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# Assessing Training Needs of School Principals in Al Ain – United Arab Emirates (Some Lessons from Literature and the Field)

Mariam Abdulla Moubarak Saeed Al Yahyaei

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United Arab Emirates University  
Faculty Of Education  
Foundations of Education Department  
Master of Education Program

ASSESSING TRAINING NEEDS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN AL  
AIN-UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

(SOME LESSONS FROM LITERATURE AND THE FIELD)

A Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements of the Degree of  
Master of Educational Leadership

By

Mariam Abdulla Moubarak Saeed Al Yahyai

Supervised by  
Prof., Mohamad Abdel-Dayem

May, 2011

# Assessing Training Needs of School Principals in Al Ain – United Arab Emirates

(Some lessons from literature and the field)

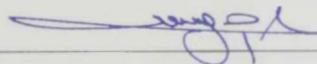
Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of education

(Education Leadership)

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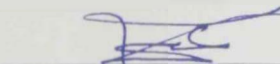
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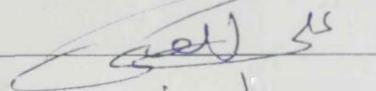
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## THESIS ABSTRACT

This study examines the characteristics of school leadership professional development programs through conducting a training needs assessment utilizing a questionnaire on school principals in Al-Ain Educational zone during 2010-2011. The study employs two research paradigms that are quantitative and qualitative, where multiple-choice items and open-ended questions are combined in a questionnaire used to collect data. The sample included 50 female and male school principals out of 114 school principals in Al Ain zone, presenting cycle one (Grade 1-5), two ( grades 6-9) and three (10-12) , including common schools( schools that cover two cycles or more). The study found that the assessment of school principals of the training needs are high in the six clusters, leading strategically, leading the community, leading people, leading teaching and learning , leading the organization and finally the self-management; where leading teaching and learning , leading strategically mean represent the highest in compared to the other clusters. Besides. among the suggestions regarding the improvement of professional development programs, 16 school principals (representing 32% of the sample) emphasized the need of conducting training needs assessment as prior to planning for PD programs. The research provides recommendations regarding the construction of development activities that target school leadership.

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## DEDICATION

To my father's soul, whom I will always miss.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

#### Introduction

Education systems in the 21st century are witnessing massive changes. These changes have been the result of information and technological advances and changes in the economy in general. They are also the result of changes in the nature of knowledge and the view that schools should prepare students for the unforeseeable future. Recent research has identified the importance of school leadership in improving outcomes for schools and their students. Consequently, new performance standards and accountability have become a central issue of educational reform in all levels; internationally and in the UAE.

School leaders are expected to demonstrate bottom-line results and make data-driven results decisions, which moves schools towards a new era of accountability, where principals are held accountable for promoting the improvement process at their schools. Hence, the emphasis on the skills and knowledge of principals is more important than before. A large volume of literature on effective schools indicates that the role of principal is crucial to school success. Research has established that school leadership is second only to the quality of teaching as an influence on pupil learning. Thus, it is also self-evident that poor management will lead to a school being less effective than it might be (Kydd, Crawford & Riches, 1997, p. 79).

Consequently, the environment and changing context, and the changes in principals' roles call for changes in principal preparation programs to give priority to in education agenda. It is established in literature, professional development is a core

component in any school improvement initiative (Phillips, 2008; Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989; Zepeda, 2008.). Regardless of the scope of the reform, "the relationship between educational reform and professional development (PD) is a two-way reciprocal relationship" (Villegas-Reimers .2003). "It has become considered as a primary vehicle in efforts to bring about a purposeful change" (Zepeda, 2008, p.21). Thus the effectiveness of all forms of professional development in education have come under scrutiny. Accordingly, questions have increased the demands for provable results of PDs.

Since "high-quality professional development is at the center of every modern proposal to enhance education" (Gusky, 2000, p. 16), and in order to develop school leadership capacities, there was the need to understand the new roles and responsibilities. Professional standards for teachers and principals have been developed coupled with benchmarking. However, principal training is seldom anchored in hands-on leadership experience in real schools (Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko, Oct. 2000). Consequently, principals find very little in their professional development programs which are disconnected from the daily realities and needs of schools. The application of traditional approaches to prepare and develop efficient school leaders are not sufficient (Hess & Kelly, 2005).

Consequently, "effective professional development is not a peripheral, bolt-on, area of school or school district activity but is, rather, an integral feature of day-to-day work" (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994, p. 300). In fact, the provision of effective professional development is regarded as a sophisticated process, which sets emphasis on the need to build a comprehensive framework of support for those activities needed to ensure appropriate transfer of learning and lasting changes in performance, to ensure benefited learner and organization.

Effective professional development programs heavily depend on the availability of a group of certain elements that need to be considered. In essence, developers of PD programs must ensure that targets of professional development respond to the accurate training needs guided by the instructional objectives and goals that should be served along with new assessment tools. Villegas-Reimers (2003) states that "educational reforms that do not include educators and their professional development have not been successful, just as unsuccessful the professional development initiatives as they have not been embedded in some form of reform structures and policies".

Worldwide, initiatives have been taken to improve school administrations. Initiatives included scholarship, university courses and training programs. In the UAE, in June 2009 Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) officially launched its 10-year Strategic plan that sets out ADEC's approach towards creating the highest quality, comprehensive system of education aiming at changing schools to a new school model, in phases, 2009-2018, through addressing everything from teacher to principals qualifications, through to curriculum learning outcomes. As part of the development of the Strategic Plan, ADEC conducted extensive research to evaluate key areas for improvement and how Abu Dhabi's education system benchmarks amongst international leaders in education. ADEC's ultimate aim is the promotion of teaching and learning through the development of professional leaders in schools. Their core purpose is to provide professional leadership and management for a school, and to promote a secure foundation from which to achieve high standards in all areas of the school's work (ADEC Strategic Plan, n.d).

### **Statement of the Problem**

During the last 20 years, the UAE educational system has undergone various dramatic transformations that included new teaching methodologies, technology

integration in learning, supervision approaches. Shifts and changes are constant. The need for professional development programs that help prepare and boost the current performances is dire. These changes have incited the change in leadership models and styles.

To cater for effective learning outcomes, ADEC has created a framework that is built on five key areas, when taken together, represent the role of the principal, those are leading strategically, leading teaching and learning, leading the organization leading people, and leading the community. These five standard areas consist of competencies and performance indicators. To reach the professional performances ADEC anticipates from school principals, highly-funded professional programs have been designed. However, targeted competencies have been identified in light of school principals' performance evaluation, which was derived from ADEC vision of school leadership and schools (ADEC Training slides, n.d). This only highlights the need for more attention to engaging targeted population (school principals).

However, shortage in effective PDs seems to be an international issue that often downgrades the processes of reform. Generally, the weakness in professional development is attributed to the focus on instructional issues that are poorly connected to relevant school context (Usdan, et al., Oct.,2000). Added to that, research findings indicate little evidence of involving school principals in identifying their developmental needs. It is, therefore, logical to petition the wisdom of principals in order to assess their perceptions of their professional development needs.

This thesis tries to assess the needs of school leaders in Al Ain in light of the ADEC standards, the recent international trends in Educational leadership and principals' perceptions; through answering the following questions:

1. What are the school principals' perceptions towards the professional development programs?

2. What are the training needs of School principals in Al Ain zone in light of Abu Dhabi Educational Council expectations?
3. What are the features of an effective PD from the school principals' point of view?
4. How can literature and field experience inspire the construction of training programs for school principals?

### **Purpose of study**

The purpose of this study is to assess the training needs of the school principals in Al Ain Zone during the school year 2010-2011. In order to accomplish this purpose, specific objectives should be addressed:

1. To identify the major areas of professional development needed by school principals.
2. To identify the factors that contribute to the success of professional development programs of school principals.
3. To explore ADEC Framework of leadership development.
4. To identify the features of an effective professional development program.
5. To provide recommendations on building PD programs that target school leaders.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this study the following key terms are conceptually and operationally defined:

#### **Educational leadership.**

School leadership has become a priority in education policy agendas internationally. It plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the

motivations and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment. Effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and equity of schooling.

Generally, leadership is "a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes" (Early & Weindling, 2004). Leadership is also defined as "the process of influencing individuals or groups to accomplish organizational goals or mission" (Benator & Thumann, 2003, p. 104). Schira (2007) defines leadership as a relationship that is between one person who influences the thoughts and actions of another (or group), ...some are 'up front' providing direction and support while others are more 'behind the scenes' working with and empowering colleagues in the organization.

School leadership is defined for the purpose of this study as the group of attributes, skills, perceptions that enable the school principal to operate, run, motivate, evaluate and assess his or her work and the others (teachers) in order to reach common organizational goals that is quality education.

#### **Professional development.**

Professional development refers to "a systematic and formal group process in which a group of (educators) are required to get together for purposes of developing and/or advancing the goals of the institution" (Richardson & Hamilton, 1994, p.109).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defines Professional development as an organized and systematic group of activities and programs that aim to develop leadership skills.

#### **Needs Assessment.**

Rebore (2009) defines Needs Assessment as "the process of assessing employee need is essentially the process of determining the discrepancy between the existing and the needed competencies of the staff" (p. 183).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defines needs assessment as the process of identifying the developmental needs in light of the organizational goals, the job demands and the individual performance.

### **Public-Private Partnership (PPP).**

From ADEC official website, the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) was initiated as a pilot project in September 2006 in advance of implementation of the New School Model. The initiative is designed to leverage the expertise of private school operators to enhancing public schools operations. Generally, private operator teams work onsite at schools to support enhanced teaching methods and higher curriculum standards.

### **Significance of Study**

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest and attention in professional development programs. The importance of this study springs from the purpose, namely, assessing needs of school principals to help construct a training program. Eventually, it is intended to help policymakers and PD developers to consider principles and characteristics of professional development that aim at developing school leadership.

### **Scope of Study**

It should be noted that in 2005, the UAE established independent counsels for education. Al Ain zone is one of the zones administered by ADEC. This study is limited only to schools in Al Ain zone, where only school principals of public schools are addressed during the academic year 2010-2011.

In addition, the researcher utilizes a questionnaire as a method of training needs assessment(TNA), as it is one of the most commonly used among various methods of TNA, some of which are observation, interviews, focus groups and job description.

## **The Study Plan**

The first chapter includes an introduction of the issue, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, its significance and definitions of main terms.

The second chapter presents literature review of professional development significance and characteristics and school leadership roles and needs.

The third chapter describes the methodology of how data were collected and analyzed including: research method, sample, instruments, and analysis

The fourth chapter presents the analysis of the data collected.

The fifth chapter provides summary, conclusions, and recommendations to build an effective PD for school principals.



## CHAPTER II

### Theoretical Background

#### Professional Development

##### Definition and significance.

Little has been written about the emergence of professional development and its history, except for the fact that it appeared in the 1980 (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). However, professional development has risen to the highest stakes in most professions and organizations. In fact, "every proposal for educational reform and every plan for school improvement emphasize the need for high-quality professional development" (Gusky, 2000). Thus its significance is self-evident, as little can be changed, promoted and enhanced with unskilled, incompetent and unconfident school principals.

Definitions of professional development vary according to perceptions about what such development activity is intended to achieve (Bush & West Burnham, 1994). In a broader sense, Villegas-Reimers (2003) refers to professional development as the development of a person in his or her professional role. She refers to professional development as formal and informal experiences that range between workshops, meetings and reading publications. According to the American Federation of Teachers (2002), "professional development is a continuous process of individual and collective examination and improvement of practice". According to Luneburg & Irby (2006), high-quality professional development refers to rigorous and relevant content, strategies, and organizational supports that ensure the preparation and career-long development of teachers and principals whose competence, expectations, and actions influence the teaching and learning environment.

In all, PDs should empower individual educators and communities of educators to make complex decisions; to identify and solve problems; and to connect theory and practice to student outcomes. Professional development of teachers should, for example, enable teachers to offer students the learning opportunities that will prepare them to meet world class standards in given content areas and to successfully assume adult responsibilities for citizenship and work.

From the above discussion, it is inferred that many modern educational reforms require teachers and school administrators to transform their roles and take on new responsibilities. Structural changes in the way schools are organized and managed with more sharing of decision making and collaboration with parents and other community groups require school principals and other administrators to change the way they carry out their jobs and redesign the culture in which they work (Guskey, 2000). In this sense, professional development is necessary for teachers, staff, and administrators. As far as school leaders are concerned, it is well-known that "no effective reforms [can happen] without good leadership" (De Vita, 2007, p.5), and in order to help school leaders cope with their emerging roles and with reforms, it is necessary to have well-planned professional development programs.

It should be noted that the provision of professional development programs should consider some basic elements. First, effective professional development should be embedded in the reality and practices of schools, teachers and administrators' work. The second factor is that professional development is catering for adults and thus should incorporate principles of adult learning (Luneburg & Irby, 2006). According to Hoare (2006), "adult learning is a change in behavior, a gain in knowledge; such learning can also mean a positive change in self-understanding or in the development of personal qualities such as coping mechanisms". Learning is not just information-based, nor is it merely a change in observable behavior, it can include the acquisition of information or

the application of information, and also includes a change or recording of content in one's cognitive apparatus (Hoare, 2006).

Nearly 4 decades ago, Malcolm Knowles proposed a new label and technology of adult learning making a distinction between pedagogy and andragogy ( Merriam, Caffarella& Baumgartner, 2007). According to Knowles (1996), andragogy is set on four crucial assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from the assumptions about child learners, on which traditional pedagogy is premised. These assumptions as Knowles (1996) lists, are; self-concept, prior accumulating experience, readiness to learn, and finally, orientation to learning. Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner ( 2007) note that Knowles also referred to a fifth and a sixth assumptions in some later publications to include: internal motivation and understanding the need to learn.

Some of the several implications that spring from this difference in assumptions about the self-concept of the adult is the diagnosis of needs and the planning process. Knowles (1996) notes that an adult will learn what others want him to learn if their power to punish him for not learning is strong enough. But he is more deeply motivated to learn those things he sees the need to learn. Therefore, in Andragogy, great emphasis is placed on the involvement of adult learners in the process of self-diagnosis of needs for learning, which, according to Knowles (1996), consists of three phases: construction of a model of competencies required to achieve, providing diagnostic experiences, and helping the learner to measure the gaps between his present competences and those required by the model.

#### **Training and needs assessment.**

There are two integrated processes that adult learning is centered on. Namely, training and education. Rebore (2009) refers to training as the process of learning a

sequence of programmed behaviors, where it is intended to provide externally identified solutions to problems associated with performance, through focusing on the acquisition of motor skills and on producing simple conditioning methods that will improve the employee's ability to perform the job. In comparison, education is more focused on acquisition of knowledge. In fact, "education is the process of helping an individual understand and interpret knowledge" (Rebore, 2009).

Employment of training in PDs involves defining a prior process: that is the needs assessment. According to Gupta (2007), "some experts agree that human learning, training and performance improvement initiatives should begin with a need assessment" (p.13). The training needs assessment is a critical activity for the training and development function. While needs are defined as "problems confronting organizations, groups, and societies (Altschuld & Kumar,2010, p. 12), the needs assessment, according to Witkin & Altschuld (1995), is the "procedures for identifying and describing both present and desired states in a specific context, deriving statement of need, and placing the needs in order of priority for later action" (p.10). The needs assessment process helps the trainer and the person requesting training to specify the training need or performance deficiency, and insures that interventions are relevant and address the real needs. Research highlights approaches of needs assessment that can be utilized separately or in combination. These approaches are: knowledge and skills assessment, job and task analysis, competency-based needs assessment and strategic needs assessment (Gupta, 2007). Taken together, effective needs assessment incites the conduction of an analysis of the organizational, job and individual needs (Miller and Osinski, 1996).

#### **Characteristics of effective professional development.**

The need to improve student learning outcomes has placed a renewed focus on research about professional development, where professional development programs are

expected to support the development of the skills needed by effective principals (Hemmen, Edmonson & Slate, 2009). According to Lashway (2003) notes that mere alignment of course titles and content with the adopted higher standards is not enough. To be most effective, the new standards should lead to a fundamental rethinking of content, delivery, and assessment.

A rich body of literature establishes consensus on the characteristics and elements of professional development. Rosa Valdes, described three key and two secondary characteristics of high quality professional development, where the first key characteristic is the clarity of learning goals or expectations presented to participants, the second characteristic is focused on the cognitive challenge elicited by materials presented; the third centers on the extent to which discussion among participants represents an instructional conversation, and finally, the additional secondary characteristics of high quality professional development include the extent of collaborative work and research findings employed in professional development meetings (as cited in Zepeda, 2005).

According to Piggot-Irvine (2006), there are many elements that contribute to an effective professional development program itself, which include "attending to the principles of adult learning, program components, and facilitation". Kydd et al. (1997) see that management learning must take account of process, on a model of how adults learn. They draw a continuous learning cycle that starts with participants' experience, through structured reflection, conceptualization, experimentation, and new experience.

Research establishes several characteristics of effective PD. According to Villegas-Reimers (2003). PD is perceived as a long-term process that takes place within a particular context; linked to school reform, where participants are conceived as reflective practitioners who work collaboratively.

Moreover, transformation of models adopted by PD developers might help boost the effectiveness of these programs. In that, Villegas-Reimers (2003) highlights utilization of constructivism as opposed to transmission-oriented models. Theoretically, constructivism central idea is that human learning is constructed, that learners build new knowledge upon the foundation of previous learning and that learning is active rather than passive (Hoover, 1993). In practice, constructive professional development has to draw on learners' previous knowledge. Plus, as learning is a constructive process, instruction must be designed to provide opportunities for such construction. Through employment of constructivism in learning, it is understandable that development activities need to be more systematic, long-term that allow practice and reflection on that practice.

Zepeda (2008) cites the standards introduced by the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education (2004) in an attempt to define high quality professional development. Those characteristics include rich content that is specially chosen to deepen and broaden the knowledge and skills of teachers, principals, and administrators. High quality professional development requires structure, reflecting well-thought out delivery; efficient use of time; varied and effective styles of pedagogy; discourse and applications; and the use of formative and summative assessment to promote understanding. Professional development should also be guided by experienced educators and other professionals who have a thorough and up-to-date understanding of the content themselves and who can fully engage the participants in the desired learning (Kydd et al., 1997, McIntyre; 2001, Zepeda, 2008).

In the same stream, Barth (2001) sums the impediments that hinder effective professional development for school principals. Those impediments include the inadequacy of time during the school day on the part of principals, their ineducability and their sense of exposing themselves as flawed.

According to Luneburg & Irby (2006), high-quality professional development refers to rigorous and relevant content, strategies, and organizational supports that ensure the preparation and career-long development of teachers and principals whose competence, expectations, and actions influence the teaching and learning environment.

Similarly, Evans and Mohr (1999) criticize teaching principals – in professional development programs - how to lead schools by giving them predigested "in basked" training, which, according to the researchers, hardly leads to new thinking about leadership, teaching or learning.

Building effective programs that target building the school principals might seem a complex process that involves various factors. Gusky (1991) proposes five guidelines for designing effective professional development programs. These include: recognizing that change is an individual process; thinking big but starting small; working in teams; including procedures for personal feedback on results; and providing continued support and follow-up.

Bush & West-Burnham (1994) argue that the provision of an effective learning environment for professional development assumes awareness both of the varied ways in which adults learn and of the learning conditions most conducive to ensuring application of learning in terms of enhanced performance. They suggest that professional development activities need to be designed so that they provide a safe environment for learning, provide appropriate strategies to support transfer of learning, and allow appropriate evaluation of learning and learning transfer Bush & West-Burnham (1994).

According to Rebores (2009), "effective development of principals can be enhanced if the development programs are: systematic, concrete and relevant; ongoing and personalized; flexible and adaptable to change; carried out when the participant is

not fatigued because of work and an integral part of the educational goals and objectives" (p.190).

According to Piggot-Irvine (2006), "there are many elements that contribute to an effective professional development programme itself, which include attending to the principles of adult learning, programme components, and facilitation".

According to Kydd et al, (1997)" management development programmes in education have moved from learning about to learning how to"(p.82). In that, leadership development is broader than specific programs of activity or intervention. It requires a combination of formal and informal process throughout all stages and contexts of leadership practice, which implies coherently supporting the school leadership career through these stages: encourage initial leadership training; organize induction programs, ensure in-service training to cover need and context. (Pont, Nusche, Moorman, 2008)

Understanding the type of learning is extremely essential in planning for effective program that meets the real needs. In this sense, Robre (2009) highlights the distinction between training and education, and the importance of not assuming that all job-related activities of a particular position are either trainable or educable. Principals usually do not perform programmed work; Administrators can be trained in management techniques and procedures, but not trained to manage.

"It must be recognized that learning to teach and to lead is a lifelong professional activity, not something one completes in a leadership development program" (Yee, 1997). For any training program, to be effective, it must start with trainable people (McIntyre ,2001). According to McIntyre (2001), "learners like to be active rather than passive, and they like to feel that what they are doing is interesting, practical and real". This might be attained as "every individual tends to feel committed to a decision to the extent that he has participated in making it" (Knowles, 1996, p. 87) . Simply put,



involvement of learners in setting learning objectives is a basic element in adult learning.

To sum up this part, "leadership development programs require the deliberate creation of support networks. Building a network of collegiality among program participants promotes continuing professional and personal development, develops a trusted peer group, and creates time for reading, reflection and thoughtful discussion. Characteristics of professional development programs as Gusky (2000) simply puts them, are "intentional, ongoing and systematic" (p. 16).

Taken all together, research has set standards and characteristics for effective PDs. Providing activities that are job-embedded, address the daily realities and needs of school principals, and that invest and build on prior experiences and motivate reflective practices can help advance the quality of professional development programs.

## **School Principalship**

### **Leadership and principalship.**

Schools are changing dramatically. They are transforming in response to various pressures, including parent complaints about the quality of education, the labor market demands for increasingly skilled workers, and rapid advances in technology. Marzano, Walters, & McNulty (2005) conducted a meta-analysis (quantitative research) study of 69 studies over 35 years which reviewed teacher surveys of principal behaviors and student achievement and they found that the principal can have a profound effect on the student achievement. There can be little doubt that schools will require different forms of leadership. Leadership may be the first and most important requisite for good principals. In education, "a good leader is one who possesses noble intentions based on sound educational values" (Sybouts & Wendel, 1994,p.3). Leithwood (2007) states that leaders contribute to student learning indirectly, through their influence on other people

or features of their organizations. As countries seek to align their education systems to the demands of contemporary society, expectations for school leaders are becoming increasingly high.

Principals, as managers, have the responsibility of making certain that specific tasks are completed by teachers and other staff members. They coordinate, direct, and support the work of others by defining objectives, evaluating performance, providing resources, building a positive climate, fostering positive school-community relations, planning, scheduling, keeping records, resolving conflicts, handling student problems, working cooperatively with central office staff members, and keeping the school running smoothly on a day-to-day basis ( Sybouts & Wendel, 1994, p.15).

On the other hand, principals as leaders “ creat[e] the vision, ... and inspir[e] others (Hoerr, 2005). It is evident that the recent trends in school improvement emphasize the need for having leaders and not only managers, or simply put, having a principal who has managerial as well as leadership skills.

Effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and quality of schooling (Coles & Southworth, 2005). School leaders' responsibilities should also be defined through an understanding of the practices most likely to improve teaching and learning. This, in fact, adds to the responsibilities of school principals to become instructional leaders and not only administrative leaders. In this sense, Gunter (2002) argues that effective leaders are "purposeful in leading improvement; participative by sharing leadership and delegating; and, the leading professional through their pedagogic and curriculum knowledge" (p.33) .

### **Leadership and management.**

Fullan (1998) posits that the job of the principal has become increasingly complex and constrained. Principals need new mindsets and guidelines for action to

break through the bonds of dependency that have trapped those who want to make a difference in their schools. Principals will be much more effective if they develop and pursue high hopes as they re-culture their schools and their relationships to the outside.

Research has highlighted the nature of leadership and how it differs from management. Earley & Weindling, 2004 urge that leadership is associated with two factors a sense of purpose and confidence that is engendered in followers, where leaders tend to be more formative, proactive and problem-solving, dealing with such things as values, vision and mission. In comparison, the concerns of managers are more to do with the execution, planning, organizing and more on providing orders and consistency to organizations (p.25).

Hughes et al. (2009) differentiate leadership from management, with leadership being more concerned with doing the right thing and management more concerned with doing things right. To illustrate, managers administer programs, control budget and costs, maintain the status quo, while leaders inspire and develop others, challenge the status quo.

### **Development of leadership.**

Historically, leadership has gone through various stages of development. Vilsteren (1999) made an array of the three theoretical perspectives on leadership which have been prominent over past decades. The first perspective, the traits, behavior and style theories, where the personality and the behavior of the leader are given central attention as those characteristics are considered crucial for success in leadership. Leaders are seen as people who possess specific traits which are lacking in non-leaders.

The second perspective, consisting of the situational theories, stresses the impact of the context and the situation of the leader on effective leadership. According to this

approach there is no one best way of leading a group or an organization; behavior that is appropriate in one context can be irrelevant in another environment.

In the third theoretical perspective on leadership, the decisive role of the followers of leaders is the central focus. To be considered a leader, leadership qualities must be attributed to someone by others, can be followers or observers.

Through studying the three historical views on leadership, it is possible to confer what kind of a school principal is needed in such a complex and ever-changing time. It is an individual who has personal qualities to influence others in school, who has the ability to lead in situations and different contexts, and who is considered as a leader. According to West-Burnham (2009), "Effective leadership is not just a job; it is a complex interaction between a range of personal and professional qualities within context of moral purpose" (p.110). These three sets of qualities needed by school principals necessitate that they are provided with high quality professional development programs designed to cater to their needs.

### **School principals' roles.**

The major changes in the principalship have been the range of expectations placed on the position. These expectations have moved from demands for management and control, with presumptions for forced compliance, to the demand for an educational leader who can foster staff development, program improvement, parent involvement, community support, and student growth" ( Sybouts&Wendel, 1994, p.2).

In one side, "conflicts, complexity and goal confusion of current schooling can lead to experience of emotional challenge, tension dilemmas of practice for those in leadership positions" (O'brien&Murphy, 2008). Early & Weindling(2004) note that principals today also must serve as leaders for student learning; they must know academic content and pedagogical techniques; work with teachers to strengthen skills;

collect, analyze and use data in ways that fuel excellence; must rally students, teachers, parents, local health and social service agencies, youth development groups, local businesses, and other community residents and partners around the common goals of raising student performance.

There are various emerging roles that are expected from principals. Hemmen et al, (2009) highlight most major roles. Hemmen et al. (2009) give a recount of principals' roles which included supporting the accomplishment of the organizational goals, modeling teaching, learning and reflection for students and teachers, supporting teachers as an instructional leader, supporting the change process, developing a system of learning as a group, and developing and conducting staff development to improve the rigor of the instruction.

Faraj (2008) reported an array of the roles played by modern school leadership. These roles are planning , organizing, execution, direction, monitoring and evaluation.

Portin , Schneider, DeArmond & Gundlach (2003) concluded their report that was based on in-depth interviews with educators in 21 schools in four cities across four states in USA, that the core of the principal's job is diagnosing the needs of his or her particular schools and, given the resources and talents available, deciding how to meet them. Regardless of school type-elementary or secondary or public or private-schools, there is a need for leadership in seven critical areas: instructional, cultural, managerial, human resources, strategic, external development, and micro- political.

Leone, Warnimont & Zimmerman (2009), based on their varied educational experiences, describe their vision for the future of the principalship They describe trends, implications and requisite skills that could serve as a foundation to build up principals ready to face challenges. Leone et al. (2009) describe the two new roles seen as a bridge of knowledge and encouragement "who facilitate learning for all of the

building's adults and students. The other role is that of the navigator who directs the future course of the school through an active approach that involves being a change agent, developing strong community bonds, and focusing on successful, productive future for all involved.

In "Leader's Tool kit: Hundreds of Tips and Techniques for Developing the skills You Need", Charney (2005) lists ten traits from research and observations. The traits are: ability to create a compelling vision, ability to articulate vision to others, consistency, humility, focus, tenacity, holistic thinking, strategic thinking, agile minds, and finally aversion to tyranny.

In literature, leaders of successful organizations are seen as designers, stewards, and teachers who accept responsibility for building relationships among members. A leader builds an organization and leads with guidance of a vision and a mission. A leader knows how to create a system of learning that is valued by its members. Leadership becomes a way to provide meaning and purpose.

### **School principals' needs.**

In an era of standards and accountability in education, professional development for school leaders is more important than ever. Policy makers must make the most of time and money devoted to developing school leaders; the primary focus of which is that any PDs of principals and teachers should ultimately reflect on the improvement of student learning (Collins 2000; Guskey 2002)

An expanding body of research affirms that certain skills are necessary for education leaders to be effective. According to O'brein, Murphy & Draper (2008), "leadership practice in school involves activities and a broader range of abilities and capabilities in:

- Strategic thinking;
  - Interpreting and charting a way through complexity and change with and for others;
  - Locating the school within its broader social context;
  - Attracting followers, who are prepared to support and participate;
- and,
- Understanding and linking together the day-to-day activities of the school and its longer term purposes and values".

In addition to that; Hemmen et al, (2009) list the following are tasks that skills expected from today leaders to demonstrate:

- modeling teaching, learning and reflecting
- build and maintain productive relationships among the staff,
- along with staff development, to build the capacity of the organization
- reflect on and shift thinking and behaviors as environment and expectations change
- implementing change,
- build an organization that learns to work together to achieve a common goal
- development of rigorous curriculum that impacts student achievement
- develop an ongoing staff development system that continuously analyzes the teaching curriculum.

In leadership, a leader's role is to help the organization meet the needs of the group and to support the achievement of the organization's goals. To sum up this part, professional development programs for school principals have to help them become

instructional leaders, liaison officers as well as public relations officers of their school. In other words, the programs should help the school principal to work in harmony with all school personnel, both personally and professionally, human and technical. The leader also should be sensitive to the needs of the staff and students and possess the strength to make difficult professional decisions.



## **Previous Studies**

This part includes related previous studies, some of which are local, regional and international studies. Comments on these studies are included at the end of this section.

Ledgesog (1995) examines “the effectiveness of professional development programs for school administrators in Yap by Yap principals”. Data were collected through surveying 31 principals who participated in a program over a two-year period and holding two focus-group discussions comprised of eight principals, and four central-office administrators. The survey and the focus group findings varied in their responses about the effectiveness of the professional programs. The findings indicate the lack of organization and systemization of the professional development programs in Yap. Ledgesog (1995) relates this to the absence of the need assessments required to determine training needs. Though the interviews with the focused- group, the researcher highlights other emerged points including the lack of understanding of the leadership strands of competencies against which Yap’s school administrators performance to be measured, the low level of preparedness of the school administrators, the attitudes towards the PD programs as sporadic and intermittent. Ledgesog (1995) offers a conceptual framework for the pacific school leadership Academy so as to be developed with the community College of Micronesia.

Pertin , Schneider, DeArmond & Gundlach (2003), conducted a study titled “Making Sense of Leading Schools: A study of the School Principalship”, that attempted to understand what it takes to actually lead a school. The study was heavily based on qualitative analysis that employed a case study methodology as an approach in order to understand both the role and the context in which various principals and heads teachers work. The research was guided by three questions that focused on the core roles of the principals, and whether the roles were different across the types of schools, and whether

the current training programs address the demands of the job. In-depth interviews with educators (principals, vice principals, and teachers) across 21 schools from four cities in four states (USA) were conducted. The schools visited included five elementary, seven middle, seven high and two K-12 schools. The sample also included traditional public schools, private independent schools and "entrepreneurial" public schools. The data was analyzed in two parts; (i) a set of descriptive data that focused on the demographics of the school, the seven core leadership functions, those who performed each of the roles and the principal's preparation, (ii) a narrative that depicted the leadership story. The study team drew extensive list of tasks, functions, roles and duties that were grouped into seven common critical functions of leadership evident in all types of schools, which were performed differently in all different schools. The study, based on the seven functions, classified the principals as "one-man band, the jazz-band leader, the orchestra conductor". The study results suggest that rather than looking for principals with powers and attributes, policy makers should recognize that a variety of leaders and leadership models can work within schools.

In his study "From Policy into practice: the effects of principal Preparation Programs on Principal behavior", Isik (2003) evaluated the effectiveness of principals' performance who have undergone administrative training compared to those who have not. This study focuses on a recent reform effort that was expected to have a considerable impact on the Turkish Educational System. Specifically, the study focuses on the effectiveness of a principal training program as perceived by teachers who have worked with a principal before the reform and a principal after the reform effort (a principal who has taken some in-service training) within the same schools. The study takes an interactive approach that measures principals' effectiveness in the context where the behavior takes place. The results suggest that there is an improvement in principal behavior on a number of dimensions. However, the study results can only be related to

the context as it links behavior changes on the principals' part to administrative training regardless of other variables that might exist.

Based on the principals' viewpoints, Al Shihhi (2004) in his study "Training Needs in the School Planning process for the Principal in Oman, from their Viewpoint". Supervisors identified training needs that would be required from principals in a scholastic planning process in Sultanate of Oman. The study sample consisted of 298 male and female school principals and principal assistants, and 36 male and female administrative supervisors during the academic year 2003/2004 through school districts of Governorate of Both Mesendum and Bateneih North. Al Shihhi developed a 54-item survey as an instrument. The study main findings included:

Majority of training skills identified by the instrument were perceived as highly needed by principals in both Mesendum and Bateneih North and Bateneih South. In light of findings, Al Shihhi (2004) recommended that regardless of gender, principals need to be well- prepared, engaged in training and supervisory courses, involved in educational meetings, conferences and seminars in order to obtain variety information and skills in every possible domain of planning.

The objective of O'Brien (2004) study "An Evaluation of the Perceived Impact of Advanced Leadership Training on Principals in an Urban School District" was to systematically examine the impact of the Advanced Leadership Training course on a Midwest urban school district (USA). Interviews with 29 of approximately 70 participating principals were the primary data source for the study. Data collection included a focused interview during which principals discussed their perceptions of each of the topics covered and any impact on their professional practice or thinking as a result of participation in the course. Data obtained during these interviews and subsequent analysis may inform those at the Academy about the principal's activities, the impact of

their activities, and impediments to greater impact. The research shows that principals believed themselves to have improved their professional practice in three of the five domains of leadership covered in the course. Findings show that in three of the five domains of leadership principals believed that they were better principals at the end of the training than they were at the beginning of the training. The domains were, establishing a clear and positive direction, ensuring accountability, and providing instructional leadership.

Wong (2004) in his study, "The Professional development of school principals: insights from evaluating a programme in Hong Kong", attempts to draw a framework for principals' training in Hong Kong. He utilizes the findings of a principals' training program developed by a tertiary institution in 1998 and a previously adapted evaluation framework based on visits to and study of similar programs in England, Scotland, Australia and Singapore. The subjects of the study were 27 serving primary school principals who attended the School Management for Principals (SMP) program in the two years from 1998 to 2000. Data were mainly collected from the course participants. The methods used to collect data included group interviews, questionnaires followed by group discussion and a longitudinal survey. The results of the study provide technical insights to help develop principals' training programs, particularly for principals with limited years of experience in the role. Besides, the study identified successful elements of a principals' training program including theme or problem- based designs; espousing theory with practice, active learning and teaching strategies that are based on sharing and discussion and finally the content to be driven to the real needs and the current issues .

Hess & Kelly (2005) in their study "Program on Education Policy and Governance at Harvard University", examined the content of instruction at a stratified sample of the nation's principal preparation programs, including the training programs,

especially the programs regarded as the most prestigious, and more typical programs. They surveyed 56 programs and collected four "core" course syllabi from 31 that met the standards with utilizing a systematic coding for a total of 210 syllabi. The study presents a comprehensive assessment of aspiring principals in a national sample of 31 preparation programs and reveals considerable consistency across a variety of institutions. The syllabi yielded 2,424 total course weeks. The researchers emphasize the need to ensure that principals receive the training they need, where the content matches the challenges confronting them in 21<sup>st</sup> century schooling.

Al Asfour (2006) in his study; "Needs Assessment for Public School Principals in the State of Kuwait as Perceived by Them", aimed to estimate the training needs of public schools principals in the state of Kuwait as perceived by the principals themselves. The study population consisted of all public schools principals "males and females" totaling (789). The sample comprised 123 principals, 50 males and 73 females. Al Asfour (2006) developed a questionnaire that consisted of 45 items, distributed in 5 fields that handle administrative issues, technical issues, requirements and financial issues, school buildings issues local community issues. The study concluded that the technical issues field ranked top in terms of need priority only followed by financial and administrative issues.

In the light of the total quality criteria and based on principals' and teachers' perspectives , Rathwan (2007) conducted a study titled "Training Needs of School Principals in Jordan in Light of Total Quality Management Criteria", which aimed to identify the training needs. To achieve the study objectives, a cluster random sample was selected from the population of all school principals in Jordan and all teachers totaling around 3046 principals and 53568 teachers. Rathwan (2007) used training needs questionnaires that consisted of 60 items classified into clusters including school leadership, strategic planning, school organization, performance, assessment,

relationships between school and parents and the student affairs. The research findings included:

1. Medium training needs in all areas.
2. Involvement of teachers' roles in deciding training areas of school principals is crucial to the success of PD.

Based on the study findings, Rathwan (2007) proposed a training program that included 10 training topics.

Clendenin (2008) conducted a study titled "A Qualitative Study of The Perceived Professional Development Needs Of Principals". The purpose of the study was to determine principals' perceptions about the types of professional development activities needed in order to perform the job of an instructional leader more effectively. An emergent design and a responsive naturalistic evaluation were used to gather data for this study. A total of 12 face-to-face interviews were conducted with current school principals from the school division. The results of this study provide a new source of information for those charged with providing staff development activities for administrators. Based on the findings, the research stresses a strong professional development program for administrators would include the following features:

- A wide range of professional development opportunities are offered.
- A strong support system is in place and principals feel they can call on central office staff, including the superintendent, without being ridiculed.
- Consistent with the literature on adult learners and adult motivation to learn, principals who participated in this study want:

A survey to determine their needs, freedom to choose professional development activities based on their own needs, Individualized professional development

plans, professional development activities those are relevant to their needs and minimal time away from school.

In this mixed method study titled "Nebraska Public School Principals' Perceptions about Their Professional Development Needs: A Mixed Methods Study", Loeffelholz (2008) aimed at identifying the professional development needs of Nebraska public school principals'. This study was an Explanatory Mixed-Method study, designed to specifically analyze the perception of public school principals and their professional development needs. One hundred twenty-six public high principals from Nebraska schools participated in the study.

Using a mixed methods design for this study combining quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze data, allows for a more complete understanding of the research problem and added value to the study results and their interpretations. Quantitative data was collected using a web-based survey sent to Nebraska public school principals. Qualitative data was obtained from interviews to explore why some public school principals appeared to be more aware of their professional development needs than others. Qualitative analysis supported the quantitative results. Interview data indicated the greater the experience of administrators, the easier it was for them to make decisions related to professional development, accountability, instructional supervision, and classroom management, and student learning. This study explored different areas in which a public school principal in the state of Nebraska has identified needs. This study presented the perceptions of elementary, middle, and senior high school principals in the state of Nebraska regarding the implementation of their professional development as it related to teacher supervision, accountability, leadership, and administrative characteristics. All groups perceived that student learning was the focus of education in Nebraska.

In this study "Principal Desirability for Professional Development", Keith (2008), investigated the perceptions of Virginia public school principals as to their desirability for professional development training in order to meet current accountability measures. Specifically, principals rated and ranked their desirability for professional development according to specific accountability measures. The data were collected using a researcher-developed survey. The survey was mailed to randomly selected principals of elementary, middle and high schools within Virginia. The survey response rate was 60.7%. Qualitative information by principals was also summarized. The results of this study indicated that in fourteen of the twenty statements of desirability, principals indicated some level of desirability toward professional development training. The three statements in which principals had the greatest desirability for professional training both in rating and ranking their desirability were (1) Ensuring their teachers are trained in research-based instructional methods, (2) Raising the achievement levels of students with disabilities, and (3) Raising the achievement levels of students living in poverty. Results further indicated a statistically significance difference among principal subgroups based on principal's experience level, the percent of poverty children with their total school population, and principals level of funding. The data suggest desirability for principal professional development training, however these results only have implications for school systems within the Commonwealth of Virginia to determine principal needs and provide the necessary training to meet current federal and state mandates.

Leslie (2009) report the findings of the study "The Leadership Gap: what you need, and don't have, when it comes to leadership talent", conducted by the Center for Creative leadership between 2006-2008 that was designed to explore the concern that leadership skills are lacking in so many organizations including business, government agencies, non-profits and educational organizations. The project was designed to



identify the leadership skills and perspectives that are critical for success now and in the future; and to examine the strength of the current leaders in these critical skills. The leaders in the 15 companies participated in the survey were asked to rate the 20 leadership competencies according to the overall amount of skill managers at their level are currently demonstrating and what they need to demonstrate to be maximally effective. The results show that leaders lack the skills they need to be effective today. The study found that for all 20 competencies, the current strength is not sufficient for effectiveness in leadership roles today, which holds true across the various industries and organizational levels. The key findings of the CCL study indicate that seven leadership skills are consistently viewed as most important now and in the future, which are: leading employees, strategic planning, inspiring commitment, managing change, resourcefulness, being a quick learner, and doing whatever it takes. Secondly, the fact that leaders lack the skills they need to be effective today; namely, inspiring commitment, strategic planning, resourcefulness and employee development, where resourcefulness is considered by CCL the "current leadership deficit". Finally, leaders are not adequately prepared for the future where their capacity is insufficient to meet future leadership requirement.

Al Gaithi (2009) in a study titled "Training Needs for principals at Al Ain Educational District in the United Arab Emirates in light of Knowledge Economy from their points of view", developed a 56-item questionnaire categorized into four domains: dealing with school administration, with teacher, with student and with the local community. The study population consisted of 157 school principals; comprising of 87 males and 70 females during the academic year 2008/2009. The study findings highlighted high need for training in the local community domain, compared with average mean in the rest of the areas.

Shafi (2009) conducted a study titled "Selection and training of educational leaders the ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates in light of the entrance to the strategic management", to determine the selection and training tools of educational leaders in light of strategic leadership approach in order to reach a suggested framework to develop the process of the selection and training in the UAE. The sample of the study comprised of 100 of Educational leaders Head of Zones (10), Deputies (17), and head of departments (73) distributed on all educational zones. The data was collected through surveys and interviews with practitioners in the administrative development institute in Dubai and The Center of Human Resources development in the Ministry of Education.

The study revealed that 80% of the participants pointed to several obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of selecting and training educational leaders some of which are: the real needs of leaders are not addressed when planning for training programs, random selection usually based on years of experience rather than qualifications, and lack of accordance in the selection of trainees and the training programs. Based on the findings, Shafi (2009) proposed a framework that develops the process of selecting educational leaders and training them.

Al-Ghamidi (2010) conducted a study titled "Training Needs for the Heads of Departments in King Saud University", to determine the academic and administrative training requirements for the chiefs of the academic departments in King Saud University from their point of view. The study also aimed at determining statistical differences among the points of view of the subjects based on the study variables; scientific level, sex, the years of work experiences during responsibility of the department, attendance of training course, and the college they worked at. The study sample included 152 of the heads of departments. The data of the study was collected by using questionnaires prepared by the researcher included 95 items, where each item represents a training skill. The participants pointed to the importance of timing the

training programs at the beginning of the year where a program can extend over a week and be conducted outside the university campus. The results of the study showed that all the training skills mentioned in the study questionnaire considered as essential requirements for the chiefs of the academic department in King Saud University. The analysis of results indicated the absence of statistical implication at rate less than/equal 0.05 based on the study variables (sex, experience and scientific level).

Al Nuaimi (2010) conducted a study titled "Construction of a Professional development Program in the light of evaluating the educational leaders practices". Al Nuami utilized a questionnaire that addressed 480 teachers in Nainawa primary schools (Jordan). The questionnaire included two aspects; (i) Leadership skills and Management skills. This further covers 8 areas, namely, personal skills, technical skills, human skills and conceptual skills (Under Leadership skills), staff development, curriculum development, student and community development (Under educational leadership skills) The study found significant variation in school leaders performances. The study results indicated high scores in the technical skills, followed by conceptual and curriculum development skills. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended the necessity of espousing the theory with practical applications in PD programs. The researcher proposed a training program based on the findings that target the development of primary school principals in Nainawa.

## Comments:

1. Several studies recommend more involvement of the school principals (trainees) in planning and designing PD programs like Shafī (2009), Leslie (2009) , Keith (2008) & Radwan (2007).
2. Studies highlight the necessity of conducting needs assessment as a prior and essential step to design programs like Ledgesog (1995), shafī (2009) & Al Nuaimi (2010).
3. PD programs should focus on student learning like in Loeffelholz (2008)
5. Leadership skills that are consistently viewed as most important now and in the future, are: leading employees, strategic planning, inspiring commitment, managing change, resourcefulness, being a quick learner, and doing whatever it takes like Leslie (2009) , Pertin et al. (2003), O'Brien. (2004), Moore and Rudd (2004)
6. Study findings highlighted high need for training in the local community domain like Al Gaithi (2009).
7. Several studies focused on evaluating the effectiveness of PD programs and the change in principals behaviors like Clendenin, (2008), O'Brien,. (2004), Wong (2004) and Isik (2003).
8. Studies identified training needs of school principals like, Al Shihhi (2004), Rathwan (2007) and Al Gaithi (2009)
9. Studies identified elements of principals' training that should be linked with the real needs and the current issues like Wong (2004), Shafī (2009), Rathwan (2007) , Al Ghamdi (2010), , Al Nuaimi (2010), Keith (2008), Clendenin (2008) and Al Shehhi (2004).

10. Studies found that it is important to connect theory with practice in terms of training school principals, like Al Nuaimi(2010) and Wong (2004).

11. Studies found that technical, financial and administrative issues received high score in ranking, like Al Asfour (2006).

12. Studies found no statistical implication at rate less than/equal 0.05 based on the study variables (sex, experience and scientific level) like Al-Ghamidi (2010 ).

13. It should be also noted that Al Gaithi (2009) study is a recent study that dealt with the same issue, which is identifying the training needs of school principals in Al Ain zone. The two studies focus on the assessment of training needs, yet from different scopes. In that, the current study aims to assess the school principals needs in light of ADEC performance standards of school leadership and literature; whereas the Al Gaithi (2009) study focused on the training needs of school principals in light of knowledge economy. This does not exclude the probability of a potential overlap between the two sets of training needs identified in the two studies, which can be attributed to the fact that both were conducted close in time to changes and reforms in the educational system in the UAE.

## CHAPTER III

### **Research Design and Methodology**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology and procedures used for collecting and analyzing the data in this study. The chapter is divided into four sections; one provides a description of study design and the data collection instrument. Section two describes the population and sample. Section three offers a brief description of how data was analyzed. The chapter concludes with section four which includes procedures of the study.

#### **Design of Study**

The study employs mixed-method based on two research paradigms: quantitative and qualitative. For the quantitative method, a multiple choice 37 item questionnaire was built to gather data from school principals on their training needs regarding school leadership. The qualitative part of the study was included in the survey as open-ended questions that address principals' suggestions in improving professional development program.

#### **Instrument**

The questionnaire consists of 39 questions: The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first part covers the demographic data of the participants; the gender, the cycle, the years of experience and the level of education. The second part aims at providing an opportunity for the school principals to reflect on PD activities in order to examine their perceptions of the characteristics of effective PD that could help promote their performance. This part comprises of four questions.

The third part that answers the main question of the study, which is the school principals' professional development and training needs. It should be noted that this section is categorized into six clusters representing areas of training, 5 clusters are based on AIDEC Framework for leadership in schools and the sixth cluster (self-management), added by the researcher (it was thought by the researcher that it is an essential part of personal development and a dimension required to develop leaders in general). The six clusters are distributed as follows: leading strategically (6 questions), leading teaching and learning: (7 questions), leading the community (4 questions), leading people (7 questions), leading the organization (4 questions), and finally self-management (5 questions).

The fourth section is the open-ended questions. This part consists of two questions that target the school principals' needs that have not been mentioned in the survey, and their suggestions to enhance PD programs.

The questions are: 1) What are the other training areas that can contribute to enhancing your school leadership performance? 2) How can school leadership professional development programs be developed to effectively improve your performance?

### **The Instrument Validity**

In order to ensure that the instrument measures what it intended to, the researcher extensively reviewed relevant literature. The researcher found that most studies on the school principals' needs indicated the importance of these five elements: strategic leading, leading teaching and learning, leading community, leading people, leading the organization and self-management, regardless of their order or classification in literature. After constructing the questionnaire based on these six elements, the draft

questionnaire was shared with a panel of university professors as well as school principals to determine face-validity of the tool.

In Part two (the principals' perceptions) the 4-level Likert scale has been used instead of the 5 level, to minimize the chances of neutralized responses from the participants. The researcher needed to gather data around school principals perceptions of programs currently and previously attended in order to pinpoint downsides of PD planning processes. Items in the questionnaire were modified in light of feedback collected. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic and reviewed by a group of language experts.

### **The Instrument Reliability**

The reliability analysis was calculated using Chronbach's Alpha to ensure that the survey score is reliable and consistent with the content and purpose of the tool. The scale score had a very high level of reliability at 0.985 as shown in the table below.

Table 1  
*Cronbach's Alpha test on the questionnaire items.*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.985	.982	37

### **Population and Sample**

The study population includes female and male public school principals in Al Ain Education Zone. The population comprises 114 school principals. According to Abu-Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) statistics, the Zone includes 18 secondary schools, 25 preparatory, 38 elementary schools, 33 common schools. Al-Ain Education



Zone was chosen as the site for this study based on the proximity to the researcher, ease of accessibility, and the large number of schools it administers.

The sample consisted of 60 school principals, 30 males and 30 females. The sample was randomly selected based on the 2010-2011 school statistics issued from Abu Dhabi Educational Council (ADEC). The researcher utilized a random sampling to select 60 school principals.

Only 50 questionnaires were returned from the 60 questionnaires sent to school principals, which represents 43.8% from the population (114 school principals). Of the total number of the questionnaires, 23 questionnaires representing (46%) were returned from principals in cycle one (grades 1-6), 12 questionnaires representing (24%) from principals in cycle 2 (grades 6-9), and 15 representing (30%) from principals in cycle 3 (grades 10-12).

### **Data Analysis**

For quantitative data analysis, the data was coded and entered into SPSS program (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to calculate the central tendencies of the data (descriptive statistics). Frequency, means, percentage, and standard deviation were utilized. This was to answer the questions about the needs of principals for professional development programs. For the first question of the study (what are the perceptions of school principals towards the professional development programs?), the researcher used percentages and frequencies.

In order to answer the second question of this study (what are the training needs of school principals in Al Ain zone?), the researcher used percentiles, means and standard deviation.

As for the third question (What are the features of an effective professional development program that meet the principals' training needs?) was answered through analysis of principals responses.

Steps to analyze qualitative data included: a) transcribing all answers, b) highlighting important themes from the answers, c) classifying themes and regrouping them according to relevance, and d) discussing those themes and highlighting connections, common aspects, and linkages among them and among quantitative data findings.

### **Study Procedures**

The study procedures can be summarized briefly as:

1. Analysis of existing literature bearing on school principals needs in international studies as well as in the United Arab Emirates.
2. Examining of existing documents, plans and policies concerning professional development policies in the United Arab Emirates.
3. Identifying relevant literature that focus on setting features of professional development programs and leadership functions to help constituted the questionnaire items.
4. Creating new data by means of open and closed type of questionnaire.
5. Insuring the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.
6. Data was collected and then analyzed. Needs were identified.
7. Setting the features and recommendations for designing PD programs that target school leaders.

## CHAPTER IV

### Findings of the Study

This chapter consists of a description and analysis of the data collected from the participants of the study through the use of the questionnaire. This chapter is to present the findings which emerged from the data analysis process. The principals participated in the survey provided an assessment of their needs, in addition to an overview of their perceptions towards professional development programs. This chapter is divided in two parts; the first presents the demographic information about the participants, while the second part is organized to answer the five study questions. The results will be presented according to the research questions.

Table 2

*Demographic Information about the Participants*

		No.	Percent
Gender	Male	22	44
	Female	28	56
Cycle	One (grades 1-5)	23	46
	Two (grades 6-9)	12	24
	Three (grades 10-12)	15	30
Degree	Bachelor	45	90
	Master	4	8
	Doctorate	1	2
	Others	0	0
Years of Experience (including teaching service)	1-3 years	0	0
	4-8 years	2	4
	9-15 years	3	6
	More than 15 years	45	90

As shown in Table 2, 50 questionnaires were returned out of 60 questionnaires sent out (with a response rate of 83.3%). The majority of questionnaires came from cycle one; school principals (46%), (24%) from cycle two and (30%) from cycle three school principals. 44% of the participants were males (N=22) while 56% were females (N=28). In term of educational attainment, the majority (90%) of the participants are holders of bachelor degrees, only 4 hold a master degree, and one principal had a PhD

degree. As for the years of experience, 90% are above 15 years of experience including the years of working as teachers.

**Findings for question 1:** What are the school principals' perceptions towards the professional development programs? This question was answered through the school principal's perceptions toward four statements in the questionnaire (as shown in the table below).

Table 3  
*Means & Standard Deviations of School Principals Perceptions of Professional Development*

Statement	Degree of Agreement				Mean	Standard Deviation
	SA	A	D	SD		
Professional development programs support your professional practice in running schools.	25 %50	22 %44	3 %6	-	3.44	0.61
Professional development programs run by the Ministry/ADEC address the real needs of school principals	11 %22	27 %54	12 %24	-	2.98	0.68
As a principal, you are involved in planning for your professional development programs	9 %18	19 %38	18 %36	4 %8	2.66	0.87
Recent PD programs for school principals help you carry out the changes underway in UAE schools.	16 %32	23 %46	10 %20	1 %2	3.08	0.77

*Note \*SA & A (Strongly Agree and Agree) will be represented together in one percentage Similarly is D(Disagree) and SD(Strongly Disagree)*

It is evident from the table 3, that the majority of school principals strongly agreed (50%) and agreed (44%) totaling (94% of the sample) that their professional development supported their professional practice in running schools. Only (6%) saw that professional development programs are not supporting their practices.

However, the percentage declines to 76% of the respondents who agreed that professional development programs provided by ADEC address their professional needs, while only (24%) thought that those programs do not address their real needs for professional development.

As for the involvement of school principals in planning professional development, 56% of the respondents indicated that there is involvement of school principals in planning for professional development programs that target school leadership. However, (44%) of the respondents disagreed to this and said that there is no involvement from their side in planning for professional development is sought by PD planners. As shown in the table, the mean for this statement was (2.66) and the SD is (0.87) which indicates the disagreement on this statement.

With regard to whether recent PD programs help school principals carry out the changes underway in UAE schools, 78% of the respondents thought that the recent PD programs help school principals carry out the changes underway in UAE schools, while only (22 %) of the respondents thought that recent PD programs have very little effect on preparing them for the changes in the educational system.

It could be concluded that the respondents have general positive perceptions toward the PD programs as helping them to carry out their work in schools. However, the drawback that was apparent is the weak involvement of school principals in planning professional development programs.

**Findings for Question 2:** What are the training needs of School principals in Al Ain zone in light of Abu Dhabi Educational Council expectations? The answer is presented according to the six areas of training needs:

According to table 4, the responses indicate that (70% ) of the respondents indicated high need for setting evaluation tools to monitor progress of school at the mean of 3.84 , followed by planning my school's budget at the mean of 3.76. This indicated the highest in the skills in this cluster. However, the responses to crisis management indicate the least need in comparison to the rest of skills where only (56%) of the respondents who saw it as important. It can be related to the fact that the educational system in Abu Dhabi is still moving from centralized towards decentralized

administration where schools can make decisions without the need to refer to ADEC administration. Until schools full decentralized, schools are expected to refer constantly to Administration in making decisions and having them approved. Thus, some school principals consider this skill as less important as some decisions are still made in the council administration.

Table 4

*Means & Standard Deviations of Training Needs assessment (Leading Strategically)*

Statement	Degree of need				Mean	Standard deviation
	Very high	High need	Some need	No need		
Develop my school's vision and mission	14 %28	14 %28	9 %18	1 %2	3.50	1.29
Establish my school's long-range objectives	15 %30	14 %28	7 %14	5 %10	3.54	1.32
Set action plans to achieve my school's objectives	14 %28	16 %32	7 %14	6 %12	3.50	1.35
Plan my school's budget to meet the objectives of different educational programs	18 %36	15 %30	3 %6	5 %10	3.76	1.28
Set evaluation tools to monitor progress of my school	14 %28	21 %42	3 %6	2 %4	3.84	1.03
Manage a crisis that could suddenly happen in my school	16 %32	12 %24	8 %16	6 %12	3.48	1.40

*Note\** The percentages shown in the analysis represents the sum of very high and high need some need and no need

Table 5

*Means & Standard Deviations of Training Needs assessment (Leading Teaching and Learning)*

Statement	Degree of need				Mean	SD
	Very high	High need	Some need	No need		
Analyze student data to evaluate results.	16 %32	17 %34	5 %10	3 %6	3.76	1.18
Monitor teachers' performance.	12 %24	18 %36	4 %8	4 %8	3.60	1.17
Identify the developmental needs of teachers in my school.	17 %34	12 %24	10 %20	5 %10	3.52	1.40
Develop staff in my school.	15 %30	12 %24	9 %18	3 %6	3.54	1.26
Build a school culture that promotes learning.	18 %36	9 %18	8 %16	3 %6	3.62	1.29

In table 5, the school principals responses indicate their needs for leading teaching and learning process. Sixty six percent of the respondents indicated high need for training in data analysis and evaluation, which can be concluded as new systems are installed in schools so recently for data analysis which incites the need to be trained for such technical skills. Building a school culture that promotes learning score is (54%) of the responses at the mean of 3.62, while monitoring teachers' performance score is (60%) at the mean of 3.60. The previous two skills came second and third in order of responses rate. In reference to ADEC framework of leadership development (n.d), the key standards refer to the school principal capacity in creating a positive school culture that is conducive to learning. In the same stream, school principals have become responsible for evaluating teachers' performance, compared to the years before where teachers evaluation was a shared role by the principal and the supervision department in the educational zones.

Table 6

*Means & Standard Deviations of Training Needs assessment (leading the community)*

Statement	Leading the community				Mean	Standard Deviation
	Very high	High need	Some need	No need		
Handle complaints.	16 %32	12 %24	9 %18	6 %12	3.46	1.41
Network with the local school community.	14 %28	12 24%	8 %16	4 %8	3.48	1.28
Involve community partners in different school operations.	13 %26	10 %20	6 %12	4 %8	3.44	1.23
Handle media and public relations.	7 %14	20 %40	6 %12	4 %8	3.40	1.12

Table 6 presents the school principals' responses to their needs in leading the community skills. The table shows relatively small differences in the rate of responses. However, the highest in the cluster is networking with the local school community, where 52% of the respondents considered it highly needed, with mean score of 3.48. This came followed by handling complaints with 56% and with mean of 3.46. This can be related to ADEC new vision of linking schools with the rest of the community institutions. Hence, skills that enable school principals and prepare them to deal and handle parents and other community partners are highly needed.



Table 7

*Means & Standard Deviations of Training Needs assessment (leading People)*

Statement	Leading people				Mean	Standard Deviation
	Degree of need Very high	High need	Some need	No need		
Build a collaborative, professional work environment.	16 %32	15 %30	7 %14	3 %6	3.68	1.23
Delegate responsibilities to others in my school.	12 %24	14 %28	9 %18	6 %12	3.34	1.34
Set performance standards.	12 %24	21 %42	6 %12	2 %4	3.70	1.09
Resolve conflicts that might arise in my school.	15 %30	13 %26	7 %14	9 %18	3.36	1.49
Provide constructive feedback to my teachers, staff, and students.	17 %34	14 %28	8 %16	2 %4	3.72	1.21
Enhance job satisfaction among school staff	17 %34	13 %26	7 %14	5 %10	3.60	1.35
Monitor the progress of my school community toward achieving the goals and expectations.	16 %32	16 %32	4 %8	4 %8	3.72	1.22

Table 7 presents the school principals' responses regarding training needs in the cluster of leading people. The mean scores of monitoring the progress of school and providing constructive feedback are the highest mean of 3.72. This significant high rate of responses in these two skills is related to monitoring teachers' performances, which is not totally a new role, rather a different one. In that, school principals are expected to monitor their staff within new set of standards and tools that demands more credibility in evaluating and assessing performances.

Quite noticeable, the responses rate for responsibility delegation is the least, however still highly needed, with 52% response rate and mean score of 3.34. This can be understandable as school principals are used to delegating responsibility to others and working in teams. Nevertheless, the 30% of school principals who considered it as no need for training could also point to the type of administration they run schools through.

In other words, it could be related to their centered-administration, where they prefer holding all responsibilities in the office rather than sharing leadership with the staff.

A third explanation is that with the public-private partnership, and the extended administration staff, some school principals would see no need to involve or delegate responsibilities.

Table 8

*Means & Standard Deviations of Training Needs assessment (leading the organization)*

Statement	Leading the organization				Mean	Standard Deviation
	Very high	High need	Some need	No need		
Make informed decisions to solve organizational problems.	18 %36	13 %26	7 %14	6 %12	3.60	1.41
Manage human, physical, and fiscal resources.	17 %34	12 %24	3 %6	6 %12	3.62	1.33
Lead the change process in the school	17 %34	15 %30	9 %18	6 %12	3.56	1.43
Employ the use of Technology creating an interactive environment.	17 %34	17 %34	8 %16	5 %10	3.66	1.36

Table 8 represents the responses of school principals regarding the skills of leading the organization. It reveals that the school principals are in high need of training in employing the use of technology (68% of the respondents) and a mean of 3.66, managing school resources (58%) with mean of 3.62, leading the change process (64%) with a mean of 3.56 and finally making informed decisions (62%) with mean of 3.60. Most significantly is the need for training in the employment of technology in creating an interactive environment with high mean score of 3.66. This is linked with the data analysis skills in the leading of teaching and learning cluster, as all schools are linked and connected to highly upgraded systems and networks, which necessitates developing computer skills in general. This is followed by resources management with 58%. This rate of responses to this skill is related to the school principals' new responsibility and higher

accountability expected from principals to demonstrate good management of school resources

Table 9

*Means & Standard Deviations of Training Needs assessment (self-management)*

Statement	Self – management				Mean	Standard Deviation
	Degree of Need					
	Very High	High need	Some need	No need		
Manage my time	9 %18	17 %34	11 %22	2 %4	3.40	1.14
Reflect on my performance	14 %28	16 %32	9 %18	2 %4	3.62	1.19
Listen actively to others.	16 %32	13 %26	12 %24	6 %12	3.42	1.45
Effectively express my thoughts orally and in writing.	14 %28	12 %24	10 %20	8 %16	3.28	1.47
Conduct presentations.	9 %18	21 %42	9 %18	6 %12	3.36	1.30

Table 9 represents the respondents' estimation of their training needs in self-management skills. Significantly, reflection on performance came as the highest need in the cluster where 30 respondents (60%) indicated high need in that area. In comparison, responses to effective oral and writing communication indicate the least need in the cluster where 52% of the respondents saw there is need for training with a mean of 3.28, whereas 36% of the respondents consider it less important. As for conducting presentations, 60% thought there is a high need for training with 3.36. This can be due to the change in roles of school principals, where they are frequently demanded to communicate directly to audience that include both students teachers and parents. At the same time, school principals are seen as trainers of their staff. Hence, to some, this skill is highly needed with the recent changes.

**Findings of question 3:** What are the features of an effective PD from the school principals' point of view? Thirty four respondents (out of 50) answered the two open-ended questions. The first question reads “What are the other training areas that can contribute to enhancing your school leadership performance?”

School principals were asked to identify other training areas that were missing in the questionnaire. They mentioned these areas: differentiated instruction (n=1), Modern strategies in Education (n=1), ICT (n=1), English language courses (n=2), change resistance (n=1), planning for objective-based projects (n=1), Work ethics (n=1), train the trainer (n=1), statistical analysis (n=1), and finally, setting school-based evaluation tools (n=1), and self-evaluation (n=1).

It is apparent that participants did not give so many ideas on this question. This could be attributed to two significantly contradicting explanation. First, it could be that the questionnaire has covered all areas or at least the majority of professional development aspects. The second explanation implies the fact that the respondents tend to ignore open-ended questions.

The other question sought school principals' suggestions to improve the quality of the PD programs. Respondents mentioned the following:

1. Need to conduct needs assessment prior to planning for any PD programs (n=16)
2. More field visits both locally and abroad to schools that represent best practices and distinguished performances and experiments. (n=12).
3. Individualized training and customized programs to address the needs of every principal, where principals are classified based on their needs (n=3).
4. Selection of qualified and specialized trainers who are expert in the educational field locally, and no need for "foreign experts" (n=3).
5. Involvement of the school principals in the planning process for PD (n=2).
6. Adopting practical courses where focus should be on acquiring skills more than knowledge (n=1).
7. Setting budgets for PD (n=1).
8. Selection of suitable time and place for PD which can support the learning process with less sacrifice on the school time and work (n= 3).

9. Linking PD with performance evaluation of school principals (n=1).
10. Continuous assessment of school performances (n=2).
11. Employing principals with distinguished performances in school in PD to help (n=1).
12. Providing school principals with continuous feedback to address the areas of improvement (n=4).
13. Providing study leave opportunities for those interested of school principals (n=4).
14. Making use of new technologies and networks for better employment of online and remote learning (n=1).
15. The use of incentives to motivate principals (n=2).

From the list above, the consensus on two suggestions among the 34 respondents who chose to answer the open-ended questions is quite significant. Sixteen school principals emphasized the need to *conduct needs assessment prior to planning for any PD programs*. This might highlight the drawback in most PDs involving school principals, which is the absence of individualization. That is all school principals had to attend the same PD regardless to the fact that some have already attended similar programs. In this sense, school principals consider the attendance as a waste of time and sometimes a burden.

The second most repeated suggestion is more field visits both locally and abroad to schools that represent best practices and distinguished performances. This could be due to the limited methods employed in PDs. That is to say, school principals are frequently invited to attend one-shot workshops or training sessions that might eventually turn to be lectures.

## CHAPTER V

### **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter is divided into two sections: the first section reviews and summarizes the findings. The second section presents conclusions and recommendations.

#### **Discussion**

##### **Research question 1.**

From the data collected, it is obvious that school principals' perceptions towards professional development programs recently and currently conducted are positive. The results show strong agreement on that professional development programs support practices in running schools as 94% of the respondents agree on that. However, the percentage declined significantly of those who think that some programs address their real needs to 76%. This could be related to the absence of school principals' involvement in planning of training programs as only 56% claimed that there is involvement of school principals in planning for PD. Research in PD highlights the need to survey needs, and provide a space for freedom to choose professional development activities based on their own need and provide professional development activities those are relevant and serve their needs ( Clendenin, 2008 & Rathwan 2007).

##### **Research question 2.**

What are the training needs of School principals in Al Ain zone in light of Abu Dhabi Educational Council expectations? Close inspection of tables (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9), it is evident that all training areas were estimated by school principals as very highly and highly needed.

More specifically, the mean scores of strategic leadership, leading the organization and learning and teaching are relatively the highest as seen in table 3. This

can be justified in light of the major changes of school principals' roles cited in literature and according to latest trends (Hemmen et al. 2009, Sybouts & Wendel, 1994), and the move from demands for management and control to demand for leadership. In literature, strategic thinking is one of the abilities that are highly demanded of school principals nowadays (O'brein, Murphy & Draper, 2008). Besides, the first key standard set by ADEC is leading strategically, which explains the high rate responses on the skills of strategic leadership. Moreover, principals are expected to set visions and missions that guide them through to reach ADEC vision which, also, is set on the promotion of the learning and teaching process.

In addition, technical skills (data analysis, handling network systems, school finance and resource management) were comparatively high. This is justified as computer-based skills are in demand and principals with these abilities are always required. This is consistent with Al Asfour (2006) study which concluded that technical issues ranked top priority to be only followed by financial and administrative issues

In literature, one of the pivotal principal roles is modeling teaching and learning and reflecting on performances (Hemmen et al, 2009). Skills of teaching and learning came second to strategic leadership skills. The skills in this cluster are directly related and influenced by strategic leadership, and come second in ADEC framework. The need to develop skills in this area comes as a dire need to achieve the vision of ADEC.

School principals face fast and continuous changes in schools which add to the responsibilities and daily tasks they are in charge of. Self-management had the least rate of responses in comparison to the other clusters. This also could be related to the fact that skills of self-management are seldom addressed in professional development programs that target school principals. In the same stream, self-management skills are perceived as less important in the part of the school principals, or that the development of such skills is their total responsibility which can be done outside the working hours.

This often leaves it as an option, which is more frequently overlooked. Nevertheless, studies point to the need to develop leaders both professionally and personally (Al Nuaimi, 2010, Hoare, 2006).

### **Research question 3.**

What are the features of an effective PD from the school principals' point of view? The responses to this question is evident from the findings regarding the two open-ended questions. The findings of the first open-ended question: what are other training needs that were not covered by the questionnaire were of low frequencies which only boosts the effectiveness of the research tool (the questionnaire). As for the second question which sought principals' suggestions to build an effective PD, the analyzed responses highlight the two basic principles in adult learning, that are internal motivation and understanding the need to learn (Guskey 2002, Knowles, 1996), without which, success of PD program might be impacted. Involvement of school principals in planning for PD might guarantee more motivation, which boosts the success of any program (Al Nuaim, 2010, Clendenin, 2008, Rathwan, 2007).

Research shows that, in terms of adult learning, PD is a change in behavior, and a gain in knowledge. However, it should not only be seen as just information-based. It can include the acquisition of information and the application of information (Hoare, 2006; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). It was also found that school principals set emphasis more on application of theory. This is one of the characteristics of effective professional development wherein any PD should be embedded in the reality and practices of schools; teachers and administrators work (Luneburg & Irby, 2006).



#### **Research question 4.**

How can literature and research findings inspire the construction of a PD that is based on Al Ain zone school principals' training needs? Literature and the field set the features of an effective training program based on principals' needs.

Given that professional development is a pivotal element in any reform, without it, schools would remain static, run by incompatible and under-skilled principals. To correspond with constant changes and high expectations, professional development opportunities are provided. Simultaneously, more attention is redirected towards the value of PD activities, with more questions about the outcomes. Thus, only high-quality professional development is in demand for every modern proposal so as to improve education (Guskey, 2002). First and foremost, what is most needed is inducing a positive culture of ongoing learning, where trainees are included. Literature and study findings point to the implication of adult learning principles, which if considered, goals of PD are attained and effectiveness is achieved. The following is a summary of the study findings and literature on effective professional development.

Research and empirical data indicate that motivated, cooperative, educable, trainable and long-life learners are essential to build an effective PD (Barth, 2010; McIntyre, 2001, Knowles, 1996). Research places great emphasis on the involvement of adult learners in the process of self-assessment of the needs for learning (Al Asfour, 2010; Clendernin, 2008; Knowles, 1996). The more involved the learners are in the learning experience, the more committed they are. School principals, with a sense of exclusion, feel unmotivated and might not show cooperation or commitment.

To be most effective, new standards of performance should lead to more consideration of content, delivery, and assessment (Lashway, 2003). Training has to integrate both theoretical and practical sides. Content and delivery of the subject matter

needs to be relevant , more focused on application rather than gaining knowledge (Al Shehhi. 2004; Kydd et al, 1997; Luneburg & Irby 2006)

Incorporating adult learning principles incites more consideration to the fact that school principals have their own prior experiences. Investing these experiences can boost the quality of PDs and assures more collaboration among them ( Villegas-Reimers , 2003) On the same side, school principals call for more field visits, more sharing of real experiments that deliver best practices and deep understanding of what is expected from them.

Effective leaning environment for professional development assumes awareness of both adult learning principles and the learning conditions that can be conducive to learning, without exposing them as unskilled or incompetent (Barth 2001; Bush & West-Burnham ,1994).

Evaluation of PDs is highly required and is as essential as training needs assessment. In addition, PDs might not be enhanced without evaluation. Similarly, school principals might not show any change in behavior without follow up and evaluation. Literature is rich with models for evaluating PD programs. These models and methods are systematic and theory-based. Besides, the study findings indicate that school principals are aware of the need to be followed-up and provided with feedback on their performances, which might ensure ongoing development.

## Conclusions

A rich body of literature points to the change in the school principals' roles which incites the need to consider the effectiveness of the professional development programs to keep up with the new trends and reform goals. The relevance and effectiveness of PD can be enhanced, if basic fundamental issues, as mentioned below, are borne in mind, when developing PD programs for school principals.

Based on findings, this study has to highlight certain points that are found consistent with several previous studies. First, the construction of any PD that targets the development of leadership needs to be based on systematic and scientific principles. Application of adult learning principles is capable of increasing the effectiveness of these programs. Certain elements have to be taken into account. Those are readiness of the trainees, employment of previous experiences, focusing on application rather than information-transmission.

First, PDs need to be built in light of ADEC standards and expectations for school principals. In that, high need of training was rated in the first five areas, that are leading strategically, leading teaching and learning, leading the community, leading people and leading the organization, while a comparatively lower scores have gone to the sixth skills cluster: self-leadership.

Secondly, the training needs should be identified by the learners themselves, which provides a margin of choice and involvement. In the same sense, the principals' call for more involvement can promise more sense of commitment and inclusion to the reform plans.

Thirdly, variation of PD methods; visits to distinguished schools, opportunities to gain higher degrees and others is highly requested. Generally, educators value opportunities to work together, reflect on their practices, exchange ideas, and share

strategies and experiences. Thus, investment of those with distinguished performances may promote the level of self-motivation and encourage collegiality

Fourth, to ensure that the use of new practices is sustained, regular feedback and evaluation procedures are essential. Change of behavior on the side of principals requires follow-up on areas of improvement, and guidance and supervision where support is needed. Most ultimately, evaluation procedures have to yield change in behavior and its effect on students' outcomes, which is the ultimate and core goals of any PD.

Fifth, principals' time inside their schools is more valuable. Hence, there is a high demand to consider timing of PDs. The planning for PDs should take into consideration the availability and workload of principals, since the principals' contributions to the school during the school day is extremely valuable. Besides, it is unrealistic to expect change in principals' behaviors at the end of a workshop, or training sessions at irregular intervals.

All in all, what is expected from PD is learning that equips school principals with skills which prepares them to change; in the absence of which, PD might be viewed to some as a waste of time and resources. To conclude, each of the following features should be considered to serve the needs of administrators in the design of programs, to the highest potential. Some of the features of quality programs include the following:

- Clear Focus and Purpose
- Curriculum Coherence
- Instructional Strategies
- Location
- Length and Time Structure
- Linkage to State Initiatives and Program Policies
- Information Technology
- Linkage to Organizational History, Values, Mission and Community

## Recommendations

The process of designing an effective professional development program that target school principals' practices could be enhanced. Based on literature and the research findings, the researcher recommends:

1. To design optimally effective PD, involvement of the school principals (trainees) in planning and designing PD programs through conduction of needs assessment and combining it with performance evaluation and the evaluation of prior professional development programs. This is established in literature and called for by a great number of the study participants. In this sense, involvement means more willing and fully engaged learners.
2. Espousing empirical data derived from the educational field that pinpoints real needs with current international educational trends in order to generate programs in light of our education objectives and future leadership requirement. In that, focusing on areas of leadership of teaching and learning, community communication, organization and people, besides, strategic planning skills. In all, school leadership development programs need to be built more around leadership skills rather than management.
3. From literature building school leaders incites the need to build self-leaders. This highlights the need to include new tainting areas that help principals to acquire the skills of self-management.
4. Among the school principals' suggestions is the employment of school principals experiences. Theories of learning and principles of adult learning point to the importance of constructing new learning experiences that invest on prior knowledge. Investment of school best and exemplary educational practices is in itself an approach in professional growth. Allowing for valuable opportunities of collegial sharing is a step in creating a learning community among school leaders. This is not only crucial for

facilitating the learning and development processes, but also a chance to recognize those potential mentors and trainers among principals. In short, experiences of school principals should not be overlooked.

5. Both literature and study findings point to the importance of following PD programs with evaluation of activities and their effectiveness in inducing the change in principals' behaviors. The process of evaluation need to be taken beyond immediate trainee feedback sheet. Rather, extended observation and technical feedback might help in guiding principles in adapting the new practices. This support can be offered in a form of coaching, where trainees move to transfer new experiences to their context.

6. Learning new skills and ways in doing something requires both time and effort. The requirements of extra time and efforts can add to the principals' workload, even when release time is provided. Thus, provision of programs needs careful decisions of timing that help trainees to practice and apply new knowledge. Based on principals' suggestions, PD programs can be conducted during the first month or the end of the school year, where loads of work is less compared to other times of the year. In the same stream, as part of building professional leaders, allowing principals to make decisions on their needs is the core of professional development. Principals needs are different, and learn differently. Moreover, keeping principals informed of the time and topics of training gives more sense of flexibility and personal choice.

7. According to the study findings, school principals suggest linking professional development programs with incentives as to enhance quality of PD and motivate trainees. Regardless of the type of incentives, it can be a two-sided issue that incites a careful consideration of the consequences that can ensue. In that, incentives should not be used to encourage attendance only. Rather, positive participation can be rewarding to those active principals, and needs to be recognized and rewarded.

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## APPENDICIES

## Appendix A

### School Principals TRAINING NEEDS Assessment Survey



**UAE University**

**Faculty of Education**

**Department of Foundations of Education**

**Master of Education Program (Leadership Track)**

**Dear School principal,**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The questionnaire you will complete is part of a scientific thesis to gain master degree in Educational Leadership under the title of

*Assessing training Needs of School Principals in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates*

*(Some lessons from literature and the field)*

Please complete this questionnaire to help identify the training needs of school principals. Your responses will contribute to design a framework for an effective professional development program that meets your training needs as a principal.

The questionnaire consists of four parts. The first part compiles demographic data of the participants; the second part addresses the school principals' perceptions towards Professional Development programs conducted by ADEC and the Ministry of Education. The third part comprises 37 statements that form the competencies of school leaders. Finally, the fourth part consists of open-ended questions.

Your feedback is important. This questionnaire should only take about 15 minutes of your time. Responses will only be utilized for research purposes and none will be identified individually.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

For more information or inquiries, please email the researcher at [920122154@uaeu.ac.ae](mailto:920122154@uaeu.ac.ae)

The researcher

Part I: Please, tick (✓) to your answer by marking the box

Gender:  Male  Female

Degree of Qualification:  Bachelor  Master  Doctorate  Other:

Your school:  cycle 1  cycle 2  cycle 3

Years of Experience as a principal:

1-3 years  4-8 years  9-15 years  More than 15 years

**Part II: School Principal Perceptions of Professional Development Programs**

Please, For each statement below, Tick ( ✓ ) the box that best shows your degree of agreement

Statements/Scale	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
1. Professional development programs (PD) support your professional practice in running schools.				
2. Professional development programs run by the Ministry/ADEC address the real needs of school principals.				
3. As a principal, you are involved in planning for your professional development programs				
4. Recent PD programs for school principals help you carry out the changes underway in UAE schools.				

**Part III: Leadership skills**

For each item identified below, Tick ( ✓ ) the box that best shows your need for training.

**1. Leading Strategically**

Statements/scale	No need	Some need	Moderate need	High need	Very high need
<b>I need training to be able to:</b>					
5. Develop my school's vision and mission.					
6. Establish my school's long-range objectives.					
7. Set action plans to achieve my school's objectives.					
8. Plan my school's budget to meet the objectives of different educational programs.					

9. Set evaluation tools to monitor progress of my school					
10. Manage a crisis that could suddenly happen in my school.					
<b>2. Leading Teaching and Learning</b>					
I need training to be able to:					
11. Define expectations for student learning.					
12. Assess the instructional program.					
13. Analyze student data to evaluate results.					
14. Monitor teachers' performance.					
15. Identify the developmental needs of teachers in my school.					
16. Develop staff in my school.					
17. Build a school culture that promotes learning.					
<b>3. Leading the community</b>					
I need training to be able to:					
18. Handle complaints.					
19. Network with the local school community.					
20. Involve community partners in different school operations.					
21. Handle media and public relations.					
<b>4. Leading people</b>					
I need training to be able to:					
22. Build a collaborative, professional work environment.					
23. Delegate responsibilities to others in my school.					
24. Set performance standards.					
25. Resolve conflicts that might arise in my school.					
26. Provide constructive feedback to my teachers, staff, and students.					
27. Enhance job satisfaction among school staff					
28. Monitor the progress of my school community toward achieving the goals and expectations.					
<b>5. Leading the organization</b>					
I need training to be able to:					

29. Make informed decisions to solve organizational problems.					
30. Manage human, physical, and fiscal resources.					
31. Leading the change process in my school					
32. Employ the use of Technology creating an interactive environment.					
<b>Self - management</b>					
<b>I need training to be able to:</b>					
33. Manage my time.					
34. Reflect on my performance.					
35. Listen actively to others.					
36. Effectively express my thoughts orally and in writing.					
37. Conduct presentations.					
<b>Part III: please, take time to answer the following questions</b>					
38. What are the other training areas that can contribute to enhancing your school leadership performance?					

39. How can school leadership Professional Development programs be developed to effectively improve your performance?

40. Other comments

Thank you for your time and effort

Appendix B

Arabic version of the questionnaire

جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

كلية التربية

قسم أصول التربية

لبرنامج الماجستير في التربية (مسار القيادة التربوية)

الأستاذ الفاضل / الأستاذة الفاضلة مدير المدرسة

الاستبانة التي بين أيديكم هي جزء من دراسة بعنوان: "تحديد الاحتياجات التدريبية لمديري المدارس في منطقة العين التعليمية بدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة في ضوء الأدبيات والممارسات الميدانية" بغرض استكمال متطلبات شهادة الماجستير في القيادة التربوية.

يرجى الإجابة على أسئلة الاستبانة ليتسنى للباحث تحديد الاحتياجات التدريبية للقيادات المدرسية , حيث ستسهم ردودكم في تصميم إطار نظري لبرنامج التنمية المهنية يستهدف سد الاحتياجات التدريبية لمديري المدارس في الإمارات.

تنقسم الاستبانة أربعة أجزاء: يشتمل الجزء الأول على معلومات ديموغرافية عن المشاركين، ويتناول الجزء الثاني توجهات مدراء المدارس نحو البرامج المنفذة من قبل وزارة التربية والتعليم سابقاً ومجلس أبوظبي للتعليم مؤخراً حول التنمية المهنية. أما الجزء الثالث فيشمل على سبع وثلاثين من المهارات القيادية للمدراء. وأخيراً تدور الأسئلة المفتوحة حول اقتراحات لتصميم برامج التنمية المهنية لمديري المدارس.

مساهمتمكم بالمشاركة والإجابة على أسئلة الاستبانة تمثل أهمية كبيرة لدى الباحث. علماً بأن المعلومات ستعامل بسرية تامة ولأغراض البحث العلمي فقط. قد تستغرق تعبئة الاستبانة 15 دقيقة.

شاكرون لكم حسن تعاونكم

لاقتراحاتكم وتساؤلاتكم, يمكنك التواصل مع الباحث على البريد الإلكتروني [920122154@uaeu.ac.ae](mailto:920122154@uaeu.ac.ae)

الباحث

مريم اليحياني

## استبانة تحديد الاحتياجات التدريبية للقيادات المدرسية

### القسم الأول: معلومات عامة

ضع إشارة ( ✓ ) عند الاستجابة المناسبة لدرجة موافقتك للعبارة التالية

• الجنس:  ذكر  أنثى

• المؤهل العلمي:  بكالوريوس  ماجستير  دكتوراه  أخرى: .....

• الحلقة:  حلقة 1  حلقة 2  حلقة 3

• سنوات الخبرة:

3-1 سنوات  4-8 سنوات  9-15 سنوات  أكثر من 15 سنة

### القسم الثاني: توجهات مديري ومديرات المدارس نحو برامج التنمية المهنية

ضع إشارة ( ✓ ) عند الاستجابة المناسبة لدرجة موافقتك للعبارة التالية

لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	العبارة
				1. تدعم برامج التنمية المهنية ممارساتي المهنية في إدارة المدرسة.
				2. تلبى برامج التنمية المهنية المقدمة من قبل الوزارة ومجلس أبو ظبي للتعليم الاحتياجات الفعلية لمديري المدارس.
				3. أشارك كمدير مدرسة في التخطيط لبرامج التنمية المهنية الخاصة بقيادات المدارس.
				4. تساعد برامج التنمية المهنية التي يحصل عليها مديري المدارس حالياً على تنفيذ التغيرات التي تحدث في مدارس الدولة.

### القسم الثالث: المهارات القيادية

ضع إشارة ( ✓ ) عند الاستجابة المناسبة لدرجة موافقتك للعبارة التالية

درجة الاحتياج التدريبي

عالية جداً  عالية  متوسطة  منخفضة  منخفضة جداً

أحتاج التدريب حتى أستطيع أن:

5. أصوغ رؤية ورسالة مدرستي.

6. أحدد الأهداف طويلة المدى لمدرستي.

7. أضع خطط تنفيذية لتحقيق الأهداف.

تابع القسم الثالث: المهارات القيادية



ضع إشارة ( ✓ ) عند الاستجابة المناسبة لدرجة موافقتك للعبارة التالية

درجة الاحتياج التدريبي					احتياج للتدريب لأكون قادراً على أن:
منخفضة جداً	منخفضة	متوسطة	عالية	عالية جداً	
					8. اخطط لميزانية مدرستي لتحقيق أهداف البرامج التعليمية.
					9. أطور أدوات تقييم لكي أتابع تطور مدرستي.
					10. أدير الأزمات التي تطرأ في مدرستي.
					11. أحدد التوقعات المتعلقة بتعلم الطلاب.
					12. أقيم البرامج التعليمية في المدرسة.
					13. احلل بيانات الطلاب وأقيم نتائج الانجاز.
					14. أتابع أداء هيئة التدريس.
					15. أحدد الاحتياجات التدريبية للمعلمين في مدرستي.
					16. أضع برامج للتنمية المهنية للمعلمين.
					17. أبني ثقافة المدرسة لكي تشجع على التعلم.
					18. أتعامل مع الشكاوى بفعالية.
					19. أتواصل مع المجتمع المحلي المحيط بالمدرسة.
					20. أقيم شراكة مع مؤسسات المجتمع في مختلف العمليات المدرسية.
					21. أتعامل مع وسائل الإعلام والعلاقات العامة.
					22. أبني بيئة عمل تعاونية ومهنية.
					23. أفوض المسؤوليات للآخرين في المدرسة.
					24. أضع معايير للأداء.
					25. احل النزاعات التي قد تحدث في مدرستي.
					26. أعطي تغذية راجعة لبناءة للمعلمين والموظفين والطلاب.
					27. أنمي الرضا الوظيفي لدى العاملين في مدرستي.
					28. أتابع تطور المجتمع المدرسي في تحقيقه للأهداف والتوقعات.
					29. اتخذ قرارات واعية لحل المشكلات التنظيمية.
					30. أدير الموارد البشرية والمادية والمالية بكفاءة.
					31. أقود عملية التغيير في مدرستي.
					32. أوظف التقنيات الحديثة في خلق بيئة تفاعلية.
					33. أدير وقتي بفاعلية.
					34. أقيم أدائي .
					35. أصغي بإيجابية للآخرين.
					36. أعبر عن أفكاري شفهاً وكتابياً بفاعلية.
					37. أقدم عروضاً أمام الآخرين.

القسم الرابع: اقتراحات لتطوير برامج التنمية المهنية الحالية

38. ما هي الاحتياجات التدريبية التي يمكن أن تسهم في تطوير أداء القيادات المدرسية الأخرى التي لم تذكر في هذه الإستبانة؟

39. كيف يمكن تطوير برامج التنمية المهنية للقيادات المدرسية بحيث تطور أداؤك بفعالية؟

40. مقترحات وأفكار أخرى

نشكر لكم حسن تعاونكم

## Appendix C

### Request of Consent Letter

التاريخ: 2010/11/01

الأستاذ الفاضل/ مدير منطقة العين التعليمية  
المحترم  
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

بداية يظيب لنا أن نتقدم لكم بأطيب تحياتنا متمنين لكم ولمنطقة العين التعليمية كل التوفيق والنجاح في الارتقاء بالعملية التعليمية التعلمية، هذا وفي إطار التعاون الدائم بين منطقة العين التعليمية وكلية التربية بجامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، بود إفادتكم علماً بأن الطالبة/ مريم عبد الله مبارك اليحيائي، ممجلة في برنامج الماجستير تخصص "القيادة التربوية"، تقوم بإعداد رسالة الماجستير تحت عنوان تحديد الاحتياجات التدريبية لمديري المدارس في منطقة العين التعليمية بدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة في ضوء الأدبيات والممارسات الميدانية، لذا نرجو التكرم بالموافقة على تسهيل مهمتها البحثية.

شاكرين ومقدرين حسن تعاونكم.

هذا وتفضلوا بقبول فائق التحية والتقدير.

منسق برنامج الماجستير  
أ.د. محمد أحمد عبد الدايم





جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
United Arab Emirates University

**UAEU**

Faculty of  
Education

جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
كلية التربية  
برنامج الماجستير في التربية

### عنوان الرسالة:

تحديد الاحتياجات التدريبية لمديري المدارس في منطقة العين التعليمية بدولة  
الإمارات العربية المتحدة في ضوء الأدبيات والممارسات الميدانية

### اسم الطالبة:

مريم عبد الله مبارك سعيد اليحيائي

### المشرفون:

أ.د. محمد أحمد عبد الدايم

د. عبد الرحمن سالم النعيمي

د. علي سعيد الكعبي

