more about it, respect those who resist, relax to keep the broader picture in mind and finally stay in contact with the resisting people and be ready to listen to their common concerns (as cited in Palmer et al., 2009).

Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann (2002) explained that the principal is responsible for taking part in the strategic functions of the school, which include visioning, integrative planning, distribution of power, and transformation of culture. Besides, the teacher leaders function to align the stated vision of the school and the teacher's approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment practices. To achieve this alignment, a sense of shared purpose should be established in order to pave the way for smooth change and subsequent organizational development. This leads to the development of a distinctive school culture. Additionally, Mednick (2003) pointed out that the principal and the leadership team has to make sure that all members of the

school community clearly understand all parts of the change process and are committed to the vision. This includes using certain criteria to communicate the standards by which the school's progress will be measured.

### *1.5. Definition of terms*

The researcher came up with the below mentioned definitions after extensive reading from literature. The terms are operationally defined specifically for this study.

Educational Change: Educational change is the development of teachers, students, and administrators' knowledge, skills and dispositions in a way that is different from the present situation in order to keep functioning and competitive in such an advanced society. In this study, change refers to the initiatives undertaken by ADEC to reform the curriculum, teaching methods, assessment scheme, and leadership in Abu Dhabi emirate including AL Ain city.

Resistance to change: lack of interest and collaboration to implement change; prefer to keep the status quo.

Psychological Factors: are those factors associated with teachers' stress, discomfort, worries, fear, and insecurity.

Personal Factors: are those factors associated with teachers' attitudes, beliefs, adaptability and trust.

School Cultural Factors: are those factors associated with the principal's behaviors that originate from moral values including sharing, collaboration, communication, support, problem solving, continuous learning and openness to change.

Organizational Factors: are those factors associated with the work of principals and change agents in dealing with change that includes goal setting, planning, staff development, coaching, implementation, and motivation to change.

Educational Zone: UAE has nine educational zones. Each educational zone represents the Ministry of Education administratively in a certain geographic area. In Al Ain, Al Gharbiya, and Abu Dhabi regions, the Ministry of Education delegated the responsibility to ADEC. ADEC is supervising the three education zone in those regions.

### ***1.6. Organization of the Study***

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter one introduced the topic, stated the problem and research question.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review in which literature regarding change, resistance to change, and the causes of teachers' resistance to educational change are examined

Chapter 3 presents detail about the methodology that is used in this study. It entails the research design, the population, sampling process, the instrument and its validity and reliability, procedures, ethical consideration and limitation and delimitation.

Chapter 4 presents the findings based on the analysis questionnaire statements using the SPSS program.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of findings, conclusion and the recommendations.

## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

In order for schools to fulfill their goals, they need to develop and be up to date with all the educational growth that is evolving nowadays. This necessitates an ongoing and continually developing process of educational change. However, for any change, resistance may arise (as shown in the previous chapter). This study aims to explore the causes of teachers' resistance to the educational change in Al Ain public schools. The literature presented in this chapter reviews the recent ten-year writings. Some articles are limited to investigating the reasons behind teachers' resistance to various educational changes, while others focus on other organizational changes. Still, a number of those sources explore the factors that could enhance the change.

#### *2.1. Categories of Change*

This study has reviewed several resources for the purpose of highlighting factors affecting change in schools. These factors are clearly identified and categorized into four categories. These categories are the psychological, personal, school culture and the organizational factors.

##### *2.1.1. The Psychological Factor*

Change agents need to understand that the psychological stability of teachers has great effect on the successful implementation of change. Therefore, they have to work on maintaining the emotional stability of teachers. They need to know that

In a culture of change, emotions frequently run high and often represent fear or differences of opinion. The nature of change includes fear of loss and obsolescence and feeling of awkwardness. People often express doubts about new directions and sometimes outright opposition to them.

(Fullan with Ballew, 2004, p. 97)

Change moves people from what is well-known and comfortable to which is unusual and uncomfortable. Resistance might also occur when conflict arises due to the fact that change is either unable to get along with the reality of teachers' background or because of the lack of time to incorporate the proposed change into their philosophy (Flamholtz & Randle, 2008). Besides, Margolis & Nagal (2006) asserted in their study that cumulative stress from physical and mental exhaustion affects job performance and satisfaction. This stress will increase in relation to the extent and rate of change and the amount of which teachers perceive the changes to be imposed rather than shared. Furthermore, Palmer et al. (2009) identified the reasons of resistance. These are the aversion to change, discomfort of the uncertainty, worries about the negative effect on interests, and attachment to the organizational culture. Motlotle (2000) added that fear of the unknown, lack of information, misinformation, threat to status, threat to power base, no perceived benefits, mistrust organizational performance, poor relationships, fear of failure, fear of looking stupid, customs, peer group norms could also be reasons behind resisting change.

Van Veen, & Slegers (2006) indicated that "the manner in which teachers react to educational reforms is largely determined by whether the teachers perceive their professional identities as being reinforced or threatened by reforms" (p.109). People respond differently to change by either being worried, apprehensive, and insecure or having the enthusiasm, energy, and happiness to take risk for developing

the change (Fullan & Ballew, 2004, p.1). Motlotle (2000) further asserted that change has double effect, it can be exciting and motivating or it can bring distress and apprehension, depending on how it has been introduced. Additionally, resistance can be manifested by different behaviors including refusal to participate in solving common problems, refusal to look for a common opinion, the calmness of the promoter for change, disruption, and the general lack of collaboration (Graetz, Rimmer, Lawrence, & Smith, 2002).

Margolis & Nagal (2006) emphasized that the principals are considered the most powerful mediator of teacher stress. Principals are the ones who help in shaping the environment and structure that either enhance or hinder teacher work. Moreover, Per (2004) explained that through visioning, planning, empowering people with resources, assisting staff, and solving their problems, the staff will have a transition from having insecurity, anxiety, de-learning and loss into stabilization, learning and commitment that help in the change process.

### *2.1.2. The Personal Factor*

The nature of human being defies any change. It is a system concept, reflecting organizational members' distress due to their belief that change will not give them any benefit. Besides, the institutionalized resistance perspective supposes that staff resist change because they consider that the change is unnecessary. The organizational culture view proposes that staff resist change that is not meeting their attitudes and beliefs (Graetz et al, 2002). Moreover, when teachers view the change as in rigorous contrast with the political, cultural, and social structure within their schools, they will resist (Kubanyiova, 2006).

Furthermore, how teachers view their work is essential to their professional identity which has great effect on their perception of the change. This means that

Those teachers who experience congruence between their professional orientations and the current changes will react more positively, and experience their professional identities as being reinforced, while those teachers who experience incongruence between their professional orientations and the current changes will react more negatively. (Van Veen, & Slegers, 2006, p. 109).

The teachers' attitudes towards change are vital to the success of its implementation. Norman (2010) highlighted that even in well-planned programs, the change will not take place unless we have a dedicated and focused staff members. Therefore, teachers' opinion of the targeted change and their intentional contribution are necessary to successful change. Education reform necessitates that teachers understand their role in the change process. Moreover, Norman (2010) emphasized the importance of the teachers' awareness of their roles in the change process. They have to be comfortable or willing to take risk to change. Additionally, "an individual teacher's adaptability and willingness to respond positively to the administration's introduction of a new intervention may have important consequences for professional development, classroom practice, introduction of new technologies, and—ultimately—teacher retention" (Overbay, Patterson, & Grable, 2009, p.360). Gray (2002) also pointed out that the "lack of trust, cultural or age-related conservatism, and different perceptions of external dangers or disagreement over the proposed strategy or changes"(p. 64) contribute to educational resistance.

Mckenzie & Scheurich (2008) explained the four factors that contribute to resistance to change. First, teachers blamed external factors such as the carelessness of children, parents, neighborhood, culture and second language issues. Second, teachers



perceived the accountability system as a way of being watched and judged that are destructive to their teaching. Third, teachers considered any suggestion of change as criticism since they regarded leaders as powerful and authoritarian. Finally, teachers strongly resisted change when it required them to become leaders because they did not want to position themselves as leaders in relationship to the other teachers.

### *2.1.3. The School Culture Factor*

School culture has a great effect on the teachers' perception of the change and its progress. Kezar & Eckel (2002) pointed out that institutional culture has a relationship to change in such a way that the strategies like collaborative leadership appeared to have effects on change through a collegial cultural approach where motivation for change was observed. Moreover, the unique institutional cultural standards may help to determine which strategies might take prominence in the change process. Besides, Palmer et al (2009) pointed out that managing change can be facilitated by having a common vision and effective communication strategies that help in reinforcing the change.

The principals are the ones who help in shaping the school culture. Silcox, MacNeill, & Cavanagh (2003) explained that changing the school culture necessitates having an efficient leader whose behaviors originated from moral values and beliefs that are directed towards learning. Leader needs to communicate and share information and ideas about education to all stakeholders involved in the change process, raises their awareness levels, keeps them informed, and assists in reducing the feelings of anxiety, frustration, and concerns. Furthermore, DuFour et al. (2008) added that change will be facilitated by modeling the new behaviors and providing support for its application whenever needed. Further, McGregor (2002) asserted the importance of visible principal advocacy in facilitating the change. Principal needs to be willing to

take risk in trusting the implementer. Principals have to support the change because they believe this change will affect students positively. Silcox et al. (2003) emphasized that certain principals' behaviors are helpful in overcoming the resistance. These behaviors are the encouragement of a common vision, the engagement in the change process, risk taking, the demonstration of a strong outlook towards renewal in their schools and the willingness to seek solutions to arising problems.

The leadership traits and behaviors have great effect on change. These are the knowledge, skills and behavioral characteristics of leaders as well as their leadership styles that affect and maintain professional learning community which is necessary for having successful change (Sheard, 2004). Accordingly, "parallel leadership" is an effective strategy to improve the school's capacity. In this strategy, both the teachers and administrators assume a leadership role. The teacher's leadership role focuses on the pedagogical functions including the "school-wide processes of professional learning, conceptualization of the school's approach to teaching, learning and assessment, and design of learning environment" (Crowther et al, 2001, p.13).

Nagal & Margolis (2006) indicated that the most well-funded and well-researched reform effort will not succeed without the teacher's involvement. Furthermore, when teachers are encouraged and involved with the school effort, they can give life to the change process (Norman, 2010). The school reform can be facilitated by allowing teachers to play a significant role in leadership. This could be achieved by encouraging the collegial interaction, the continuous professional development, empowering teachers in their leadership role, involving them in decision making and enhancing collaboration. Such practices should not hinder teachers contact with the classroom. On the contrary, such practices will allow teachers to use their classroom skills to drive them to be expert on the leadership role and at the same time,

they keep on their effective classroom performance ("Starting Role," 2007). Besides, teachers' satisfaction will be increased. This will in turn influence the teachers' professional loyalty, self-sufficiency and burnout (Jiang, 2009). In addition, Gaylor (2001) explained that as the levels of participation, trust, and communication/information increased, so did the levels of openness to change. This could be achieved when the participation and communication/information provoke the trust that has a significant, direct effect on the teachers' openness to change. Beckum (2010) asserted that trusting teachers as professionals has to be taken into consideration. In this way, the administrators should seek the teachers' participation based on their "knowledge, good judgment and workload in order to meet rising education requirements" (p.1).

Andrews & Crowther (2002) indicated that the joint professional activities would enhance the alignment of the school vision and teachers' classroom practices. As a result, parallel leadership facilitates the enrichment of a pedagogy and vision, which in turn leads to enhance school's success. DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker (2008) emphasized that collaboration in a professional learning community requires the staff to work with each other "interdependently in systematic process" (p.183) in order to examine the professional performance in a way that helps in developing each staff member and the school as a whole. Crowther et al. (2002) explained more that effective reform requires not only integration of artifacts, values, and assumptions within school but also their linkage to both school vision and teachers' expertise.

It is necessary to involve all teachers and even students in the process of decision-making about how to implement the change. These joint efforts of the administration, teachers and students should focus on building a culture that underpins the school's vision. Staff should be continuously developed to maintain the learning

culture which is a prerequisite for innovation. Principals have to encourage them to become innovative by developing their capacity to learn and experiment. They should not only learn from their experience but also apply what they learn (Fullan, 2000).

#### ***2.1.4. The Organizational Factor***

Fullan & Bathew (2004) pointed out that what an organization needs in a time of change is an effective leader that helps staff members feel that even the most complicated problems can be dealt with effectively. The five behaviors that leaders have to demonstrate to reinforce positive change are: behaving according to "moral purpose, understanding change, building relationships, creating and sharing knowledge, and making coherence" (p.4). First, the leader has to behave in a morally purposeful way in order to be efficient in dealing with any situation. The moral purpose means that it is the ethical reason that guides the leaders' performance to have positive effect on the lives of all the staff members, customers and society. Second, understanding the change means that the leader needs to understand the change process clearly. Leaders need to respect and consider the differences in opinions as an opportunity to learn by intentionally build on the diversity. Third, building relationships means to develop a relationship with all staff members to get things better especially with diverse people. Fourth, creating and sharing knowledge aims to continuously generate and spread knowledge inside and outside the organization. For people to share knowledge, they need to feel some moral commitment. People will not share unless the change supports their needs. Sharing information is a social process, and for that to happen the organization needs good relationships. Finally, making coherence is a persistent search that leader works through the ambiguities and complexities of the very complicated problems while seeking consistency along the way (Fullan with Bathew, 2004). Gumusluoglu & Ilsev (2009) mentioned that external

support for innovation was found to extensively moderate this result. This means that it is important for the leader to build relationships with external institutions that provide technical and financial support

It is necessary for change agents to give more attention and efforts to properly evaluate the organizational culture before adopting the change in order to make it fits more successfully the culture of the organization. The leadership style and the change management strategies throughout the change process also have a great effect on the employees' post-change satisfaction. Furthermore, stressed and anxious employees may resist change and what they need is a clear direction to follow so they keep away from misunderstanding the change (Appelbaum, Lefrancois, Tonna, & Shapiro, 2007). Palmer et al. (2009) added that people resist because the proposed changes are inappropriate and the timing of its introduction is not suitable. Besides, the excessive change and the cumulative effect of previous changes could be one of the reasons why people resist the change. Moreover, strengthening the reform by using learning theories and different methods of approaching them from significant research helps in overcoming difficulties (Ofshed, 2008).

One reason that impedes the progress of change is the deficiency in good planning for the change. The implementation of the proposed changes has to be accomplished by carrying out the action plan that aims to provide guidance and support, communicating the new vision and the proposed changes to all staff, providing training on the implementation of the change, supporting and directing the staff throughout the change process. The changes and the progress towards goals should be evaluated. Information about the effect of change should be obtained in order to identify any need to modify the plan. The staff members, who contribute to the successful implementation of change, are rewarded. The implementation of the plan

would be considered successful if the set goals are met (Waddell, Cummings & Worley, 2000). The administrators, teachers, and consultants have to be dedicated when changes occur. When trying to change the teaching practices with no consideration to causal hypothesis and the societal pressures and beliefs in that school, it possibly will create only restructuring more than considerable changes in the classroom practices (Kise, 2005).

Khassawneh (2005) explored the major reasons of employees' resistance to administrative change. These factors are the lack of employees' involvement, insufficient encouragement, mistrust between staff members and the administration, and lack of understanding of the goals of change.

Reforming the teaching, learning and assessment practices of the school should be a collective responsibility of managers and teacher leaders. Andrews & Crowther (2002) noted that the teacher leaders assume responsibility to explore their common successful teaching practice in relation to school vision. Subsequently, they either align those practices with the school vision in collaborations with the principal or negotiate with them meaningful changes in the vision.

Another resisting factor that was explored in literature is excluding teachers from planning for change. Ketabdar (2002) proposed that this resistance could be reduced by orienting teachers on the subject of change and engaging them in planning for the change. This may help in improving the attitude they have toward this change. Moreover, a specific training workshop with topics such as organizational manners, alertness of change, resistance to change, benefiting from more experienced teachers and other important topics can enhance both willingness and ability of teachers to accept change. Moreover, Cavanagh (2006) indicated that teachers usually do not

accept the reforms due to incomplete understanding about what and how to implement change, and believed that the old approaches were the best way for students to learn.

In addition to the above mentioned factors, previous literature has also investigated another resisting factor which is the lack of effective staff development. Crowther et al. (2002) explained that change has to develop and sustain a culture that shows commitment to values of motivation, initiative, and self – development as well as to higher quality learning. This could be achieved by organizing professional development activities and arranging for frequent staff meetings that emphasize these values, monitor the implementation phase of reform, and suggest ways to deal with the difficulties encountered in this phase. Abrami, Poulsen & Chambers (2004) asserted the importance of professional development in boosting teachers' certainty in applying the innovation. This will be also enhanced by the follow up training for skills' modification and for adjustment to innovation. When teachers are asked to master new skills and integrate them into the classrooms, the capacity to adapt to change is critical. Overbay et al. (2009) asserted the importance of teacher educators who help in "giving them the assistance they need in continuing on in this challenging profession and developing the requisite new skills to prepare students for a world where change is, perhaps, the only constant" (p.367).

It is important that teachers are involved in planning for their educational development to strengthen their achievement while implementing the change. Kise (2005) showed the significance of teachers' suggestions, taking into consideration the needs and concerns of teachers in proposing staff development programs and school reform efforts. Silcox, MacNeill, & Cavanagh (2004) stressed the issue of designing the staff development activities according to individual teacher's needs. This is because teachers grow and learn at different rates and have diverse needs. Calabrese

(2006) emphasized that staff development training should take into consideration the unique cultural needs of students as well as involve teachers in the planning, implementation and growth of professional development. Coaching is also essential for ensuring the acquisition of skills learned in staff development (Norman, 2010).

Another factor that should be considered while organizing for change is the lack of time that teachers encountered while trying to successfully achieve the change. Calabrese (2006) explained that teachers value professional development but they seldom use such training. The reasons behind this are the limited time available for practice and the huge information they have to grasp. Swan & Dixon (2006) added that teachers usually value the mentor-supported model of professional development to improve specific skills needed in their classroom. However, they are facing problems that prevent them from benefiting from the mentorship. One of those problems is the lack of release time for training, planning and collaboration and the need for ongoing support. Cavanagh (2006) also mentioned that teachers suffer from lack of time. They have to prepare for their lessons, keep students working in small group, and prepare students for examination. These are considered by the teachers as major obstacles.

Lack of support and motivation can be one of the factors that contribute to resistance to educational change. For example, Rayan & Ackerman (2005) stressed the importance of both motivation to abide by innovative plan, and support to put the plan into action in order to encourage teachers to abide by change. Kubanyiova (2006) pinpointed that the reasons behind the negative outcomes of implementing change were due to a wrong type of motivation, unsupportive system, and absence of reflective teaching culture that was due to the heavy teaching load, fear of making mistakes, and lack of communication skills to practice reflection.



When the leader faces resistance to change, the leader needs to actively deal with the resisting attitudes. This could be done by exploring sources of resistance and utilizing the suitable strategies to counteract them. To achieve this, the leader has to follow these three phases: knowledge formulation, strategy implementation, and status evaluation. For the knowledge formulation phase, the principal has to investigate about the resisting individuals, their needs, beliefs and values and their interests to determine the sources of employees' resistance to change. To achieve the strategy implementation phase, first the principal has to communicate the benefits of change and the way it is going to be implemented. Second, the principal should try to influence the affective component of staff's attitudes (psychologically influence them). Third, he/she should provide training and finally be totally committed to the change. As for the status evaluation phase, the actions and reactions have to be documented accurately to make sure the staff anxiety and resistance is under control and accordingly, appropriate actions have to be taken (Aladwani, 2001).

#### *2.1.5. Other Factors*

The other factors that are investigated in literature and could contribute to resisting change are the ones that are related to age, years of experience, qualification and gender.

Silcox et al. (2003) found in their study that most resisting members to change appear to be from veteran teachers. They were doubtful of change due to having negative experiences with amendment efforts in the past. Hinde (2002) also stated that teachers with more years of experience were less likely to change their practices and; consequently, they will resist change. This is because teachers do not get acquainted during their experience with certain practices that the change requires. Moreover, Islam et al. (2010) added that the older the employees are, the more it is difficult for them to

accept change and more likely to resist change. They do not want to accept change because they feel more "stable" with their present position. Additionally, Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic (2002) explained that older and more experienced teachers have more resistance to change. This is because older teachers believe that they are not effective in implementing the change. Further, they are emotionally exhausted and this affects their enthusiasm to develop themselves.

Although some researches agreed that more resistance come from senior teachers, other researches contradict this concept. Khassawneh (2005) found that employees whose experiences were five years or less were more stressed and that created more resistance. This could be attributed to the lack of participation in the change process and training programs simply because they were still new in the profession. Additionally, those teachers did not have the incentives the veteran teachers had. Their salaries were less due to having their salaries adapted to the length of service and the level of education. William (2010) in his study also indicated that the older the teachers are, the more they react positively to the newly implemented change. Furthermore, Alas (2006) showed in his study that older people trust administration and believe in the decisions of the leading implementers more than the younger people. This affected them positively to accept the change. Yet, the ones that had experience between 11 and 15 years are the ones who are mostly satisfied. Moreover, Kunze, Bohm & Bruch (2011) confirmed that as age increased, resistance decreased. This contradicts the "age stereotype" proposing that the older employees are, the more resistant they become.

Another view that contradicts the above mentioned findings showed that when so many changes in terms of policy and procedures are introduced, they may

have created a challenge for both experienced and beginning teachers (Overbay et al., 2009).

Regarding the teachers' qualification in affecting their attitude towards change, Islam et al. (2010) found in his study that employees who hold a masters degree react with more resistance to change. This has been attributed to the fact that they do not want the change to affect their position in the organization. They may be fearful to accept the change that might bring surprises. Whereas Gaylor (2001) indicated that the teacher's educational level had no significant effect on their acceptance and openness to change. Moreover, Jekayinfa (2006) found that the opinion of qualified and unqualified teachers, as well as male and female teachers on the introduction of change showed no considerable difference. However, there were significant variations in the teachers' perceptions of change between the teachers who were specialized in the change topic and the non specialized teachers. This is also applied to the experienced and the non experienced teachers.

In his study, Alas (2006) has showed that the employees' content with their job and its leadership is more important than understanding the need for change. For employees to take risks in implementing the change and start learning, it is essential to trust administration and believe in the leading implementers of change and their decisions. Employees differ in their satisfaction level. Alas added that the more satisfied teachers are the less resistant they become. Female teachers are found to be more content with their administrator's effort than the male teachers. This has great impact on the male teachers to resist change.

## **2.2. Summary**

To be competitive in the educational sector, educational system has to undergo changes. Leaders of change have to expect that for every change there is resistance.

Resistance to change can be present everywhere and at any time. This is due to several reasons that are investigated by a number of researchers.

In literature, several studies stressed the importance for change agents to understand the teachers' psychological reaction to change. Teachers respond differently to change, from having distress to having motivation. They resist when they experience the feeling of stress, fear and discomfort of the uncertainty and the negative effect of the change on their interest and status at work.

The teachers' positive attitude towards the importance of change and their belief in the beneficial effect of its implementation are two of the contributing factors that help in the success of change. They have to be willing to take the risk to change.

More studies emphasized the importance of the principal's behavior in shaping the school culture as well as managing the change process. The principals' knowledge, skills, behavioral characteristics and leadership style highly influence and maintain the professional learning community. To have a learning community in schools, the principals have to believe in the change and act accordingly. Consequently, their attitudes will be reflected to all staff members, especially the teachers. Moreover, principals have to involve all teachers in constructing the new vision and planning for change. The principals need to give due consideration in supporting teachers while implementing the change as well as seeking immediate solutions to arising problems. They have to communicate with teachers about the change and its progress. This will help teachers to be open to change.

Principals' behavior is not the only support that is needed for change. Teachers need to be ready for the change. They have to acquire the knowledge on how the change will take place and what they might expect to face while implementing the change. Moreover, attending the developmental activities that are accompanied with

the follow up training for skill modification and for adjustment to innovation will help in having a successful change. Teachers also have to be given an opportunity to suggest what developmental activities they need and be involved in planning and implementing of different activities.

For change to be performed effectively, it is important to release teachers for training, planning, and collaboration. Several researches showed that what hinders teachers from implementing change is the lack of time for attending the developmental activities, preparing lessons, and working with students.

Another factor that was stressed in literature is the importance of motivation, support and reflection. Teachers have to be rewarded by promoting them or increasing their salaries. They need to be supported as well as given the chance to communicate their worries and reflect on their practices. They usually resist because they have to implement the change on careless children who have unsupportive parents. Teachers strongly resist change when it requires them to become leaders and they are not supported to take this position.

Finally more studies investigated the relation between the gender, age, qualification, and years of experience of teachers to their resistance to change. However, the selected literatures showed no consistency in their results.

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

The review of literature has shown that several factors are behind developing resistance to change. To successfully implement the change, it necessitates reducing the resistance. This could be achieved by identifying the factors behind resistance to change, in order to know how to overcome those factors. This study attempts to investigate this question: What are the underlying (psychological, personal, school-culture, organizational) factors for teacher resistance to educational changes that are currently underway in the UAE public schools? This question is answered by using a questionnaire that was developed as an instrument for collecting data about the teachers' resisting factors to educational change. In this chapter, the process for conducting this study will be addressed. This includes the methodology, target population, sampling, the instrument, validity and reliability, procedure, ethical consideration and limitation and delimitation.

#### *3.1. Method*

The aim of this thesis is to examine the factors that discourage teachers from accepting the educational change by using the quantitative approach specifically the descriptive research method. Gay, Mills & Airasian (2009) indicated that a quantitative approach includes the collection and analysis of numerical data to describe, explain, predict, and control phenomena. It entails the use of numerical data that identify a sample of participants large enough to provide statistically meaningful data. A descriptive research method "involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or to

answer questions about the **opinions** of people about some topic or issue. Descriptive research is also called survey research."(Gay, & Airasian, 2000, p. 315). Survey research finds out and gives details on the way things are: "it involves **collecting** numerical data to test **hypotheses** or answer **questions** about the current **status** of the subject of study. One common type of survey research involves assessing the preferences, attitudes, **practices**, concerns, or interests of a group of people."(Gay et al, 2009, p 9). The survey method has a number of advantages **over** other methods of data collection. The data collected using the **survey** instrument is objectively obtained. The respondents are not providing inaccurate **information**. Further, it is a mean to quantitatively measure **resistant** attitudes towards change as well as to gather information from a large population.

### ***3.2. Target Population***

The target population of this study was teachers from Al-Ain public schools in the U.A.E. Those teachers were under the **process** of educational change at the time this study was conducted. The total number of teachers were 4771 that included 1948 male teachers and 2823 female teachers who worked in public **schools** in Al Ain. 2606 teachers were expatriates and 2165 teachers were national (ADEC, 2010). They worked in different grade levels. They also were from **different** age groups as well as different years of experience.

### ***3.3. Sampling and Participants***

For the purpose of the study, the researcher used a stratified sampling technique. "Stratified sampling is the process of strategically selecting a sample in such a way that guarantees desired representation of relevant subgroups within the sample." (Gay et al, 2009, p138).

Based on this sampling method, Table 4.2 in (Gay & Airasian, 2000) was used to determine the sample size. Out of the 4771 teachers in Al Ain, it was found that 380 teachers would be an appropriate sample for this study. Then, a stratified sample of schools was initially selected according to the type of schools. 18 schools were randomly selected, nine male schools and nine female schools. Of each nine male and female schools, 3 high schools, 3 preparatory and 3 elementary schools were chosen. The researcher distributed 414 questionnaires. 207 male teachers were randomly selected from the nine different grade level schools with 23 questionnaire distributed at each school. The same procedure had been followed at the female schools. However, only 255 teachers responded. The participating teachers belonged to various age groups from both sexes with different specialties as well as different years of experience, and various nationalities.

#### ***3.4. The instrument***

The researcher used a questionnaire as an instrument to accurately quantify the teachers' attitudes about change as well as the factors that cause teachers to resist change. Several steps were taken to develop this instrument. The first step was the development of a list of the most common resisting factors that were selected after an extensive review of the literature. Later, such factors were organized into four categories: psychological, personal, school culture, and organizational factors. A total of 39 statements of closed-ended statements were developed in addition to two other open-ended questions that were included at the end of each category. One of these questions was to check which one of the mentioned factors the respondent thought had the greatest effect. The second question asked the respondents to write other three resisting factors they thought were related and were not presented in the mentioned statements.



Responses were noted on 5 points Likert scale ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree, where strongly disagree ranked 1 and strongly agree ranked 5. A Likert scale is one type of an attitude scale. "An attitude scale is an instrument that measures what an individual believes, perceives, or feels about self, others, activities, institutions, or situations." (Gay et al, 2009, p. 151).

Demographic data was used and it included the gender, age, years of teaching experience, highest degree completed as well as the specialty in education or in another specialty and Emirati national or non-national. Such data were used in the analysis and discussed later in this thesis. The instrument is present in the appendix 1.

### ***3.5. Validity and reliability***

After the factors had been determined through a review of literature, the next step was to determine the validity and reliability of the instrument. It is important to establish the validity of the instrument prior to the administration of the questionnaire. " Validity refers to the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure and consequently, permits appropriate interpretation of scores" (Gay et al, 2009, p154). The content validity of the questionnaire was established by referring to a jury of five specialists in the field of educational leadership. This jury judged the relevance of the instrument to the study, the belongings of each item to its subscale, and the wording of items. The expert evaluators provided some modification to the statements. The statements were amended and sent for the advisor to confirm the changes. After that the questionnaire was translated by experts into Arabic and later reviewed by the advisor.

Afterward, a pilot testing was considered. This is due to the fact that "pilot testing the questionnaire provides information about deficiencies and suggestions for

improvement." (Gay et al, 2009, p181). The instrument was pilot tested by asking ten randomly selected teachers from one of the government schools to respond to the questionnaire. The pilot test was done after taking permission from the school principal. The teachers' feedback was taken into consideration.

The modified instrument was also checked for the reliability by using the Cronbach's alpha.

Reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it is measuring. The more reliable a test is, the more confidence we can have that the scores obtained from the test are essentially the same scores that would be obtained if the test was re-administered to the same test takers at another time or by a different person. ( Gay et al, 2009)

Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire is 0.9, which indicates high reliability.

### ***3.6. Procedure***

#### ***3.6.1 Distributing and Collecting Data***

After gaining approval from the head of Al Ain Education Zone, and taking permission from the school principals, the Arabic version of the questionnaire was distributed to randomly selected teachers via the relevant director of each school. Cover letter was attached to each questionnaire; such letter outlined the purpose of the study, assured confidentiality and anonymity and explained the voluntary nature of participations (see appendix 1).

Data collection took place on June 2010 at the end of the academic year when teachers were not engaged in teaching. This allowed teachers to answer the questionnaire without feeling overwhelmed. The teachers were given two days to

return the questionnaire to the school principals. Teachers completed the questionnaire during break time. After two days the questionnaires were collected and were ready for the entry of data.

### ***3.6.2. Data Entry***

After collecting the distributed questionnaire, the questionnaire was coded and had been entered to the SPSS to be ready for analysis.

### ***3.7. Ethical Consideration***

All participants were informed before the commencement of data gathering that they were free to agree or disagree to participate in the study, and that such refusal would not in any way affect their evaluation. The participants were also informed to feel free to withdraw from participation at any stage, and that would not in any way be used against them. The objectives of the project and the involvement of the participants were communicated in advance, and their consent to participate was being sought in writing.

### ***3.8. Limitation and delimitation***

This thesis is limited only to Al Ain national schools, so results cannot be generalized to all UAE schools. In addition, private schools in Al Ain were excluded from this study. Moreover, the data analysis was limited to the respondents and the variables that were presented in this survey. As a consequence, other factors would remain unknown. Further, teachers may not be able to honestly answering the questions that were related to their principal, since teachers were asked to return their completed surveys to their principals.

Regarding the delimitation of the study, the sample was limited to government schools because the educational change had been taking place in public schools. In addition, the study focused only on teachers due to the fact that the resistance is more among this group. Moreover, the closed-ended questions as well as simple open-ended questions were chosen because they were easy to be answered by teachers and take less time so that respondents will not get bored.

### **3.9. Summary**

This quantitative research study in the form of descriptive research method was used to investigate the factors that contributed to teachers' resistance to educational change in Al Ain public schools in the U.A.E. This was achieved by preparing the survey instrument, insuring the validity and reliability of the instrument, specifying the target population, distributing and collecting the questionnaire with adequate numbers of the participants and analyzing data.

## CHAPTER IV

### Findings of the Study

This chapter includes the analysis of data collected from the participants in the study by using a questionnaire that was developed for this purpose. For the analysis to take place, the data were coded and entered into an SPSS file. The SPSS program was used to measure the frequencies, percentages, means and the Chi-Square Test. The Chi-Square Test was used to determine if there were significant relation between the most important factor of each category and some of the obtained demographic data. Although it was not the main aim of the study, the researcher found it interesting to look at how significant the relation was between gender, years of experience, and the nationality and the resistance to educational change.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part presents analysis of demographic data regarding the participant teachers. This includes gender, age, qualification, years of experience and nationality. The second part of this chapter is about statistical analysis concerning the answers obtained from teachers regarding their opinions about factors associated with teachers' resistance to educational change. The third part of this chapter presents analysis of the data collected from the four open ended questions.

#### ***4.1. Part 1: Demographic Information of Participants***

The following tables display the frequencies and percentages of the completed questionnaires by the participants. As shown, 255 questionnaires were completed out of 414 questionnaires that stand out for 61.59 % response rate.

Table 4.1.1  
*Frequency and Percentage of the Participants' Gender*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	102	40
	Female	153	60
	Total	255	100

Table 4.1.1 displays the gender of participants. As shown, the highest percentage of the participants is for female. In this study there were 153 (60%) female teachers and 102 (40%) male teachers.

Table 4.1.2  
*Frequency and Percentage of the Participants' Age*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	20-25	9	3.5
	26-30	68	26.7
	31-35	51	20
	36-40	52	20.4
	>40	41	16.1
	Total	221	86.7
Missing	System	34	13.3
Total		255	100

Table 4.1.2 displays the age of the participants. As shown, the highest percentage of the participants is for those aged 26-30. This age group represents approximately 26.7% (N=68) of the total participants. Those aged 36-40 represent 20.4% (N= 52) of the total participants. Fifty one participants were 31-35 years, while 41 (16.1%) participants were more than forty years. only 9 (3.5%) of the participants were 20-25 years.

Table 4.1.3

*Frequency and Percentage of the Participants' Qualification*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	PhD	1	0.4
	Master	11	4.3
	Bachelor Education	101	39.6
	Bachelor Non-education	103	40.4
	Other	15	5.9
	Total	231	90.6
Missing	System	24	9.4
Total		255	100

Table 4.1.3 displays the participants' qualifications. As shown, the highest percentage of the participants is for those with a Bachelor in non-education major. They represent 40.4% (N=103) of the total participants, while 39.6% (N=101) of the participants are those with a Bachelor in education. Participants with other qualifications represent 5.9% (N=15), whereas people with master represent 4.3% (N=11). Only 0.4% (N=1) of the participants are with PhD.

Table 4.1.4

*Frequency and Percentage of the Participants' Years of Experience*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	<3	31	12.2
	4-7	52	20.4
	8-14	75	29.4
	>15	60	23.5
	Total	218	85.5
Missing	System	37	14.5
Total		255	100

Table 4.1.4 displays the frequency and percentage of the participants' years of experience. As shown, the highest percentage of the participants are those with 8-14 years of experience who represent 29.4% (N=75) of the total. Sixty (23.5%) of the participants have 15 years and more, while fifty two (20.4%) of the participants have 3-7 years of experience. Thirty one (12.2%) of the participants has 3 or more years of experience.

Table 4.1.5

*Frequency and Percentage of the Participants' Nationality*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	National	122	47.8
	Non national	91	35.7
	Total	213	83.5
Missing	System	42	16.5
Total		255	100

Table 4.1.5 displays the participants' nationalities. As shown, the highest percentage of the participants is for nationals. There were 122 (47.8%) nationals and 91 (35.7%) were non-nationals participated in the study.

**4.2. Part II: Quantitative Part**

According to the factors of resistance to educational change, the questions were arranged into four categories. Each category included different factors that were gradually rated from strongly disagree to strongly agree. For each category there were three kinds of tables:

- Tables displaying the frequencies of the participants' responses for the most important factor from each category.
- Tables displaying the means, standard deviations and the percentages of agreement of the different factors of the participants' responses.
- Tables illustrating the frequency of the relationship between one or two variables from (gender, years of experience, and nationalities.) with the most important factor of each category of factors. The Chi-Square Test was utilized to test whether the relation was significant or not.



### 4.2.1. Category I: The Psychological Factor

Table 4.2.1.1  
*Most Important Psychological Factor*

		Frequency
Valid	I like to have educational change	43
	I have high motivation to participate in the educational change	49
	I have fear of the unknown consequences of the change	53
	I have fear of losing my job because of the change	21
	I fear having more demand and job requirements to implement the change	21
	I feel overwhelmed from the information overload	17
	I doubt my abilities to learn something new	4
	Total	208
Missing	System	47
Total		255

As shown in Table 4.2.1.1, the first category represents the psychological resisting factors of the educational change that consists of seven statements sub-factors. As revealed in the above table, the highest number (N=53) of the participants believe that they have "fear of the unknown consequences of the change". (N=49) of the participants agreed that they "have the motivation towards educational change". The lowest number (N=4) was for the statement "doubting their abilities to learn something new".

Table 4.2.1.2

*Mean, Standard deviations, Percentage of Agreement of Psychological Factors*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage of agreement
I like to have educational change	254	4.02	0.951	79.2
I have high motivation to participate in the educational change	254	4.06	0.878	80.8
I have fear of the unknown consequences of the change	251	3.56	1.274	59.3
I have fear of losing my job because of the change	252	3.09	1.403	43.2
I fear having more demand and job requirements to implement the change	252	3.23	1.344	49.4
I feel overwhelmed from the information overload	251	3.19	1.321	46.7
I doubt my abilities to learn something new	253	2.20	1.195	17.7
Valid N (list wise)	243			

Table 4.2.1.2 reveals the means of psychological factors associated with teacher resistance. As shown in the table, teachers rated the statement "I have high motivation to participate in the educational change" as the highest psychological factor effect with a mean score of 4.06 (80.8%). The teachers rated the statement "I like to have educational change" and "I have fear of the unknown consequences of the change" as the second and third psychological factor effects with mean score of 4.02 (79%) and 3.56 (59.3%) respectively. The statement "I doubt my abilities to learn something new" was rated as the least factor with a mean score of 2.20 (17.7%).

Table 4.2.1.3  
Gender \* Most Important Psychological Factor Cross tabulation

Most Important Psychological Factor	Gender	
	Male	Female
I like to have educational change	20	23
I have high motivation to participate in the educational change	28	21
I have fear of the unknown consequences of the change	15	38
I have fear of losing my job because of the change	16	5
I fear having more demand and job requirements to implement the change	4	17
I feel overwhelmed from the information overload	4	13
I doubt my abilities to learn something new	3	1
Total	90	118

As shown in table 4.2.1.3, the highest number of male teachers, (N=28) out of 90, think they "have high motivation to participate in the educational change". The smallest number of male teachers (N=3) think "I doubt my abilities to learn something new" is the most important factor. For the female teachers, the highest number of female teacher (N=38), think that "I have fear of the unknown consequences of the change" is the most important psychological factor while the lowest of them (N= 1) think "I doubt my abilities to learn something new" is the most important factor.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between gender and the most important psychological factor was significant,  $\chi^2=27.494$ ,  $p=0.001$ . This indicates that teacher's gender does influence the teacher's opinion about the most important psychological factor.

Table 4.2.1.4  
*Years of Experience \* Most Important Psychological Factor Cross-tabulation*

Most Important Psychological Factor	Experience			
	< 3	4-7	8-14	> 15
I like to have educational change	5	6	5	18
I have high motivation to participate in the educational change	7	7	15	14
I have fear of the unknown consequences of the change	8	7	22	12
I have fear of losing my job because of the change	1	3	6	7
I fear having more demand and job requirements to implement the change	7	9	4	1
I feel overwhelmed from the information overload	1	5	7	3
I doubt my abilities to learn something new	0	1	2	1
Total	29	38	61	56

As shown in table 4.2.1.4, the highest number of teachers with 8-14 years of experience, N= (22) out of 61, and teachers N= (8) with less than three years of experience think that "I have fear of the unknown consequence of change" (missing information). The smallest number of teachers with 8-14 years of experience N= (2) and teachers <3 years of experience N= (0) think "I doubt my abilities to learn something new "is the most important factor. The highest number (N=18) of teachers with more than 15 years of experience think that "I like to have educational change" is the most important psychological factor while the lowest number of them (N=1) think that " I doubt my abilities to learn something new " and "I fear having more demands and job requirements to implement the change " are the two most important factor. While teachers with 4-8 years of experience N= (9) think" I fear having more demands and job requirements to implement the change "is the most important factor.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between years of experience and the most important psychological factor was significant,  $\chi^2 = 34.236$ ,  $p=0.012$  this indicates that teachers' years of experience does influence the teachers' opinion about the most important psychological factor.

Table 4.2.1.5.  
*Nationality \* Most Important Psychological Factor Cross-tabulation*

Most Important Psychological Factor	National	
	National	Non-national
I like to have educational change	18	14
I have high motivation to participate in the educational change	17	29
I have fear of the unknown consequences of the change	27	18
I have fear of losing my job because of the change	3	17
I fear having more demand and job requirements to implement the change	18	1
I feel overwhelmed from the information overload	12	4
I doubt my abilities to learn something new	3	1
Total	98	84

As shown in table 4.2.1.5, the highest number of national teachers (N=27) out of 98 think that "I have fear of the unknown consequences of the change" (incomplete information). The smallest number of national teachers (N=3) think "I doubt my abilities to learn something new" is the most important factor. For the non-national teachers, the highest number of non-national teachers (N=29), think that "I have high motivation to participate in the educational change" is the most important psychological factor while the lowest number (N=1) think that "I doubt my abilities to learn something new" and "I fear having more demands and job requirements to implement the change" are the two most important factors.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between nationality and the most important psychological factor was significant,  $\chi^2 = 34.569$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . This indicates that the teacher's nationality does influence the teacher's opinion about the most important psychological factor.

#### 4.2.2. Category II: The Personal Factor

Table 4.2.2.1  
*Most Important Personal Factor*

		Frequency
Valid	I see the need for educational change	46
	I believe in the management abilities to have a successful change	47
	I trust the change agents	29
	I am aware of my role in the change process	21
	I think the change disrupt my stable work norms and relations	16
	I reject the change due to the lack of conformity to norms and sacred values	13
	I resist change because everybody does	2
Total	174	
Missing	System	81
Total		255

As it is shown in table 4.2.2.1, this category is about "personal factors" which consists of seven statements. According to the above table, (N=47) of the participants "believe in the management abilities to have a successful change" to be the most important factor of this category and it is the highest rating. (N=46) of the participants agreed on "the need for educational change", while only (N=2) of them consider "resist change because everybody does" as the least important one.

Table 4.2.2.2  
Means, Standard Deviation and Percentages of Agreement of Personal Factors

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage of agreement
I see the need for educational change	252	3.70	1.086	69.8
I believe in the management abilities to have a successful change	254	4.01	0.956	79.3
I trust the change agents	255	3.65	0.993	62.3
I am aware of my role in the change process	249	3.54	1.100	59.3
I think the change disrupt my stable work norms and relations	253	2.83	1.213	32.4
I reject the change due to the lack of conformity to norms and sacred values	255	2.62	1.170	22.7
I resist change because everybody does	251	2.22	1.192	15.7
Valid N (list wise)	243			

Table 4.2.2.2 reveals the means of personal factors associated with teacher resistance. As shown in the table, teachers rated the statement "I believe in the management abilities to have a successful change" as the highest personal factor effects to facilitate with a mean score of 4.01 (79.3%). The teachers also rated the statement "I see the need for educational change" and "I trust the change agents" as the second and third personal factor effects with mean score of 3.70 (69.8%) and 3.65 (62.3%) respectively. The statement "I resist change because everybody does" was rated as the least factor with a mean score of 2.22 (15.7%).

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between gender and the most important personal factor was not significant,  $\chi^2 = 7.764$ ,  $p = 0.256$ . This indicates that the teacher's gender does not affect the teacher's opinion about the most important personal factor.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between years of experience and the most important personal factor was not significant,  $\chi^2 = 24.567$ ,  $p = .137$ . This

indicates that teachers' years of experience do not affect the teacher's opinion about the most important personal factor.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between nationality and the most important personal factor was not significant,  $\chi^2 = 10.688$ ,  $p = 0.099$  this indicates that teacher's nationality does not affect the teachers opinion about the most important personal factor.

#### 4.2.3 Category III: The School Culture Factor

Table 4.2.3.1  
*Most Important School Culture Factor*

		Frequency
Valid	The principal has to communicate to teachers the proposed changes	15
	The principal has to collaborate with teachers in formulating the new vision	35
	The change norms and values are in agreement of the organization's values	15
	Teachers participate in planning for the change	33
	The principal demonstrates understanding of the change process	9
	The principal has to provide guidance and support during the implementation stage	11
	The principal has to encourage collaboration between staff members	13
	Sufficient time is provided for the implementation of change	12
	The school culture encourages experimentation and continuous learning	16
	Total	159
Missing	System	96
Total		255

As it is shown in table 4.2.3.1, this category is about school cultural factors which included nine statements. According to the above table, (N=35) of the participants believe that "The principal has to collaborate with teachers in formulating the new vision" is the most important factor of this category as it has rated the highest.



(N=33) of the participants agree that "Teachers have to participate in planning for the change", while only (N=9) of them consider "The principal demonstrates understanding of the change process" as the least important one.

Table 4.2.3.2  
*Means, Standard Deviations, Percentages of Agreement of School Culture Factors*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage of agreement
The principal has to communicate to teachers the proposed changes	251	4.08	0.939	83.9
The principal has to collaborate with teachers in formulating the new vision	252	4.02	0.938	79.2
The change norms and values are in agreement of the organization's values	250	3.85	0.875	70.6
Teachers participate in planning for the change	251	3.65	1.128	65.5
The principal demonstrates understanding of the change process	247	3.96	1.033	76.9
The principal has to provide guidance and support during the implementation stage	251	4.05	0.889	76.4
The principal has to encourage collaboration between staff members	251	4.22	0.840	85.1
Sufficient time is provided for the implementation of change	249	3.47	1.242	54.6
The school culture encourages experimentation and continuous learning	240	3.93	1.013	67.5
Valid N (list wise)	230			

Table 4.2.3.2 reveals the means of school cultural factors associated with teacher's resistance. As shown in the table, teachers rated the statement "the principal has to encourages collaboration between staff members" as the highest school cultural factor with a mean score of 4.22 (85.1%). The teachers rated the statement "The principal has to communicate to teachers the proposed changes" and "The principal has to provide guidance and support during the implementation stage" as the second and third personal factor with mean score of 4.08 (83.9%) and 4.05 (76.4%) respectively.

The statement "sufficient time is provided for the implementation of change" was rated as the least factor with a mean score of 3.47 (54.6%).

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between teachers' gender and the most important school cultural factor showed that it was not significant,  $\chi^2 = 3.356$ ,  $p = 0.256$ . This indicates that the teacher's gender does not influence the teacher's opinion about the most important cultural factor.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between teachers' years of experience and the most important school cultural factor showed that it was not significant,  $\chi^2 = 27.365$ ,  $p = 0.288$ . This indicates that teacher's years of experience has no effect on the teacher's opinion about the most important cultural factor.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between teachers' nationality and the most important school cultural factor showed that it was not significant,  $\chi^2 = 12.138$ ,  $p = 0.145$ . This indicates that the teacher's nationality does not have effects on the teacher's opinion about the most important cultural factor.

## 4.2.4. Category VI: The Organizational Factor

Table 4.2.4.1  
*Most Important Organizational Factor*

		Frequency
Valid	The change agents assess the staff members readiness for change	7
	The change has to be planned and directed towards particular goals	15
	The change goals is clear to all staff members	8
	The change process is comprehensible and logical	1
	The change is introduced gradually	16
	The timing of implementing the change is suitable	1
	The successful implementation of the change is linked to rewards	14
	The teachers are trained on how to implement the change	10
	The staff development activities are effective	2
	The staff development activities have to meet the change objectives	1
	An effective scaffolding is required to facilitate the change	13
	The presence of coaching is essential for ensuring the acquisition of skills	16
	There is a release time for employee to cooperate to solve problems	2
	There is time to implement the change	7
	The implemented changes are evaluated for effectiveness	2
	The school has a history of excessive change	1
Total	116	
Missing	System	139
Total		255

As shown in Table 4.2.4.1, the fourth category represents the organizational factors of the educational change. Sixteen factors were investigated under this

category. As revealed in the above table, the highest number (N=16) of the participants have supported that "the change is introduced gradually" and "the presence of coaching is essential for ensuring the acquisition of skills" are the most important factors. (N=15) of the participants believe that "the change has to be planned and directed towards particular goals". Participants who consider "the successful implementation of the change is linked to rewards" are (N=14). The lowest rating factor, one was for "The school has a history of excessive change".

Table 4.2.4.2

*Means, Standard Deviations, Percentages of Agreement of Organizational Factors*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage of agreement
The change agents assess the staff members readiness for change	247	3.56	1.126	62.7
The change has to be planned and directed towards particular goals	247	3.90	1.021	74.2
The change goals is clear to all staff members	246	3.34	1.263	52.9
The change process is comprehensible and logical	246	3.46	1.152	44.5
The change is introduced gradually	246	3.44	1.303	57.2
The timing of implementing the change is suitable	245	3.24	1.240	47.8
The successful implementation of the change is linked to rewards	245	3.44	1.305	52.2
The teachers are trained on how to implement the change	245	3.57	1.202	62.0
The staff development activities are effective	245	3.57	1.111	58.8
The staff development activities have to meet the change objectives	241	3.67	1.158	65.1
An effective scaffolding is required to facilitate the change	247	4.27	0.875	85.1
The presence of coaching is essential for ensuring the acquisition of skills	245	4.23	0.970	83.9
There is a release time for employee to cooperate to solve problems	248	3.42	1.188	53.7
There is time to implement the change	247	3.29	1.241	51.8
The implemented changes are evaluated for effectiveness	248	3.50	1.135	59.2
The school has a history of excessive change	248	3.67	1.012	63.9
Valid N (list wise)	230			

Table 4.2.4.2 reveals the means of organizational factors associated with teacher resistance. As shown in the table, teachers rated the statement "an effective scaffolding is required to facilitate the change" and "The presence of coaching is essential for ensuring the acquisition of skills" as the two highest organizational factor effects with a mean score of 4.27 (85.1%) and 4.23 (83.9%). The teachers rated the statement "The change has to be planned and directed towards particular goals" as the third organizational factor effects with a mean score of 3.90 (74.2%) and "The staff development activities have to meet the change objectives" and "The school has a history of excessive change" as the fourth and fifth organizational factor effects with the same mean score of 3.67(63.9%). The statement "The timing of implementing the change is suitable" was rated as the least factor with a mean score of 3.24 (47.8%).

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between teachers' gender and the most important school organizational factor showed no significance,  $\chi^2 = 17.735$ ,  $p = .277$ . This indicates that the teacher's gender does not affect the teacher's opinions about the most important organizational factor.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between teachers' years of experience and the most important school organizational factor showed no significance,  $\chi^2 = 36.65$ ,  $p = .808$ . This indicates that the teacher's years of experience do not influence the teacher's opinion about the most important organizational factor.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test for the relationship between teachers' nationality and the most important school organizational factor showed no significance,  $\chi^2 = 14.416$ ,  $p = 0.494$ . This indicates that the teacher's nationality does not influence the teacher's opinion about the most important organizational factor.

### *4.3. Part III: Open Ended Questions*

The open ended questions aimed to check if there were other resisting factors the respondents think they are related but not present in the questionnaire statements. For each question the researcher left three lines for the participants to write down the most important factors they think influence their resistance to change. The participants' answers were collected, assimilated and put into two parts. The first part includes all the factors that were mentioned by the respondents but not present in the instrument. The other part includes all the factors that were already present in the instrument.

Several suggestions and complaints were given by the respondents. Some respondents emphasized the importance of assessment for the need to change. They thought that change should be done on a small scale and when proved to be successful, it can be generalized. They added that it had to be gradually done and the goals had to be realistic and achievable. Moreover, the change agents must be well trained to be able to manage the change and handle the arising problems. Furthermore, there should be a kind of documentation that specifies what goals have been achieved and what have not. Certain actions should be taken to help staff attain the goals that are not achieved. They also mentioned that change was coming from different sources such as the Education Zone, ADIC, and the school management. Some of the respondents thought that there were no coordination between different kinds of change. They claim that they were exhausted from having frequent changes. Another group was also worried about extending the working hours. They believed that they needed to be prepared psychologically for change since the psychological stability of teachers is important for work and change. Additionally, they declared that they were facing hard times while trying to implement the change on students who were not grasping the amended curriculum. They emphasized that different resources of the curriculum have

to be available and the curriculum needs to be up to the level of students and representing the UAE culture. What they considered important was not to rely on western models and western teachers due to the fact that they might jeopardize the religion and the UAE culture.

However, a number of the respondents mentioned again some of the factors that were already present in the instrument. For the sake of this study, it is also important to highlight all those factors that had been re-emphasized in the open ended question. A number of teachers feared having negative results of the change. They also felt overwhelmed with the added responsibilities that were most of the time not related to teaching. Some respondents found it necessary to check for the staff readiness for the change before starting the process. Furthermore, they complained that the change was imposed on them. It was generally agreed that teachers must share in decision making regarding all the aspects of the change including the aim and the planning of the change. They needed to know the reason behind the change and how it was going to benefit them. They added that there was a need for a well-planned change and an evaluation of its progress. They thought that the change had to fit with the school culture. They called for the principal support in the change process and readiness to solve the arising problems. They mentioned that there was no cooperation between the staff members. Moreover, many respondents believed that the present staff development activities were not helping to achieve the goals of the change. They asked for good training programs that help teachers in acquiring skills. Finally, they asked to improve their salaries to be more motivated to go with the change.

#### ***4.4. Summary***

The analysis of the findings is presented in three parts. The first part is related to the demographic information of the teachers who participated in this study. This includes the participants' gender, age, years of experience, qualifications, and nationality. The demographic data were statistically analyzed using the frequency and percentages.

The second part has included closed questions that are categorized into four categories. These are the psychological, personal, school cultural, and organizational. The findings of these questions were analyzed and displayed in three different kinds of tables. Tables that present the frequency of the most important factor in each category, tables that present the means, standard deviations, and percentages of agreement of each categories, and tables that show the frequency of the most important factor of each group according to the gender, years of experience and nationality. Part three of the questionnaire included the open-ended questions that help the researcher to find out more factors that were not present in the questionnaire statements. The teachers' answers were collected and presented at the end of this chapter



## CHAPTER V

### Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

In this chapter, the findings of this study will be discussed based on the analyzed data displayed in chapter IV. The discussion and conclusion, supported with the findings of this research and the previous researches, is explored. The investigated findings are revealed in a way that showed the factors that are associated with teacher resistance to educational change in the U.A.E. as well as suggestions to further assist the implementation of change. This is followed by recommendations for future studies.

#### *5.1. Discussion and Conclusion*

##### *5.1.1. The Psychological Factor*

Findings for this category showed that the largest number of teachers thought that "I have high motivation to participate in the educational change", "I like to have educational change" and "I have fear of the unknown consequences of the change" seemed to have high effects on their attitudes toward educational change.

When teachers were asked to indicate the most important psychological factor that they thought it would have effect on change, "I have fear of the unknown consequences of the change" seemed to have high effects on their attitudes.

Again, when they were asked to mention other resisting factors in the open ended questions, their answers emphasized that they are afraid of the negative results of change. This confirmed the above mentioned quantitative finding. They also

stressed that they felt overwhelmed with the added responsibilities that most of the time were not related to teaching. In addition, they were worried about extending the working hours. They needed to be prepared psychologically for the change since their psychological stability was important for work and change.

Literature supports finding of this study. Margolis & Nagal (2006) asserted in their study that the cumulative stress from physical and mental exhaustion affects negatively the job performance and satisfaction. Further, Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic (2002) showed in their study that "the more lessons teachers give weekly, the more they suffer from emotional exhaustion, and the less they are convinced of their capacities to stand up to the stress innovative changes are accompanied with" (p.234). Moreover, Palmer et al (2009) indicated that discomfort of the uncertainty is one of the causes of resistance.

Teachers wanted to have educational change and they were willing to participate in change; however, the way change was introduced created the feeling of fear, which is a natural reaction when human beings face the unknown. It seems that the change was introduced without involving them in the change process. They were also not prepared for the change a head of time. The change was imposed on them. Moreover, teachers were not happy about the added responsibilities and the extended working hours. Teachers got used to work till 2:00, with limited teaching hours as their main responsibilities. The introduced change necessitated them to work for more hours and to perform more tasks in addition to their teaching load. The new curriculum urged them to teach in English, a language which they themselves needed to improve. Thus, more requirements and more responsibilities were added to their stress.

A statistical significant relation ( $p=.0001$ ) was found between gender and the most important psychological factor. The highest number of male teachers felt that

they "have high motivation to participate in the educational change", whereas the highest number of female teachers felt they "have fear of the unknown consequences of the change" to be the highest effect on their attitude. This is expected because the female nature is more liable to develop more emotional reactions than males.

A statistical significant relation ( $p=.0001$ ) was found between nationality and the most important psychological factor. The highest number of nationals felt that they "have fear of the unknown consequences of the change", whereas the highest number of non-national teachers felt they "have high motivation to participate in the educational change" to be the most important factor that affected their attitude. This difference is expected. It seems the nationals are more worried about the way the change is going to affect them, their students, language and their culture or maybe non-nationals can adapt to change as part of their employment.

A statistical significant relation ( $p=.012$ ) was found between years of experience and the most important psychological factor. The highest number of teachers between 8-14 felt that they "have fear of the unknown consequences of the change" as well as teachers with less than 3 years of experience. While teachers with more than 15 years of experience think that they "like to have educational change". From the psychological point of view, it seems that teachers with more than 15 years of experience react better to change than teachers with less experience. Nothing in literature specified that the psychological reactions to change of the more experienced teachers are better than teachers with less experience. Still, some researches confirmed the general idea that veteran teachers accept change better than novice teachers. Example of this is the study done by Khassawneh (2005) and Alas (2006). Other studies found the opposite to be true. Example of this is the study done by Silcox et al. (2003).

It seems that the more experience teachers have, the more confident and the more likely to take risk. There is a possibility that they became tired from the frequent changes that witnessed throughout their career. Perhaps they are becoming careless, looking at the change as an event that will slow down with time like the previous ones. On the contrary, teachers with less years of experience seems to be more worried about what the change will bring about to them in terms of position and responsibilities.

In terms of the relation between the demographic data and the other variables, no consistency in the results obtained from reviewing a number of articles, which supports what this study revealed. There was a significant relationship between gender, nationality, and years of experience with the most important psychological factors. However, no significant relationships were demonstrated between the mentioned demographic data and the other three important factors as shown below.

### ***5.1.2. The Personal Factor***

Findings for this category showed that the largest number of teachers thought that they "believe in the management abilities to have a successful change"; "see the need for educational change" and "trust the change agents" seemed to have high effects on their attitudes.

When teachers were asked to indicate the most important personal factor that they thought would have an effect on change, "I believe in the management abilities to have a successful change" seemed to have high effects on their attitudes.

When they were asked to add more factors in the open ended question, some declared that they were facing hard times while trying to implement the change on

students who were not grasping the new curriculum. They added that the curriculum has to be up to the level of students and representing the UAE culture.

This finding contradicts what Gay (2002) indicated as one of the factors that cause resistance is lack of trust. In this study, teachers trust the change agents and principal; however, they are still having resistance because of other factors. Moreover, Graetz et al (2002) found that staff resists change when they consider the change unnecessary. On the other hand, the literature supports the finding. McKenzie & Scheurich (2008) for example, pointed to the second language issues that can cause resistance to change. Hinde (2002) also indicated that the teachers' values and norms influence their views of education and change. Consequently, any change that is different from the teacher's already developed culture and philosophy will be resisted (as cited in Hinde, 2004).

Regarding their personal opinion, it seemed that teachers believed in the importance of having change and they had no problem in trusting change agents and the management. On the other hand, it was mentioned in the open ended question that students faced difficulty in understanding the new curriculum that was introduced in English. This might be due to language barriers. It is not fair for teachers and students to start this new curriculum especially when it is introduced to students who got used to the old system. Moreover, it will be difficult for teachers to teach a foreign curriculum that included norms and values which contradict their culture and students' culture. Example of this is some science books included pictures of naked people. Another example is some of the required readings, like novels, incorporate various ideas about Christianity and other countries ways of living that is totally different from that of the UAE. Therefore, to benefit from the new curriculum, it should be modified to fit the UAE culture.

### *5.1.3. The School Culture Factor*

Findings for this category showed that the largest number of teachers thought that "the principal has to encourage collaboration between staff members", "The principal has to communicate to teachers the proposed changes" and "the principal has to provide guidance and support during the implementation stage" seemed to have high effects on their attitudes.

When teachers were asked to indicate the most important school culture factor, "the principal has to collaborate with teachers in formulating the new vision" seemed to have high effects on their attitudes.

When teachers were asked to answer the open ended questions, some teachers complained that the change was imposed on them. They stressed that teachers have to share in decision making regarding all the aspects of the change including the aim and the planning of the change. They insisted that change had to fit with the school culture. They called for the principal's support in the change process and readiness to solve the arising problems. They added that there was no cooperation between staff members. These findings coincided with statistical results that showed the teacher's preference for principals who encouraged collaboration, communicated the change, and guided and supported staff during the period of implementation. Some teachers mentioned that the change had to be in harmony with the UAE culture. The change should not rely on foreigners due to the fact that they would jeopardize the religion and culture of the U.A.E.

The findings in literature supported the findings of this study. For example, Palmer et al (2009) pointed out that managing change can be facilitated by having a common vision and effective communication strategies that help in reinforcing change.

Further, McGregor (2002) asserted the importance of visible principal advocacy in facilitating change. Silcox et al. (2003) also indicated that one of the principals' behaviors that were helpful in overcoming resistance was their willingness to seek solutions to arising problems.

The principals are the ones who create the school culture. Through collaboration, sharing, visioning, communicating, developing self and others and solving problems, learning culture will prevail which is vital for staff to achieve the change. It seems that most of the Al Ain public schools lack this learning culture. This is manifested by the teachers' attitudes toward change. Teachers were not involved in formulating the school vision nor they participated in taking decisions that are related to change; consequently, they resist. Furthermore, their answers in the open ended questions give the impression that teachers are worried about their culture. This is most probably because through education, the cultural norms and customs will be transmitted. Teachers' behaviors and attitudes will also be transmitted to the new generation. They were afraid that with time certain norms and behaviors, which are demonstrated by the foreign teachers, will dominate and eradicate the present culture.

#### ***5.1.4. The Organizational Factor***

Findings for this category showed that the largest number of teachers thought that "an effective scaffolding is required to facilitate the change", "the presence of coaching is essential for ensuring the acquisition of skills" "The change has to be planned and directed towards particular goals", "The staff development activities have to meet the change objectives" and "The school has a history of excessive change" seemed to have high effects on their attitudes.

When teachers were asked to indicate the most important school organizational "the change is introduced gradually" and "the presence of coaching is essential for ensuring the acquisition of skills" seemed to have high effects on their attitudes.

When teachers were asked to answer the open ended questions, some teachers claimed that they were exhausted from having frequent changes in curriculum and assessment scheme. Most of them needed to know the reasons behind change and how it was going to benefit them. They added that there was a need for a well-planned change and evaluation of its progress. Moreover, many respondents believed that the present staff development activities were not helping to achieve the goals of change. They asked for good training programs that would help teachers in acquiring skills and this confirmed what was statistically found in this category. Finally, they wanted their salaries to be raised so they become more motivated to go with the change.

There were other organizational factors that have been stated by teachers that added to what was presented in the closed-ended statements. Some respondents emphasized the importance of assessing the need for change. They thought that the change had to be done on small scale, when proved to be successful, it would be generalized. It had to be done gradually and the goals had to be realistic and achievable. Moreover, they believed that change agents had to be well trained to be able to manage change and handle the arising problems. Furthermore, there should be a kind of documentation that specified what goals had been achieved and what had not. If goals were not achieved, certain actions have to be taken to help staff attain the goals. They declared that change had been coming from different sources such as from the education zone, ADEC, and the school management. However, there was no coordination among them.



Those findings supported previous literature. Palmer et al. (2009), for example, indicated that the excessive change and the cumulative effect of previous changes could be one of the reasons why people resist change. Moreover, Waddell, Cummings & Worley (2000) pointed out that one reason that impeded the progress of change was the deficiency in good planning for change. Lack of guidance and support, absence of communicating the new vision on the proposed changes to all staff, the deficiency in providing training on the implementation of change, and lack of evaluation and rewards would all lead to resistance.

It is expected to have resistance to any change. However, resistance would increase when the change is not planned, staff is not supported, developmental activities are not related to change, training programs are not effective, and a rewarding system does not exist. This is what it seems happening in public schools in Al Ain. Adding to this is what teachers referred to as the mismatch between the different plans and initiators of change. They did not know which change to follow. Moreover, frequent changes that were taking place explain the teachers' need to have good planning for the change. Because of all of the mentioned challenges, change has not been proceeding smoothly. Teachers were not able to effectively implement the educational change because things around were not clear and structured. This created feeling of insecurity. Accordingly, it appeared that teachers were in need of a well-planned and coordinated change and this also had been shown from their valuable suggestions in the open ended part of the questionnaire.

### ***5.2. Suggestions and Implications***

This section presents some suggestions and implications the researcher thinks can help the educational policy makers and change agents in the U.A.E. These

suggestions are based on the data obtained from teachers, the researcher personal experience, and the reviewed literature. Here are the suggestions.

- It is suggested that policy makers and principals spend more effort to decrease the teachers' fear of the unknown consequences of change. This can be done by many different means. For example, they have to explain the rationale behind change, include teachers in the change process, and support staff during the journey of change. Moreover, they need to reassure them that this change will not affect their position at work.
- It is suggested that policy makers, principals and staff members collaborate in formulating the new vision, planning for change, and evaluating its success.
- It is suggested that policy makers perform staff development activities that are related to the individual teacher's needs and to the goals of change.
- It is suggested that principals and policy makers support coaching program for its usefulness in developing staff.
- It is suggested that policy makers reduce the workload of teachers and many other responsibilities that are not related to teaching.
- It is suggested that policy makers compensate for extending the working hours. They also have to compensate for the after duty hours spent for professional developmental activities. This will motivate teachers to spend more hours on duty.
- It is suggested that policy makers consider reviewing the adopted foreign curriculum to fit more to students' level of learning and culture.
- It is suggested that changes in the curriculum should start gradually from the early school years till grade 12 rather than introducing it at different school levels.

- It is suggested that policy makers limit recruiting the western teachers in order to preserve the culture.
- It is suggested that policy makers use very strict rules while recruiting the principals because principals have great effect in creating the learning culture that help staff to be open to change.
- It is suggested that principals have to be aware of all the aspects of change so that they will be able to be resource person while implementing the change.

### *5.3. Recommendations for Future Studies*

Here are some recommendations to consider for future studies.

- Researchers are encouraged to increase the target population to include teachers from all the emirates of the U.A.E. to be able to generalize the findings to the UAE schools.
- Researchers are encouraged to expand the target population to include the administrative staff members including principals to find out if resistance is present among that group.
- Two researches can be conducted for a specific change, one during the introductory phase and the other one sometime following its completion to check if resistance decreased after implementation.
- The mixed research approach can be used in future research so that more instruments can be used to strengthen the findings. The usage of the qualitative method will allow the researchers to investigate more factors other than the ones presented in the questionnaire instrument.

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**Appendix: 1****PARTICIPANT COVERING LETTER****Resistance to Educational Change from the Perspective of Teachers in  
AL Ain Education Zone in the United Arab Emirates**

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire aims to address the factors that affect you as teachers to resist change. By knowing the underlying factors, this study would be of great benefit to the change agents by having in hands a researched paper that shows such factors; and consequently, will help in managing and overcoming the causes of resistance.

The participation in the study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate in the study. Refusal to participate will not affect you in any way. Participation involves you completing a self-administered, anonymous questionnaire, which should take approximately 15 minutes of your time. By filling in the attached questionnaire, you will indicate your agreement to participate. You are kindly requested to complete all questions. You WILL NOT be asked to give your name on the questionnaire and your specific answers will remain strictly confidential. Only people associated with the study will see your answers and you will not be identified in any report or presentation that may arise from the study.

Please complete all the sections straightaway. Do not discuss this with other participants until finished. When done; hand in the completed booklet to your principal. For any inquiry do not hesitate to email me on this: wafaaz71@gmail.com

Many thanks

## Demographic information

1. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age: 20-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, above 40
3. Degree: PHD, Master, Bachelor in education, Bachelor in non-education
4. Years of experience: less than 3, 4-7, 8-14, 15 and above
5. Nationality: National, Non-national

Statement of the Factors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>Psychological</b>					
1. I like to have educational change					
2. I have high motivation to participate in the educational change					
3. I have fear of the unknown consequences of the change					
4. I have fear of losing my job because of the change					
5. I fear having more demands and job requirements to implement the change					
6. I feel overwhelmed from the information overload					
7. I doubt my abilities to learn something new					

From the above please indicate the most important psychological factor that you think has effect on

change ( )

**Other psychological factors you would like to mention:**

1. ....

2. ....

3. ....

**Personal**

1. I see the need for educational change					
2. I believe in the management abilities to have a successful change					
3. I trust the change agents					
4. I am aware of my role in the change process					
5. I think the change disrupt my stable work norms and relations					
6. I reject the change due to the lack of conformity to norms and sacred values					
7. I resist change because everybody does					

From the above please indicate the most important personal factor that you think has effect on change ( )

**Other personal factors you would like to mention:**

1.-----

2.-----

3.-----

### School Culture

1. The principal has to communicate to teachers the <b>proposed changes</b>					
2. The principal has to collaborate with teachers in formulating the new vision					
3. The change norms and values are in agreement of the organization's values					
4. Teachers participate in planning for the <b>change</b>					
5. The principal demonstrates understanding of the change <b>process</b>					
6. The principal has to provide guidance and support during the <b>implementation stage</b>					

7. The principal has to encourage collaboration between staff members					
8. Sufficient time is provided for the implementation of change					
9. The school culture encourages experimentation and continuous learning					

From the above please indicate the most important school cultural factor that you think has effect on change ( )

**Other cultural factors you would like to mention:**

1. -----

2. -----

3. -----

### **Organizational**

1. The change agents assess the staff members readiness for change					
2. The change has to be planned and directed towards particular goals					



3. The change goals is clear to all staff members					
4. The change process is comprehensible and logical					
5. The change is introduced gradually					
6. The timing of implementing the change is suitable					
7. The successful implementation of the change is linked to rewards					
8. The teachers are trained on how to implement the change					
9. The staff development activities are effective					
10. The staff development activities have to meet the change objectives					
11. An effective scaffolding is required to facilitate the change					
12. The presence of coaching is essential for ensuring the acquisition of skills					
13. There is a release time for employee to cooperate to solve problems					
14. There is time to implement the change					
15. The implemented changes are evaluated for effectiveness					
16. The school has a history of excessive change					

From the above please indicate the most important organizational factor that you think has effect on change ( )

**Other organizational factors you would like to mention:**

1. -----

2. -----

3. -----

*Thanks for your cooperation*

*Please be reminded that all provided information is dealt with utmost confidentiality*





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جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
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برنامج الماجستير في التربية

عنوان الرسالة:

مقاومة التغيير التربوي من وجهة نظر المعلمين في  
منطقة العين التعليمية

اسم الطالبة:

وفاء محمد علي الزعتري

المشرفون:

- د. علي سعيد الكعبي
- د. عبد الرحمن سالم النعيمي
- د. علي سعيد إبراهيم



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وفاء محمد علي الزعتري

إلى

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جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
كلية التربية  
برنامج الماجستير في التربية

مقاومة التغيير التربوي من وجهة نظر المعلمين في  
منطقة العين التعليمية

رسالة مقدمة من الطالبة

وفاء محمد علي الزعتري

إلى

جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في التربية

"القيادة التربوية"

مايو 2011