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Teacher Leadership in Government Schools in Qatar:  
Opportunities and challenges.

By  
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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of Warwick  
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFBT	Centre for British Teachers for British Teachers
EFA	Education for All
EQI	Education Queensland International
FIFA	The Federation International of Football Association
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
learn	International Education and Resource Network
IRB	Institutional Review Board
KSA	Kingdome of Saudi Arabia
KG	Kindergarten
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoE-HE). In this study it is referred to as MoE.
NCATE	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
NPS	National Professional Standards
PD	Professional Development
PISA	The Programme for International Student Assessment
PLO	Professional Licensing Office
QNPSTL	Qatar National Professional Standards for teachers and leaders
QORLA	Qatar Office for Registration, Licensing, and Accreditation
RAND	Research and Development Cooperation
SEC	Supreme Education Council
SSO	School Support Organisation
TFQ	Teach for Qatar
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TLI	Teacher Leadership Inventory
TPCP	Teacher Preparation and Certification Programme
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



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## **DECLARATION**

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree. The work presented (including data generated and data analysis) was carried out by the author except in the cases outlined below:

*Figure 8 (multilayer perception analysis using SPSS 24) was produced by a collaborator.*

## **ABSTRACT**

The current study is an attempt to understand how teachers working in Qatari government schools understand the concept of teacher leadership. This topic has received little attention in the educational leadership literature in this context. Teachers came to Qatar during and after its massive educational reform (2003-2017), mainly from countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and are employed in an advanced educational system equipped with the most recent educational technologies and resources. The Ministry of Education (MoE) offers comprehensive professional development programmes, and a licencing system guarantees uniformity in teachers' qualifications to ensure quality education. These opportunities have made it imperative to investigate how teachers perceive the concept of teacher leadership, examine the factors that influence these perceptions and provide suggestions to foster teacher leadership in schools. Adopting the teacher leadership definition of York-Barr and Duke (2004), this mixed methods study used a questionnaire based on the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) tool developed by Angelle and DeHart (2011) and semi-structured interviews to collect data regarding teacher leadership perceptions. 2,969 people responded to the questionnaire and 96 teacher leaders were interviewed. The results of the study showed that teachers define teacher leadership in terms of formal leadership roles, e.g. subject coordinators. However, teachers in Qatar practise many informal leadership roles to support other teachers socially and professionally. Contrary to previous research, school level (preschool, primary, preparatory, secondary or complex) was not a significant variable in the quantitative phase although interviewees stated that school level affected teacher leadership practices. The qualitative phase results revealed many factors that support teacher leadership (including support from other staff including the principal, and from family members) as well as factors that inhibit it (dealing with difficult people, lack of team support, language and cultural differences, continuous changes from the MoE).

# 1. INTRODUCTION

When I was a student, I empathised with my teachers who were trying hard to launch initiatives and apply new teaching strategies in the face of obstacles at many different levels. When I began my career as a teacher, I was fortunate enough to have great mentors and to be supported by expert teachers, school leaders and my family. Based on their support, I tried my best to return the gesture by supporting other teachers and by being open to new ideas when I joined school leadership teams. I experienced how one teacher can enhance students' performance, influence their behaviour and inspire parents and their families. Yes, one teacher might change a whole village and more! I always wondered what was unique about those teachers, how they were able to change and influence others and how this positivity could be spread.

This study came from my own experiences and from the urgent need of countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in which I lived (Jordan, Kuwait and Qatar). Many Arab countries are considered conflict zones and are under crisis. Many other Arab countries suffer from poor conditions, with inadequate educational infrastructures that require extensive updating to help individuals build their capacities, and deal with varying needs and complex situations (Rugh, 2002; El-Baz, 2009; Rauch and Kostyshak, 2009). Education has been seen as the main tool to help change economic, political and social conditions (El-Baz, 2009). An educational system is known by what its employees do: no matter how great the plans are, the application is what distinguishes a superior educational system. Educational systems have different stakeholders, e.g. policy makers, school leaders, parents, students and, of course, teachers, who all contribute to and make an impact on any reforms.

Teacher quality could be considered a synonym for educational reform (Wiseman and Al-bakr, 2013). There are continuous efforts to improve teacher preparation and professional development programmes in order to fulfil the objectives of the reforms and meet the expectations of the education system (El-Baz, 2009). In order to further enhance teacher quality, it is important to examine teachers' perspectives. Thus, this study explored teachers' perspectives towards their leadership roles in one of the most well-known Arab countries. Qatar is not only famous for hosting the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2022, but also for launching comprehensive educational reform and providing many opportunities at different levels, e.g., attracting outstanding schools from other countries (Al-Fadala, 2015). With all the reforms that are occurring in Arab countries, it is essential to explore teachers' roles, their teacher leadership practices and the factors that might influence teacher leadership.

This chapter provides a brief overview of recent educational reforms (in Arab countries and Qatar, in particular) and the roles teachers play. It then presents a statement of the problem (as well as the overall aims of the study). Next, the research questions are set

out and the scope of the study clarified. The chapter ends by describing how my personal experience relates to the study.

## **EDUCATIONAL REFORM**

Throughout the ages, education has been seen as the cornerstone for change and improvement of social, political, health and economic conditions. Moreover, it is the most important tool of innovation, creativity and productivity. Governments around the world have launched education reforms in order to develop the economic and social conditions in their societies (Hallinger and Kantamara, 2000; Cochran-Smith, 2005; El-Baz, 2009; Klugman *et al.*, 2011; Guarino and Tanner, 2012; Khaikleng, Wongwanich and Sujiva, 2014; Akkary, 2014). El-Baz (2009) reports that ‘improving education; emphasizing the acquisition, increase, and dissemination of knowledge ... and empowering innovative thinkers are keys to economic growth’ (p. 42).

Arab countries face huge pressure due to globalisation, international demands and competition in education. Therefore, many of these countries have launched educational reforms (El-Baz, 2009; Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015; Al-Fadala, 2015). Educational reforms in Arab countries share some common characteristics, identified by Akkary (2014) as large-scale, top-down strategic plans mandated through policies at the national level of school governance.

Commentators have generalised these characteristics in studies conducted on educational reforms in all Arab countries, including Qatar. Qatar is known for hiring external companies to plan and support the achievement of its educational reform. In addition, Qatar’s educational reform was based on policies borrowed from Western countries (Romanowski and Nasser, 2012; Ellili-Cherif and Romanowski, 2013; Akkary, 2014; Al-Fadala, 2015; Romanowski, Alkhateeb and Nasser, 2018)

In most Arab countries, governments launched educational reforms which their societies saw as the government’s responsibility, and individuals only implemented them. This view is deeply rooted and reflected in each country’s reform and educational systems. Akkary and Rizk (2012) describe how stakeholders, including teachers in Arab countries, see reform as something that happens *to* them and that they should await passively. ‘Teachers see no reason to become proactive agents of change in their institutions’ (Akkary and Rizk, 2012, p. 20). Another characteristic is described by Chafi and Elkhouzai: ‘teachers still transmit knowledge to be regurgitated by learners who are expected to passively and unselectively copy and reproduce the conveyed information in its “original” and “objective” form’ (Chafi and Elkhouzai, 2017, p. 79).

Even though teachers play a major role in executing educational reforms, if the government adopts a top-down approach, this can lead teachers to believe that being proactive and introducing new ideas is too risky. Policy makers or educators in critical positions might not accept their initiatives (El-Baz, 2009; Akkary and Rizk, 2012;

Akkary, 2014). Akkary and Rizk (2012) argue, ‘Arab teachers are not prepared to engage in inquiry, critical thinking, the generating of innovative ideas, or the taking of initiatives necessary for improvement in their schools’ (p. 8). While those who are in high formal positions lead the reform, teachers are not expected to share experiences and document their work (Nasser, 2017). In addition, Akkary and Rizk (2012) state that change in Arab countries has been shown to isolate innovative practices from actual problems. For these reasons, many scholars report that teachers are not equipped to carry out educational reform in many Arab countries (El-Baz, 2009; Akkary, 2014; Al-Fadala, 2015).

Although Arab countries have features in common such as language, religion, history and culture, there are many differences in their economic, social and cultural situations (Rauch and Kostyshak, 2009). This makes it hard to generalise without evaluating teachers’ practices and their perspectives with reference to other conditions.

Teacher leadership has been investigated since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but teacher education in Arab countries still lags behind current trends and is considered outdated (Al Suwaidi and Schoepp, 2015; Al-Zboon, 2016; Keller, Al-Hendawi and Abuelhassan, 2016). Islamic and Arabic culture and history have always shown appreciation for teachers and their role (Subhi-Yamin, 2009). At the same time, teachers in Arab countries are generally ignored, isolated and considered tools rather than the main factor in leading change (El-Baz, 2009). However, a few Arab countries have implemented educational reforms that included different approaches to teacher preparation and development programmes, e.g. Jordan and Qatar (Al-Fadala, 2015).

### **Educational reform in Qatar**

One Arab country that has undergone educational reform is Qatar. Qatar is well-known not only as a wealthy country, rich in oil and gas, but also for its tremendous efforts to improve economic and social conditions and its emphasis on education. World ranking reports show Qatar as the first Arab country, and the fourth country internationally, to work on the quality of its educational facilities (Al-Fadala, 2015; Alkhater, 2016).

As will be discussed in the next chapter, Qatar launched an intensive educational reform in the last decade. Her Highness, Shaikha Moza Bint Nasser<sup>1</sup> (2009) emphasised that ‘the right to a quality education is, I believe, the perfect path to bridge the gap between different cultures and to reconcile various civilizations’ (Nasser, 2009). Dr. Darwish Al-Emadi, one of the main leaders of the reform, states clearly that ‘the reform in this country is something you will not see anywhere else in the Middle East. It is a total earthquake’ (as cited in Jaafar, 2012, p. 230). Many studies describe the history of the reform (Zellman *et al.*, 2009; Al-Fadala, 2012; Jaafar, 2012; Ghafir, 2012; Romanowski

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<sup>1</sup> Mother of the current Emir of Qatar, Shaikh Tamim.

and Nasser, 2012; Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015; Fadlemula and Koc, 2016; Alkhater, 2016; Nasser, 2017; Romanowski, Alkhateeb and Nasser, 2018). These studies also present the perspectives of principals and school leaders towards the educational reform. However, to date, there do not appear to be any published studies investigating teachers' leadership roles in Qatar's educational reform. In addition, few studies consider teachers' perspectives of the educational reform or the educational system before, during and after the educational reform in general. The closest study known is titled 'The impact of Qatar national professional standards: Teachers' perspectives' (Romanowski and Amatullah, 2014).

### **Different levels of school leadership**

Many scholars emphasise that schools and educational organisations are dynamic and complex systems (Christie and Lingard, 2001; Langdon and Alansari, 2012; Struyve, Meredith and Gielen, 2014; Goksoy, 2016; Hawkins and James, 2018). Researchers also highlight that school leaders are not able to deal with all these rapid changes and new requirements. Leadership, leading and being a leader have always been more difficult during challenging times, such as when using new or upgraded technologies (Avolio and Gardner, 2005), or when teaching in conflict zones or crisis areas, e.g. Palestine. Another challenge facing school leaders is leading schools during educational reforms (Guarino and Tanner, 2012; Khaikleng, Wongwanich and Sujiva, 2014; Khegay, 2017) .

'Effective leadership is particularly needed when schools are in the midst of educational reform since successful educational reforms have strong and effective leadership' (Romanowski *et al.*, 2018, p. 2). In Qatar, school leaders, mainly principals, participated in extensive professional development programmes to develop their leadership skills and knowledge (Ellili-Cherif, Romanowski and Nasser, 2012; Romanowski *et al.*, 2013; Al-Fadala, 2015; Alkhater, 2016). These programmes were based on distributing and sharing leadership with school stakeholders.

As Romanowski *et al.* (2018) note, 'After the quality of instruction, school leadership is the most significant school-related factor to student learning' (p. 2). Researchers indicate that *instruction* refers to teachers' roles because teachers are the most important factor affecting students' achievement (Hunter, 2012; Peeters *et al.*, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2017). Darling-Hammond (2017) claims that many countries are still struggling to meet global demands despite changing their schools. Only a few countries are showing good practices. For example, Finland, which is considered one of the leading countries in education, has been developing its teacher education programmes.

As teachers face significant changes during educational reforms and school restructuring, educational leaders have entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a call for greater opportunities for teacher leadership. In the reform environment, where there is a huge emphasis on accountability and autonomy (Kelley, 2011; Guarino and Tanner, 2012), teachers can be criticised and held responsible for failing schools (Anderson, 2004).

Therefore, many ideas have been discussed about how to develop teachers' skills and knowledge. One is the call for improved professional development for teachers, based on the assumption that people other than teachers themselves can improve the quality of what teachers do (Bangs and Frost, 2012). Another, however, is stated by Althani and Romanowski as follows:

Teachers must be included in the initial development of any (program), and be actively involved in not only expressing their needs to policy makers but also having a voice to improve the educational system and educational reform in order to improve students' achievements. (2013, p. 10)

In an effort to improve teacher quality, many countries are developing teacher preparation programmes and teacher licencing systems. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries' national education systems show increased emphasis on improving teacher quality by establishing teacher certification requirements in GCC countries' national education systems (Al-Fadala, 2015). However, Wiseman and Al-bakr claim that there is neither 'a direct nor a consistent association between teacher certification and student achievement in the GCC' (Wiseman and Al-bakr, 2013, p. 289).

It is clear that teachers fulfil an essential role in school improvement and society development (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Birky, Shelton and Headley, 2006; Muijs and Harris, 2006). Many researchers highlight the importance of developing teachers' skills and practices, not only for effective educational reform, but also for the survival of public education (El-Baz, 2009; McDonald, 2012).

Although I have quoted researchers' comments about the importance of teacher leadership, I need to highlight that teachers are not instruments; rather, they are the heart of the educational system, and their voices and contributions should not be heard in the implementation phase only. Teachers' impact goes beyond the classrooms to the entire school, community and world. Although teachers might be seen as instruments, Al-Fadala reports, 'The primary stakeholder in education reform is not the principal; but it is the classroom teachers on whom the overall success of reform efforts rests' (Al-Fadala, 2015, p. 35). Teachers' leadership role during the reform or after has not been mentioned in previous research about Qatar.

During the educational reform in Qatar, the country witnessed massive changes, especially in providing new roles for teachers, such as training school leaders to distribute leadership and involving stakeholders in general in decision-making, e.g. the role of a board of trustees. Thus, I found it crucial to explore the leadership opportunities that became available to teachers during the reform and after its implementation. There has been an increased interest in teachers' role, not only as the key factor to enhancing and improving student achievement, but also as a means to practise leadership, share teachers' voices and improve school performance (Akert and Martin, 2012; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014; Bangs and Frost, 2015). Heifetz and

Linsky (2002) claim, ‘When they look deep within themselves, people grapple with the challenge of leadership in order to make a positive difference in the lives of others’ (p. 74). This might be seen with teachers’ leadership practices.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Individuals in Arab countries are living with various economic, health and social challenges. These challenging conditions cannot be improved by the efforts of governments only. Individuals and organisations need to collaborate to influence, change and educate people. Education needs proactive and innovative teachers, leaders and educators who can deal with the rapid changes and new requirements of reform communities.

Despite the increased attention being paid to effective educational leadership (that improves student achievement), there is a lack of research exploring teachers’ perspectives towards their role in these continuous changes in Qatar, how to utilise teachers’ knowledge and experiences, and how teachers can lead/ influence and contribute to improving their own practices and developing conditions around them. According to Andrews and Crowther (2002, p. 167), teachers ‘enter into contractual agreements in which they sell their promises to obey commands’. This often means teachers are willing to do anything to secure and maintain their employment. As a result, they are often reluctant to try innovations for fear of upsetting senior leadership if they fail. Alternatively, if they are selected to lead an initiative, they decline for fear of failure.

As teachers’ perceptions govern their actions (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Salama, 2018), exploring teachers’ knowledge of teacher leadership is essential to understand their leadership practices and their willingness and readiness to assume leadership roles. Salama (2018, p. 5) explains how teachers’ perspectives and beliefs evolve:

Teachers try to make sense of their complex world which forms their beliefs. Meijer, Verloop and Beijaard (2001) explain that beliefs are contextualized and socially constructed, reflective and ‘inclusive’ (p. 446). They are both explicit and implicit with different degrees of conviction. Teachers may have perceptions, shaped by their surroundings, about their role and as a result act upon this perception, which may result in their active and/or inactive involvement in the education reform process.

While studies indicate that educational reforms in many Arab countries did not meet expectations (El-Baz, 2009; Akkary, 2014), Qatar is still evaluating its reforms and reflecting on the educational practices and changes. Qatar’s educational reform, as will be discussed in the next chapter, was a top-down approach. Most of the studies conducted have investigated principals’ and teachers’ perspectives towards school leadership (Ellili-Cherif, Romanowski and Nasser, 2012; Jaafar, 2012; AlRashidi, 2013;



Ellili-Cherif and Romanowski, 2013; Romanowski *et al.*, 2013; Romanowski, 2014; Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015). Andrews and Crowther (2002, p. 168) show that ‘traditional approaches to school reform, with their central focus on the principalship, are largely inadequate to meet the needs of a society in which knowledge-generation is of fundamental importance’.

School leadership does not only include principalship, as will be discussed in chapter 3 (Gunter, 2016). Since studies (Akkary, 2007; El-Baz, 2009) indicate the need for the participation of educational stakeholders, especially teachers, there is a need to explore other types of leadership in the school system.

Considering all the changes Qatar has faced, this study aimed to:

1. Explore teacher leadership in Qatari public/government schools.
2. Identify the characteristics of effective teacher leadership according to teachers in Qatar.
3. Identify the factors that affect teacher leadership according to teachers in Qatar.
4. Identify the barriers that inhibit teacher leadership according to teachers in Qatar.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

As this was the first study of teacher leadership in Qatar, it started with basic, yet essential, questions. The questions focused on the teachers’ perspectives towards teacher leadership; the nature of the teacher leadership being practised in Qatar; the factors that influence teacher leadership and the impact, if any, of the selected variables on teacher leadership. These questions were carefully stated in this study (Table 17). This topic is relatively new in the MENA region, as few studies have been conducted until now (Ramahi and Eltemamy, 2014; Al-Zboon, 2016; Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017). As found in the literature review (Wenner and Campbell, 2017), there is no agreed definition of teacher leadership, which led me to the first research question:

- **What do teachers and school leaders in Qatari government schools understand by the term *teacher leadership*?**

Previous studies show a lack of agreement regarding teacher leadership definitions (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Gumus *et al.*, 2018; Wenner and Campbell, 2017).

Defining teacher leadership is connected to understanding teachers’ formal and informal leadership practices in schools. Identification of factors affecting those practices is based on these definitions. For example, scholars who define teacher leadership based on distributed leadership roles focus on school leaders’ support and school culture and investigate teachers’ contributions to many aspects of schools (Anderson, 2004; Harris, 2003; Torrance, 2013; Goksoy, 2016; Banker, 2017). Other scholars, however, confine teacher leadership to instructional leadership inside and outside the classroom (Snell and

Swanson, 2000; Jita and Mokhele, 2013; Peeters *et al.*, 2014; Smith, Hayes and Lyons, 2017).

Qatar launched an educational reform in the last decade and borrowed from many Western policies and systems (see chapter 2). The purpose of this question was to explore the terminology used and its impact on the practices of teachers and school leaders who had been part of this reform or who had subsequently joined the sector.

The second and third research questions are:

- **What is the nature of teacher leadership in Qatari schools?**
- **To what extent, if at all, are any differences in their perspectives related to their position (age, gender, qualifications, school level, years of experience, school size and leadership position)?**

These questions were investigated in the quantitative phase using the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) developed by Angelle and DeHart (2011) in order to explore the variables that affect teacher leadership, i.e., age, qualifications, or school level. The results helped in understanding the factors that affect teacher leadership and how to promote and enhance teacher leadership practices, roles and functions. After data analysis, the findings showed that some results were not consistent with previous studies, which led me to add a fourth research question, as follows.

- **What conditions support or inhibit teacher leadership in Qatari schools?**

This was explored in the interview phase in order to gain in-depth understanding, which was the aim of using mixed methods. The intention behind this question was to explore how to enhance and support teacher leadership.

## **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This mixed methods sequential explanatory study was conducted in government/public schools K–12 in Qatar<sup>2</sup>. This approach was used to attain in-depth information by using different methods. The qualitative data were used to explain the quantitative results. This is believed to be the first study conducted in Qatar about teacher leadership. Thus, using mixed methods was beneficial to answer the research questions and explore teachers' perspectives in different ways, as will be explained in subsequent chapters. The 2,969 respondents in the quantitative phase were teachers working in government schools. The 96 interviewees in the qualitative phase were teacher leaders identified and

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<sup>2</sup> During this study, the Ministry of Education changed independent schools to government schools, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

recommended by their colleagues and school leaders to participate in this study. Data collection was conducted between May 2015 and July 2017.

## **PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

During my school career (having lived in Jordan and Kuwait), I encountered personally what I now identify as frustration. In 2004, I had the opportunity to work as an Academic Vice-Principal in a Qatari reform school (known as an *independent* school) under Supreme Education Council (SEC) supervision. I was apprehensive when I learned that my team was supposed to design the curriculum, set the policies and even decide how to assess the students with no assessment policy and few guidelines. Full responsibility for each aspect was placed squarely on my shoulders! Although I worked with a School Support Organisation (SSO) team, the topics they were referring to were completely new to me and took a lot of effort to comprehend.

Many teachers faced the same challenges, as the majority of teaching staff in independent schools were brand new to teaching and had no teaching qualifications or relevant experience. Their professional backgrounds ranged from engineering to law. Although those teachers did not have educational certificates or experience, they were expected to design the curriculum and assess the students without an assessment policy or proper training. Some independent schools, in contrast, were considered successful because their teachers' performance met expectations, and their progress was noticeable within the first year of opening. This led to their staff being headhunted and asked to lead schools or departments during and after the reform. Most of those teachers left the classrooms because of the sudden responsibilities and multiple demands. Some changed careers and started new professions; however, many refused leadership roles and responsibilities because they were afraid of new commitments and heavy workloads.

During this period, I questioned why teachers were overwhelmed and what the pitfalls were, although the best organisations were working to implement the policies of the reform.

I asked,

1. What could have been done differently?
2. How can we solve the current problems and prevent this from happening again?

I saw how teachers were keen to learn and do their best during continuous changes as will be discussed in next chapter. In addition, I truly believe that everyone influences others in some way, even if they do not notice or even know how they influence others, which can be a feature of informal leadership.

One of the major challenges I encountered in my profession was manifested in teachers' self-perception and the extent to which they appeared to underestimate their professional contributions. Although Islam values the teaching profession and views teachers as

descendants of the prophets and God's messengers in communities (Subhi-Yamin, 2009), this perspective is no longer so keenly felt. Muslims have historically held teachers in high regard, viewing them as educators rather than instructors/vehicles for delivering information (Qarashi, n.d.). However, appreciation of the teacher's role has been undermined over the years, to the extent that they are often abused by their own students.

In my judgment, it is important for teachers to practise leadership roles regardless of their titles and positions. Leadership, in my opinion, means influencing others mainly by being responsible and proactive.

I came to a conclusion about educational leadership, school leadership and teacher leadership after facilitating the 'Leader in Me' programme at the private school I led. This programme is based on teaching students about the '7 Habits of Highly Effective Kids and Teens' (Covey, 2004). The impact of the '7 Habits of Highly Effective People' (Fonzi and Ritchie, 2011) on teachers and students in that school was amazing. Since then, I have tried to create a supportive atmosphere for teachers and for school leaders, and to empower teachers by offering them new opportunities and ways to share their opinions. My sense that this was unusual in Qatar schools led me to research teacher leadership in this context

## **ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

This chapter has provided a statement of the problem and outlined the research questions. The remaining six chapters of the thesis are as follows:

Chapter 2 contains a brief explanation of the educational context in Qatar, presented to illustrate the specificities of its educational system. This chapter was separated from the introductory chapter to summarise the main systems, regulations, terms, roles and responsibilities in Qatari public schools before, during and after the reform. Furthermore, it aims to place the respondents' answers in the appropriate context. Many terms that are also used in other countries may indicate different things in Qatar and thus need clarification. It is also worth mentioning that this chapter is not an evaluation of the reform as much as a clarification of the context.

Chapter 3 is a literature review, organised around the research questions and derived from them. It defines the main terms, e.g., leadership, leaders, teacher leadership, teacher leadership, roles and responsibilities and teacher leadership characteristics. It also factors in the influence of teacher leadership, the main theories in teacher leadership and a few comments about teacher leadership in Arab countries. These themes are essential to form the foundation for the terms used throughout this study and especially to demonstrate that teacher leadership is an umbrella term; there is no agreement on one definition, as will be discussed through the lens of previous studies. In addition, this chapter describes the conceptual frameworks that have informed the study. An overview

of teacher leadership in Arab countries from previous studies is given to provide new insight into the results.

Chapter 4 presents the research methodology and discusses the instruments used, the translation process of the instruments, the ethical procedures followed, the pilot studies, and the population. In addition, this chapter shows the data collection methods used to answer each question.

Chapters 5 presents the results. The quantitative phase results are presented according to the variables tested, while the qualitative phase results are presented according to the main themes coded. Chapter 6 discusses the main themes emerging from both phases of data collection. In addition, it explains the findings in the light of previous studies and the context of the educational system in Qatar.

Chapter 7, the final chapter, summarises the main findings, thereby addressing the research questions. It also discusses the main limitations of the study. This chapter also proposes future research and explores the implications, recommendations and significance of this study.

## **SUMMARY**

Many Arab countries, including Qatar, have engaged in massive educational reform without studying or clarifying the role of teacher leadership. This introductory chapter began by explaining why this lack of research needs to be addressed. It then listed the four research questions underpinning the study and delineated its scope. Next, some personal experiences that aroused my interest in this topic were described. Finally, an outline of the rest of thesis was presented.

## 2. BACKGROUND: THE CONTEXT OF QATAR

Before and after the Arab Spring, many scholars and policy makers highlighted the importance of improving educational systems and building capacity in Arab countries (El-Baz, 2009; Akkary, 2014; Mohamed, Gerber and Aboukacem, 2016). Countries in the Middle East launched educational reforms, e.g., the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Although these reforms have consumed considerable resources, Al-Fadala reports that Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) policymakers did not make the most of the pivotal roles of school principals and headteachers in articulating the reforms' vision (Al-Fadala, 2015). Her statement, however, does not include informal teacher leadership roles.

Despite the fact that teacher leadership has been studied since the eighties, not many studies have been conducted in the Middle East (Al Suwaidi and Schoepp, 2015; Al-Zboon, 2016; Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017). Although the reforms in GCC countries have been quite extensive, they have relied on Western consultants. There has been little research about the reform's impact on teachers (Zellman *et al.*, 2009; Ellili-Cherif, Romanowski and Nasser, 2012; Al-Fadala, 2015; Nasser, 2017), and, to my knowledge, no studies have investigated whether, from the teachers' perspectives, the reform increased opportunities for teacher leadership; in fact, the term *teacher leadership* has not been addressed clearly within the reform in Qatar. Therefore, this study aimed to explore how teachers and teacher leaders perceive teacher leadership practices and what affects these practices in Qatari government schools.

This chapter provides important information about the context of Qatar and Qatari reform. It is important to highlight that it is not an evaluation of the reform but rather describes the context in the light of previous studies and my own experience and reflections.

### QATAR

Qatar is the second-smallest country in the Arabian Gulf, with an approximate land area of 11,500 km<sup>2</sup>. It houses a population of 2.5 million people, of which 14% are Qataris and the remainder are expatriates (MDPS, 2018). The country has a flourishing economy due to the massive increases in global oil prices throughout the 1970s (Kronfol, Ghuloum and Weber, 2013).

According to Brewer and others (2007), Qatar has made considerable efforts to improve the quality of its educational system in order to achieve its national priorities as well as international innovations. The Qatari government believes that developing education will empower Qatar to compete in a highly competitive world (Alkhater, 2016).

Before the discovery of oil in Qatar and under the British Protectorate, there was no formal educational system; the Kuttab, known as the ‘traveling educators’, mostly ran education, teaching Arabic and the Quran (Alkhater, 2016; Nasser, 2017). The first school was opened in 1948 for boys in Doha, the capital of Qatar. More public schools were gradually opened, and, in the mid-1950s, the Ministry of Education, called *Wizarat Al-Maarif*, was established and became one of the first ministries in Qatar (Alkhater, 2016).

At the same time, girls’ education was supported by opening the first school for girls in 1956 (Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015). All subjects were taught in Arabic at the time, except English. To date, schools are segregated based on gender, and the educational sector consists of primary (grades 1–6), preparatory (grades 7–9), and secondary (grades 10–12) divisions. Students attend school five days a week, beginning at the age of six. The number of school days and hours has increased from 130 days in the eighties and nineties to 180 at the time of writing, and from five to seven hours per day.

In the late 1990s, the MoE established the scientific schools, called the Developed Schools or *Al-Madaris Al-Mutawara*. These schools ‘had complete independence from the Ministry of Education. The idea started with two segregated secondary schools - one for boys and one for girls - that were inspired by the Canadian schooling system and were designed and implemented with the help of Canadian experts’ (Alkhater, 2016, p. 99). These schools taught mathematics and science in English as models of change and gained a great reputation for quality education in Qatar (Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015).

Due to the results of these scientific schools compared to the government schools, and with many other concerns related to the public educational system, the Qatari government asked Research and Development Cooperation (RAND), an internationally recognised non-profit research institution, to conduct an objective assessment of the Qatari education system and suggest a variety of remedial solutions (Zellman *et al.*, 2009; Al-Fadala, 2012; Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015; Alkhater, 2016).

## **EDUCATION FOR A NEW ERA**

In 2001, RAND recommended many solutions to Qatari government leaders to improve the education system, and this popular report became known as the ‘RAND Report’ (Brewer *et al.*, 2007). The RAND report identified a number of weaknesses, e.g. the schools’ lack of vision and mission. Further, the organisational structure of the schools was very hierarchical. In addition, the facilities were not suitable for teaching and learning. Zellman *et al.* (2009) note the RAND report’s claim that schools relied on higher authority and top-down decisions. The curriculum from the MoE needed to be reviewed to support a student-centred approach and the number of target-specific professional development programmes needed to be increased.

At that time, Sheikh Tamim, the crown prince, highlighted that:

The reform that we seek must be total and comprehensive involving all components of our educational system - students, human resources, curricula and buildings. Moreover, we want it to be continuous, and not to be subject to certain circumstances, and we want it to be qualitative, renewable and capable of adaptation with all variables and requirements. ('Education Reform Plan Launched', 2004)

Alkhatir (2016, p. 100) report that several reform models were presented to Qatari leaders who were aware of the weaknesses of the educational system:

Option 1 was to reform within and through the Ministry of Education by improving the curricula and teaching quality.

Option 2 was to create a decentralized parallel system to the Ministry based on the charter school model.

Option 3 was to create a voucher system which might eventually lead to privatizing the sector.

The second option was chosen in 2002, namely to apply a modified version of charter schools (Independent schools) ( Brewer *et al.*, 2007; Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015; Al-Fadala, 2015; Fadlemula and Koc, 2016; Alkhatir, 2016; Nasser, 2017; Romanowski, Alkhateeb and Nasser, 2018). As a result, the father of the current Emir of Qatar launched an extensive plan based on:

1. The establishment of Independent Schools not managed by the Ministry of Education,
2. Curriculum standards based on international benchmarks reform, and
3. A range of professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators.

RAND mentioned that all the options that were studied (Brewer *et al.*, 2007) required the endorsement of four basic principles:

- **Autonomy**, meaning schools would operate according to specific conditions in a time-limited agreement;
- **Accountability**, meaning schools would be evaluated regularly based on measures that would be available to all stakeholders;
- **Variety**, meaning each school would be free to develop its own educational plan and policies;
- **Choice**, meaning parents would use schools' evaluation reports to select the best school for their children's needs.

Eventually, the Supreme Educational Council (SEC) was launched to clarify the objectives of the new education system. At the same time, the Ministry of Education



continued to supervise and run the government schools. Private schools were run by investors, and community schools were run mainly by embassies and vocational schools. The SEC included three institutes:

1. The Education Institute was set up to deal with managers of the Independent schools and support them with the financial and professional development required to increase student achievement. It was responsible for developing curriculum standards for the four main subjects, English, Arabic, mathematics, and science, (which in 2008 became six subjects with the addition of Islamic studies and social studies). The Education Institute also selected school support organisations (SSO) to offer educational and functional assistance to school operators.
2. The Evaluation Institute planned and implemented tools to assess school achievement. The instruments designed by the Evaluation Institute were used to gather information about school achievement; these were used on all private Arabic schools, Independent schools and MoE schools.
3. The Higher Education Institute provided scholarships that allowed Qatari students to study at the Qatar Foundation<sup>3</sup> and overseas. This institute also planned to offer advice and services to all students in the country and was supervised by higher education (Brewer *et al.*, 2007; Jaafar, 2012; Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015; Fadlemula and Koc, 2016).

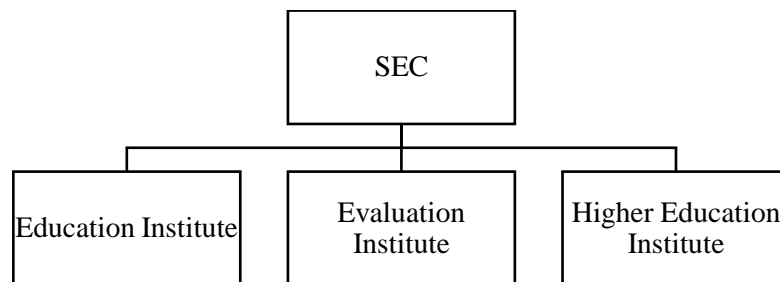


Figure 1: SEC structure (2005)

The SEC started the first group of Independent schools that taught the new curriculum in 2004 (Brewer *et al.*, 2007). The Independent schools were a modified version of charter schools. These schools were funded by the government, while each school could apply a different system according to the educational plan submitted by the Independent school operator and the contract signed between the SEC and the school operator. From 2004 until 2010, Qatar began a new cohort of Independent schools to replace the MoE schools

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<sup>3</sup> Sheikh Hamad Al Thani and his wife Moza Bint Nasser launched the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development in 1995.

gradually. In 2010, Qatar converted all MoE schools to 174<sup>4</sup> Independent schools, hosting approximately 79,000 students and merging the two governing institutions, the MoE and the SEC.

In 2003, the SEC placed an advertisement in the local newspapers in order to receive applications for school operators. ‘The school operator is not necessarily the school principal; in fact, one operator can have several school principals reporting to him/her depending on the number of the contracted schools that the operator could get’ (Alkhater, 2016, p. 101). At the beginning, individuals or companies could apply, but from the second year, only individuals could. The SEC received almost 180 applications to run the first cohort, and 60 successful applicants came to orientation sessions in December 2003. The applicants were chosen mainly for the ‘innovativeness and thoughtfulness of their vision, prior experience, interest in education, success in their previous work, educational background (a four-year college degree was the minimum requirement), and desire to lead and manage an Independent school’ (Brewer *et al.*, 2007, p. 135).

In January 2004, the Education Institute, with the support of RAND, selected the school operators. Educational training sessions were open to 60 successful applicants and to any staff they had hired at that point, such as principals, finance officers, vice principals and subject coordinators (Brewer *et al.*, 2007; Fadlemula and Koc, 2016; Zellman *et al.*, 2009). This step was considered very progressive compared to the level of professional development previously offered to educators in Qatar and other countries, especially with the different roles and responsibilities expected in that phase.

The principal or the school operator<sup>5</sup> was required to submit an educational plan, including a financial plan, an academic plan and all school policies, e.g. an assessment policy. Hence, each school leader was responsible for articulating the school’s vision and educational plan for his/her school, selecting and recruiting qualified teachers and administrators based on the school’s educational system, and monitoring development. The planned working conditions were expected to permit the teachers to experiment, improve interactive connections within departments, raise work satisfaction, and increase students’ achievements (Brewer *et al.*, 2007; Zellman *et al.*, 2009).

Table 1 shows the number of Independent schools by year (Supreme Education Council, 2007). The reform was introduced in stages, with rapid growth (Guarino and Tanner, 2012; Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015).

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<sup>4</sup> Each year, the MoE opens new schools. At the time of writing, the MoE administers 299 schools.

<sup>5</sup> At the launch of Independent schools, the operators were not the school principals. In 2008, the operators became the principals.

Table 1: Number of Independent Schools by Year

Academic Year	Cohort	Number of Independent Schools Opened
2004–2005	1	12
2005–2006	2	21
2006–2007	3	13
2007–2008	4	18
2008–2009	5	15
2009–2010	6	29
2010–2011	7	65
Total		174

Many educational companies, known in Qatar as School Support Organisations (SSO), sent their teams to Qatar to provide support to the newly formed schools (Alkhatir, 2016). These organisations came from different countries, e.g., Multi Serve from New Zealand and the Centre for British Teachers (CFBT) from the United Kingdom (Brewer *et al.*, 2007). More specifically, these companies helped schools to articulate the curriculum standards (Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015).

Most of the professional development offered by the SSOs and SEC focused on new teaching methods and compliance with curriculum standards (Nasser, 2017). The main goal was to equip the teachers to be able to plan according to the standards and to identify the appropriateness of the standards for grade and age levels. Moreover, it was essential to learn how to write objectives aligned with the standards according to content and cognitive level, and, most importantly, to assess the students' learning (Nasser, 2017). All this training was to enhance student-centred approaches. These professional development modules might have been considered simple by other educators, but they were difficult for most of the teachers working in Independent schools as most of them did not have a teaching certificate and had started their profession with no proper training (see below).

Nevertheless, each school operator had the freedom to select, hire, determine salaries and even dismiss teachers and staff; the professional development plan was left to each school according to its educational programmes and system. In parallel, the Education Institute provided foundational and advanced training programmes for teachers and school leaders as mentioned earlier. These training programmes relied on training master teachers to train other teachers in their schools or other schools. The SSOs also made efforts to build capacity and train coordinators, using the Training of Trainers model (ToT) to reach the largest number of teachers (Nasser, 2017). This approach to training can be effective if there is an evaluation process, follow-up and good selection of master teachers (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Levin and Schrum, 2016).

The reform was based on the idea of autonomy, which was translated into teachers making autonomous choices about instructional practices (Brewer *et al.*, 2007). Most teachers did not have the knowledge and skills to develop curriculum materials, as explained previously. Al-Banai and Nasser (2015) concluded that ‘many teachers were overwhelmed by this process and much of the curriculum, i.e., professional development content was not up to par with the quality needed to transform the educational spectrum’ (p. 680). Likewise, Zellman *et al.* (2009) reported that few teachers thought the trade-off between longer hours and increased autonomy was positive. In contrast, Alkhater (2016) found that some young Qatari and non-Qatari teachers were attracted to Independent schools precisely because of the decentralised decision-making and increased autonomy, e.g., curriculum design, resource selection, and assessment of students’ needs. These teachers saw their Independent school teaching experience as challenging and rewarding despite the workload.

As one of the four principles that guided the reform was autonomy, it is important to identify how previous studies define it. Sitch (2005) describes autonomy as ‘capacity and responsibilities to bring change and manage one’s attitudes and capabilities in a productive way. Teachers possess autonomy when they are able to have control over any situation and possess freedom to handle all matters using their own approach’ (as cited in Jumani and Malik, 2017, p. 31).

Although this definition is very general and does not reflect what happened in the majority of schools, defining the term is essential as it clarifies the importance of knowing teachers’ capabilities as a prerequisite to possessing autonomy. Moreover, educational leaders and policy makers need to clarify what is expected of teachers and what they can accomplish with this level of autonomy.

Undoubtedly, the reform created great demand and high expectations of teachers (Zellman *et al.*, 2009; Fadlemula and Koc, 2016) (see Table 2). The RAND report demonstrates how the SEC provided a variety of ways to support teachers and school leaders to implement these reforms in their schools. The SEC not only provided different types of support, but also accepted new ideas and new strategies suggested by teachers and school leaders. It was more like teachers in their new formal roles in each school were leading and articulating the reform.

Table 2: *MoE Teachers' Responsibilities Compared to Those of Independent Schools' Teachers 2004–2010*

Teachers in MoE Schools	Teachers' Responsibilities in Independent Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MoE provided its teachers with textbooks and teachers did not have to add or use their own resources to develop the curriculum.</li> <li>• The MoE curriculum was based on a lecture and recitation format, which primarily required students to memorise content and teachers to mainly lecture in a teacher-centred approach. The curriculum changed only about once a decade, so new preparations were relatively uncommon.</li> <li>• MoE curriculum did not incorporate the use of information technology across subjects, as it was outdated.</li> <li>• A MoE schoolteacher's day often began at 7:00 a.m. but ended around noon. Teachers worked for a maximum of 130 days.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEC trained teachers to plan according to curriculum standards. They were required to develop textbooks, or schools could purchase textbooks or materials.</li> <li>• Independent schoolteachers performed many duties related to curriculum development and material selection outside of the classroom. These duties expanded the scope of their responsibilities and were often quite time consuming.</li> <li>• The standards-based reform was designed to encourage teachers to employ student-centred teaching practices in the classroom.</li> <li>• Teaching in Independent schools required the use of information technology to prepare for classes, communicate with students, conduct research and make presentations</li> <li>• Independent schools required that a large portion of mathematics and science instruction be conducted in English.</li> <li>• The workload in Independent schools often meant long hours for teachers, with days lasting from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 or 4:00 p.m. and a longer academic year (180 days).</li> <li>• Independent schoolteachers attended professional development courses that were sometimes offered after school hours and in the evening.</li> <li>• Qatari and expatriate teachers in boys' and girls' Independent schools reported feeling insecure in their jobs. This was particularly the case in the first years of the reform, before the Education Institute published personnel by-laws in 2007. The feeling of insecurity was based on the perception that hiring and firing decisions were in the hands of only one person, the school operator (who was, after the policy change, also the principal).</li> </ul>

*Note:* Adapted from Zellman *et al.*, 2009, pp. 31–33

Many professional development and teacher preparation programmes were offered, including 1) a teacher-training programme for new teachers entitled the Teacher Preparation and Certification Programme (TPCP), which offered different modules to enable teachers to plan in line with the curriculum standards; 2) SSO teams that supported schools in their first year of operation; 3) a variety of professional development workshops, some offered by the Education Institute's Professional Development Office and others provided by international contractors (Zellman *et al.*, 2009); and 4) a teacher training agenda introduced in 2003 by the SEC and Qatar University in cooperation with Texas A&M University (Nasser, 2017). This training programme was provided because a vast number of newly-recruited teachers lacked teaching qualifications or experience and were expected to teach mathematics and science in English (Alkhater, 2016). This professional development programme focused mainly on teaching strategies, lesson and unit planning, assessments and integration of technology into the classroom.

Nasser (2017) summarises the efforts offered by the College of Education at Qatar University, the only national public university, in collaboration with the Education Research Centre at Texas A&M University. These contributions were based on a national study that attempted to understand the needs of teachers. The findings revealed that teachers needed extensive and relevant professional development. Nasser (2017, p. 8), highlights that professional development should:

- (a) Be practical.
- (b) Be limited in theory and take place during the normal school day at their own school.
- (c) Include participation workshops.
- (d) Include exchanging experiences with other schools.

Based on my own experience, I want to emphasise the difference between attending and participating in workshops or training programmes. Many educators attended workshops which mostly promoted passive learning and were not given the opportunity to take an active role in their learning process although these workshops often entailed an assignment and/or some sort of participation before an attendance certificate was issued. Due to time constraints, the volume of information given was vast, but was not tailored to any individual curriculum, which made it extremely difficult to digest.

It is important to know what types of teacher preparation programmes were available in Arab countries, and more specifically in Qatar. In the same historical descriptive study, Nasser (2017) explains how the College of Education offered a bachelor's degree in general education before 2000. In response to the reform, these programmes were closed in 2004. The previous programmes did not meet the requirements of the reform or the international standards (Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015; Nasser, 2017). There was a shortage of teachers, but a great demand for them in the new schools. The College of Education

began to offer degrees that were more specialised, such as for primary or secondary teachers, and specified the subjects the graduates would teach.

Zellman *et al.* (2009) highlight how Independent schools<sup>6</sup> were originally guided by the four principles mentioned earlier in this chapter: variety, autonomy, choice and accountability. This has changed over time. ‘The idea of the school being an autonomous entity is now relegated to a government-led authority with some flexibility in hiring, professional development and budgeting. There are some decisions left to the school regarding teaching methods, teacher incentives, professional development plan and hiring of staff’ (Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015, p. 555).

During the course of this research project, the MoE reverted to a centralised system, curtailing the greater freedom earlier schools had experienced in operating and managing their budgets. As mentioned previously, one of the most important changes was to recruitment, to ensure a secure environment for employees. In the first few years of the reform, school operators had the freedom to recruit staff from any country they wished to fulfil teaching and staffing needs. ‘These changes, in addition to the elimination of grants in 2005–2006 and the elimination of start-up funds for new schools in 2007–2008 represented significant modifications to revenue policies’ (Guarino and Tanner, 2012, p. 238).

Regarding the RAND monograph,

It is interesting that the only example which the monograph gives about the ideas that were ‘put aside for later consideration’ is related to the ‘hiring and firing of teachers and merit pay’, which proved to be very fundamental to the reform model. ‘These issues are complicated by the fact that teachers are civil servants and the solution was to put the issue aside, hoping it would be resolved during the implementation phase, which did not happen. In fact, the way implementation interacted with those issues has somehow exacerbated them’.  
(Brewer *et al.*, 2007, p. 70)

Many new positions were created because of the educational reform, i.e., activities coordinator, public relations coordinator, character-building coordinator and assessment coordinator. Other positions expanded until 2016 when the MoE took over from the SEC and unified structures in schools.

The new positions were innovative for teachers and educators in general. They provided a formal leadership organisation, and teachers who were promoted to leadership positions were<sup>7</sup> compensated with extra allowances. In 2010, 174 schools had converted to become Independent schools, taking part in all the training and new opportunities of

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<sup>6</sup> During writing, the MoE changed the name to government schools (in 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Teachers who held formal leadership roles were given extra allowance until the time of writing.

Independent schools, including having an activities coordinator, public relations coordinator, year coordinator or leader and resource coordinator. Between 2011 and 2016, the MoE opened new schools, which were also called Independent but with a different level of authority given to the school operator based on centralised decisions from the MoE. Any teacher or school leader who had been hired after 2011 might not relate to the same experiences and training as those hired before.

Along with Qatarisation<sup>8</sup>, gender and the Qatari labour market affect school staffing (Romanowski *et al.*, 2013; Alkhater, 2016). Schools are segregated by gender for both students and staff. ‘Female teachers teach girls at all levels and boys at the primary school level (grades one - six). Male teachers teach only boys. Men and women do not generally work together in the same school in independent or government schools’ (Guarino and Tanner, 2012, p. 227).

In addition, teachers can work at all school levels, e.g., a physics teacher with secondary school experience can work as a science teacher in primary. Despite all the support and training given to teachers, many teachers were still struggling to meet expectations.

In 2006, the Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers and Leaders (QNPSTL) were launched, providing a benchmark for teachers and school leaders in Qatar. The Education Queensland International (EQI) of Australia outlined these guidelines (Brewer *et al.*, 2007). The QNPSTL explained the type of knowledge, disposition and skills required of teachers and administrators (Table 3). Because all teachers were compelled to register with the Qatar Office for Registration, Licensing and Accreditation (QORLA), certification procedures were developed (Brewer *et al.*, 2007; Zellman *et al.*, 2009; Ellili-Cherif, Romanowski and Nasser, 2012).

In 2016, the MoE reduced the number of QNPSTL standards for teachers and educational leaders (see Table 3). Table 3 shows how previously teachers were required to meet 12 standards, which were subsequently reduced to six. For educational leaders, the standards were reduced from seven to five. (Ministry of Education, 2016). Prof. Michael Romanowski and his colleagues (2018, p. 4) summarise the reasons for this review:

1. Focus more on the impact of teaching on students’ learning, progress and achievement
2. Refine and improve Standards so they are realistic
3. Base Standards and licensing on relevant, authentic classroom-based practices

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<sup>8</sup> Qatarisation refers to Qatari government efforts to increase the number of Qataris employed in public and private sectors.



4. Increase the capability of teachers, school leaders and system leaders through programmes of professional development aligned to the achievement of the Standards

Table 3: A Comparison of the NPSTL Standards in 2008 and 2016

	2008–2015	2016–Present
Teachers	1. Structure innovative and flexible learning experiences for individuals and groups of students	
	2. Use teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning	
	3. Foster language, literacy and numeracy development	1. Plan for student progress and achievement
	4. Create safe, supportive and challenging learning environments	2. Engage students in the learning process and develop them as learners
	5. Construct learning experiences that connect with the world beyond school	3. Create safe, supportive and challenging learning environments
	6. Apply ICT in managing student learning	4. Assess students' learning and use assessment data to improve achievement
	7. Assess and report on student learning	5. Model high professional standards and engage in continuous professional development
	8. Apply knowledge of students and how they learn to support student learning and development	6. Maintain effective partnerships with parents and community
	9. Apply teaching/subject area knowledge to support student learning	
	10. Work as a member of professional teams	
	11. Build partnerships with families and the community	
	12. Reflect on, evaluate and improve professional practice	
School leaders	1. Lead and manage learning and teaching in the school community environment	1. Lead and manage the school strategically
	2. Develop, communicate and report on the strategic vision and aims of the school community	2. Lead and manage teaching and learning in the school community
	3. Lead and manage change	3. Drive high standards and continuous improvement
	4. Lead and develop people and teams	4. Lead, manage and develop individuals and teams
	5. Develop and manage school–community relations	5. Lead, develop and manage the schools–parents and community relationship
	6. Develop and manage resources	
	7. Reflect on, evaluate and improve leadership and management	

*Note:* Adapted from Romanowski *et al.*, 2018

The QNPSTL described the skills, disposition and knowledge necessary for teachers and education leaders. At the start of the process, all teachers and school leaders were required to submit a portfolio of work, so that they could be attested and awarded a professional licence. This portfolio was considered evidence that the teacher or school leader met the minimum requirements of the SEC recruitment policies. In 2009, nearly 2,000 teachers and 800 leaders from the 85 Independent schools had received

provisional licences (Nasser, 2017). There were three levels of licensure for those with teaching responsibilities: entry level, proficient level and advanced skills level (Romanowski and Amatullah, 2014; Nasser, 2017). Two licence levels were created for leaders, namely the middle manager and senior manager levels (Ellili-Cherif *et al.*, 2012; Romanowski and Amatullah, 2014; Nasser, 2017;). School leaders had two main licence categories: senior leaders and middle leaders. Many voices in the community were against the process as they saw it as too complicated, impractical and an inaccurate reflection of teachers' and school leaders' professional levels.

The Professional Licensing Office (PLO) replaced QORLA and expanded its scope to all school personnel responsible for awarding certification. At the time of writing, the licencing process is undergoing significant changes due to restructuring and the conversion from SEC to MoE. The new licensing system for teachers and subject coordinators has three levels: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. All teachers start at Level 1. Subject coordinators have sub-items that differ from teachers in their leadership roles, following the same standards for teachers and school coordinators.

In my opinion, the previous standards were superior to the current ones because they helped teachers and school leaders understand the components of the new systems and how to lead change, e.g. 'manage the resources' was deleted as a separate standard. However, I agree that the previous process needed to be more practical and simpler. Al-Fadala (2012) highlights that while the National Professional Standards (NPS) offered advantages,

They nevertheless lacked clarity and left them to rely on their own skills when it came to implementation. More importantly, there were few guidelines from the SEC to implement the NPS more effectively. It was also discovered that how leaders perceived the change affected its implementation. These perceptions ranged from total awareness to lack of sufficient knowledge of the new policy. The school leaders exhibited a very positive opinion towards the reform. However, some of the leaders expressed a need for more training on how to lead their team better and be creative in change management'. (p. 1)

With all the changes that teachers were facing during the reform, they still had to comply with the national professional standards that were equivalent to Western standards and used Western terms. Although there were fewer standards and the roles were simplified, the autonomy of teachers and school leaders was reduced to specific roles and responsibilities within a centralised system.

Studies show that teachers were overwhelmed and were burdened with lesson planning and managerial responsibilities, all of which were new and connected to the reform requirements (Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015). In addition, the teachers had to prepare for licensure (Ellili-Cherif, Romanowski and Nasser, 2012). In the case of Qatar, 70% of teachers were expatriates, mostly from other Arab countries, and more than 30% did not have a formal qualification in teaching (SEC, 2010).

Finally, most prior research confirms the lack of teacher qualification as a critical factor influencing the proper implementation of the reform in Qatar (Romanowski *et al.*, 2013). Romanowski and Amatullah (2014) examined how teachers in Independent schools perceived the effectiveness and use of professional standards: as ‘too complicated’ and ‘hard to understand’ (p. 111). Most of the teachers stated that the standards created pressure on them and that documentation took them away from focusing on teaching and learning. The researchers proposed that such drawbacks occur because ‘the beliefs, values, ideas and knowledge embedded in the professional standards were taken from the Western approaches, without considering the appropriateness to the local educational context’ (p. 112). Teachers’ expertise and perspectives are essential in the development of educational innovations. Bailey (2000) mentions that if teachers feel their capabilities and abilities are in question, they will resist the reform (as cited in Fadlemula and Koc, 2016).

It is worth mentioning that a few initiatives were launched to increase the number and quality of local teachers, e.g. Teach for Qatar (TFQ), similar to Teach First in the UK, which facilitated professionals from industry and government spending two to three years in Independent schools to teach math and science.

All this considered, during the educational reform, teachers were given many responsibilities and the autonomy to implement initiatives, e.g., designing the curriculum, selecting the resources and assessing the students. Yet these responsibilities were changed into more centralised top-down decisions in less than a decade. Another main change was implemented to the reform practices by 2009: the schools had to select their resources from a list approved by the SEC. Finally, by 2010, all schools used the same textbooks (SEC, 2010). Moreover, teachers began to plan their lessons collaboratively, and they had to be approved by the SEC, and, at the time of writing, by the MoE (see Table 4, which summarises the main changes during the reform).

Table 4: Samples of Continuous Changes and Decisions Made by the SEC 2004–2015

Year	Changes						
2004–2005	First cohort of Independent schools launched	Teachers and school leaders can design and select their own resources	Science and math taught in English	Any candidate can apply to teach in Independent schools	School support organisation teams (SSO) support school leaders and teachers in first year	Each school can have its own structure to operate	Each school may apply its own training programme for teachers and staff
2006–2007	Teachers and school leaders must select resources from a list approved by the SEC						
2010–2011	All schools shifted to become Independent schools	SEC began hiring teachers in coordination with school principals					
2015–2016	SEC disbanded and all schools placed under MoE						

### BACK TO THE MOE (AFTER THE REFORM)

In line with Emiri Decision No. 9 of 2016, the SEC was disbanded and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoE-HE) again became responsible for all aspects of education in Qatar (Doha News, 2016). The use of the term *Independent school* was discontinued, and all MoE schools were called *government schools* by 2017. The MoE

hired school operators who espoused the MoE vision and mission (The Peninsula, 2016). These changes were made in response to the voices of society and decision makers and their dissatisfaction with the results and impact of Independent schools (Nasser, 2017).

Zellman *et al.* (2009) note that teachers planned according to curriculum standards and student assessments that were based on Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Yet, teachers were most likely to use the lower end of the taxonomy. The study reveals that it was difficult to hire high-quality teachers because of the workload, the promotion system and the requirement to teach math and science in English.

The same study observed teacher-centred behaviours in classrooms. 'They remained at their desks and classes were conducted in the form of whole-group activities' (p. 58). Moreover, the local community raised concerns regarding the reform, e.g., the absence of well-defined Islamic studies and history, and the use of English as the language of instruction (Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015; Nasser, 2017).

Reflecting on critical lessons from the GCC countries, Al-Fadala (2015, p. 39) contends that:

Successful reform not only requires visionary, motivated, capable individuals who initiate change, but skilled adopters who understand the importance of minimizing resistance in the larger change environment. In schools, this includes school principals, teachers, and parents. Change is not an event but a process.

This highlights that managing the change is just as important as change management. Managing the change starts with understanding the people and helping them deal with the challenges before leading the change, while change management focuses more on the process and technical aspects of the change. 'The Qatar experience has struck both hopeful and cautionary notes and provides useful lessons for other countries embarking upon ambitious educational restructuring' (Guarino and Tanner, 2012, p. 244).

Other countries were looking forward to seeing the results of Qatar's educational reform, and many studies have been conducted to explore the impact and results of this reform (AlRashidi, 2013; Romanowski *et al.*, 2013; Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015; Fadlemula and Koc, 2016); in fact, the United Arab Emirates publicised its approval of the principles of the educational reform programme established in Qatar (Ghafir, 2012). The reform was very promising and provided great opportunities for teachers and school leaders to learn from Western experiences, but the problems cannot be overlooked. The pace of the reform's implementation was too fast for some stakeholders. The professional development for teachers and school leaders could have been introduced differently to minimise resistance and to be more practical, e.g., through pilot schools. One of the most important points was to utilise the capacity of teachers and school leaders who were working in the field, such as by training exceptional teachers and

school leaders and providing mentors for new school leaders (Al-Fadala, 2015). Nonetheless, many school leaders believed that working in a school under the SEC was better than the rigid approach they had experienced in MoE schools (AlRashidi, 2013).

The picture is brighter related to resources for schools. As I write, all schools have a unified design for their buildings, and almost all get the same resources. Smart boards are in each classroom and there is a learning management system in place, which is revised each year. Since 2016, all schools have had a unified structure and job descriptions; the MoE hires all teachers and school leaders. Teachers teach one subject to students in grades three through twelve according to their majors.

Figure 2 shows how administrative roles are separated from teaching and academic ones and the unified positions as summarised by the researcher. Interestingly, the MoE classifies teaching assistants as administrative roles not related to academic supervision because most of them have secondary certificate qualification, and because of the tasks assigned to them.

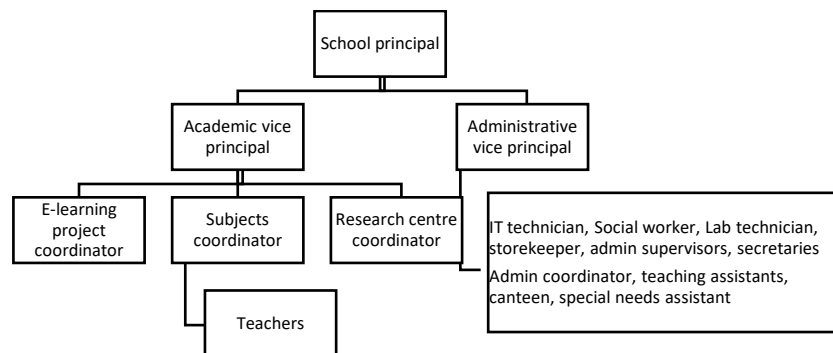


Figure 2. MoE unified school structure (2016–time of writing)

Zellman *et al.* (2009) contend that rapid changes and lack of teacher qualifications affected the implementation of the reform. Al-Fadala (2015) makes the following comments on Qatari educational reform:

School principals and teachers already have a compelling reason to make that change a success, however they are fighting a constant battle because of the varying ways in which they struggle with its implementation, due to lack of clarity in regard to appropriate methods to implement policies. This affects other areas of their professional and personal lives, resulting in increased stress, diminished focus and ensuing lack of value ascribed by teachers to the requested change. (p. 1)

## **SUMMARY**

After a brief history, this chapter described the context of the Qatari educational reform, some of the opportunities presented to teachers and school leaders and the challenges they faced. The reform provided a tremendous amount of knowledge and generated opportunities to apply new information and skills. Yet, applying systems borrowed from Western countries without a clear translation of terminology left educators perplexed.

This chapter is not an evaluation of the reform and aims only to clarify the context in which this study was conducted. This detailed summary of the educational history of Qatar is necessary as many terms are used differently than in other countries, e.g. Independent schools. Qatar has witnessed many changes, especially in the last decade, and has used systems from Western countries. Teachers and school leaders were exposed to many changes in policies, systems, roles and responsibilities. The reform required different teacher and school leader preparation and training programmes from the previous ones. Many formal teacher leadership roles were developed and practised. Although the educational reform had some positive features, Qatari leaders disbanded it and returned to a more centralised and more controlled system. In the next chapter, previous studies will be reviewed to position this study, explore the main themes of the research questions in previous studies and identify the conceptual frameworks of this research.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many interpretations of the word, *education*. This study uses the definition of education from the Greenwood Dictionary of Education:

Education is a broadly inclusive term referring to a process of fostering cognitive, physical, social, emotional, or moral growth and development in individuals or groups. It is goal directed, implies a values system, and may proceed informally or formally, as in schooling. Formal education typically aims for some balance between individual needs and societal needs. (Collins and O'Brien, 2011, p. 116)

Education is not only the key to critical thinking, mental development and creativity but also includes social development and a values system. Education is more than just schooling. To achieve the aims of education, scholars highlight that teachers are redefining what it means to teach in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This redefinition requires them to 'lead – change ideas, schools, and each other ... to become teacher leaders' (Blegen and Kennedy, 2000, p. 2).

Teachers and educators require a variety of knowledge, skills and attributes. Brooks and Normore (2010) argue that these need to be *glocalized*. In other words, they need to meet global standards but also fit the local culture. Brooks and Normore identify nine literacies that educational leaders need to develop in a glocalized way. These are '(a) political literacy, (b) economic literacy, (c) cultural literacy, (d) moral literacy, (e) pedagogical literacy, (f) information literacy, (g) organizational literacy, (h) spiritual and religious literacy, and (i) temporal literacy' (2010, p. 54).

Other authors (Corcoran and Tormey, 2010; Hen and Goroshit, 2016) highlight the importance of emotional literacy given the complexity that educational leaders face. In their view, emotional literacy is essential for two reasons. Firstly, it helps educators understand, express and control their own feelings. Secondly, it helps them recognise the emotions of others and build healthy relationships. It might even be the case that emotional literacy helps leaders develop the other nine literacies highlighted by Brooks and Normore (2010).

There is broad agreement that teachers have the most impact on student learning and school performance (Ross and Gray, 2006; Peeters *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, studies have recognised the importance of teachers' voices and participation in managing change and day-to-day tasks in order to develop educational practices and motivate teachers to remain in the profession. These studies include many terms, such as *teacher empowerment*, *distributed leadership*, *shared leadership* and *teacher leadership* (Berry, Daughtrey and Wieder, 2010; Hulpia and Devos, 2010).

Teacher leadership, the core of this study, emerged as a concept in the 1990s in North America. Later, during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it became a prominent topic in the UK as well



(Harris, 2005; Gumus *et al.*, 2018). However, Boylan (2016) reports that ‘in England the term “teacher leadership” is not often used in schools’ (p. 7). Boylan (2016) derived this claim from Muijs and Harris (2006), who note a dearth of studies exploring teacher leadership, despite many studies related to head teachers. It is not clear whether the same claim can be made about countries other than England. Certainly, researchers need to be cautious when reviewing the literature on teacher leadership because different terms may be used in different countries. Nonetheless, studies exploring teacher leadership in other cultures, e.g. Iran, South Africa, Georgia and Turkey (Smith, 2007; Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014; Mokhele, 2016; Gülbahar, 2017) are growing.

By and large, previous studies conducted on teacher leadership have explored its definition, roles and responsibilities, and impact. The sources included in this literature review were coded using NVivo 11 and manually. The main categories were ‘teacher leadership definition’, ‘teacher leaders’ roles and responsibilities’, ‘teacher leadership impact’, and ‘factors promoting or inhibiting teaching leadership’. These themes/categories were selected based on the conceptual frameworks followed in this study, which will be clarified later in this chapter, to help answer the research questions.

This literature review chapter aims to analyse what previous studies have concluded about teacher leadership and, on this basis, identify appropriate conceptual frameworks for the current study bearing in mind the research questions listed in the Introduction. The first section of this chapter reviews the definition and concept of teacher leadership/leader. Definitions are important, especially when they are being used in other contexts with a different language. The second section reviews the literature regarding the importance of teacher leadership and the roles and responsibilities exercised by teacher leaders. The third section discusses the factors supporting or inhibiting teacher leadership in K–12 education. This leads on to sections clarifying related theories and the conceptual frameworks. The chapter concludes with a section on teacher leadership in Arab countries.

## **DEFINING LEADERSHIP**

To gain a better understanding of teacher leadership and position this study accordingly, it is important to start this section by clarifying what it means to lead. Although this seems a simple question, in my opinion, it is important to begin by clarifying what is involved in leadership and how it might be linked to teachers’ leadership practices.

Yukl (1989) says, ‘The word leadership has only been in use for about two hundred years, although the term leader, from which it was derived, appeared as early as A.D. 1300’ (as cited in Whitsett and Riley, 2003, p. 4). Harris and Muijs (2002) note that ‘leadership can be separated from person, role or status and is primarily concerned with the relationships and the connections among individuals within a school’ (p. 3). In other words, ‘leadership is a function, not a role, and many people are engaged in it’ (Fairman

and Mackenzie, 2012, p. 232). This study follows this line of argument and separates leadership from the leader.

Researchers suggest that there are as many definitions of leadership as there are people trying to define it (Bolden, 2004; Bush, 2018). Yukl (1989) (as cited in Whitsett and Riley, 2003, p. 4) divides 'leadership approaches into four classifications: power-influence, behaviour, trait, and situational'. The ability to influence others is frequently cited in later literature (Snell and Swanson, 2000; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Hart, 2010; Margolis and Doring, 2012; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014; Garand, 2016). This quality is often supplemented by other elements.

For example, Northouse (2004) identifies four common features of leadership: a process, influence, occurs in a group, and helps in achieving goals (as cited in Bolden, 2004). Three of these features are self-evident, but 'occurs in groups' would benefit from further explanation. What is a group? Is it a set of two, or should it be more? Can we say someone is leading him/herself to achieve a goal? Can we say someone is a leader if he/she influences and leads one other individual? In my opinion, leadership does not occur only in a group. In this study, *leadership* is defined as the process of influencing others directly or indirectly to achieve goals. This definition follows how other researchers have defined leadership (Stone, Horejs and Lomas, 1997; Frost and Harris, 2003; Katyal and Evers, 2004; Jo, 2014).

Cooper *et al.* (2016, p. 88) differentiate *influence* from *change* by defining influence 'as indirectly altering another's practice by informing their thinking in ways that shape what they do, whereas change is intentionally propelling others to do some specific thing in a precise way that differs from current practice'. This means influence is broader than change. It can happen at any given time in our lives, without us being aware of it. This is a very important distinction for this study. Some teacher leaders may deliberately try to change the work of their colleagues. Others might acknowledge they have unintentionally caused colleagues to act differently. A third group may be unaware of their influence because it has been both unintentional and indirect.

Educational leadership is categorised by Connolly, James and Fertig (2019) in two ways: first, to describe those who hold senior leadership positions in schools; and second, to describe the process of influencing others. They build their argument on the second category, claiming that influence can be wielded by 'any member of staff ... Further, to seek to understand the nature of educational leadership on the basis of what those in leadership positions do unduly restricts understandings of the complexity of interactions and influence in educational institutions' (p. 6). The current study accepts Connolly, James and Fertig's two-fold classification and aims to provide some conceptual clarity with respect to their second category as well as exploring their ideas in a different culture and context.

Mulford (2008) argues that leadership is not the end of itself; it is an action that empowers the learning, achievement and development of youth and children. Ciulla (1998) clarifies that ‘it is a complex moral relationship between people, based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion, and a shared vision of the good’ (as cited in Bolden, 2004, p. 30). This is a very important point as not all leadership is for good purposes. Assuming that all leaders are trustworthy and good people does not accurately reflect what happens in real life. Kellerman (2005) helpfully distinguishes between unethical and ineffective leadership. This acknowledges the fact that a) some leaders are bad people and b) even leaders with good intentions can get things wrong.

Bush (2008, p. 276) claims that leadership has three main characteristics: influence, values and vision. Bolden (2004) highlights how vision, in particular, can become problematic, causing well-intentioned leaders to ‘become deluded and lose touch with reality’ (p. 25). If leaders become over-committed to their strategic vision, it can lead to a ‘stubborn refusal to consider alternative and competing approaches’ (p. 25). In addition, the leader might: 1) ‘become blind-sighted, seeking out only information that supports his or her vision’, which may result in fear among personnel of challenging the vision. 2) ‘Leaders can lose touch with reality as a result of their communication and impression-management techniques’ (Ibid). Although Bolden’s report discusses leadership in general and not only in an educational context, linking this to educational context is essential, especially regarding teacher leadership characteristics, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

## **DEFINING LEADERS**

Foti, Bray Thompson, and Allgood (2012) claim that leader prototypes are developed through early social interactions because they provide individuals with a model from which an ideal leader can be defined. For example, parental traits (both negative and positive) might shape leadership prototypes for individuals. Weller and Weller (2002) argue that ‘leaders are products of their times, their environments, their offices, their followers, their values, their personality traits, and their conceptualizations of leadership’ (p. 2). They define leaders as ‘prime movers who allow others to achieve common goals and who unite others for a common purpose’ (Ibid)). Therefore, it makes sense to think of a leader as emergent instead of defined and to focus not only on their personal traits, but also allow their relationships to shape their roles.

Douglass (2018, p. 388) lists various labels to describe relational forms of leadership:

Relational, collective, collaborative, systems, distributed, and shared leadership ... They all share a common lens that views leadership as highly relational, and exercised at multiple levels, and often by both formal and informal leaders ... The heart of relational leadership is to recognise the expertise or authority of each person or role in an organization, based on the knowledge associated with it.

Some of the studies related to leadership are descriptive. Bolden (2004) states that leadership can be a social myth of excessive dependence on the 'leader'. Early leadership theories focused on what distinguished leaders from followers and their impact on followers, while later theories looked at other variables, such as situational factors and skill levels (Gumus *et al.*, 2018). The school structure encourages a top-down approach, with its dependence on principalship (Boyaci and Oz, 2017), while some recent studies have highlighted the complexity of educational leadership (Christie and Lingard, 2001; Struyve, Meredith and Gielen, 2014; Sokol, Gozdek and Figurska, 2015).

Bolden (2004) supports what Gemmill and Oakley (1992) propose: the need to increase awareness and debate the nature of leadership and the associated values and relationships within organisations. This awareness might help with clarifying expectations, evaluating performance and identifying leadership practices and leaders. As previously stated, it can be difficult to distinguish between bad and effective leaders and leadership not only because of leaders' perspectives, but also because their perspectives are likely to be linked to the organisation and the community's level of awareness. Bolden (2004) reminds us 'that leadership is not a moral concept. Leaders are like the rest of us: trustworthy and deceitful, cowardly and brave, greedy and generous' (p. 4). In my opinion, this fact is seldom recollected when individuals are busy with their day-to-day practices and tasks.

### **WHAT IS TEACHER LEADERSHIP?**

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009, p. 5) write, 'Since teacher leadership is popular in the educators' professional jargon, there is reluctance to examine the concept, because everyone believes he or she knows what it means'. Initiating a dialogue about the definition of key terms helps to build a foundation of common understanding. Therefore, this section analyses the main terms used in this study, i.e. *teacher leadership* and *teacher leaders*. This is especially important since this study was conducted in a different language (Arabic) and context (Qatar).

Despite more than 30 years of research into teacher leadership, there is still no consensus about how to define the term. A lack of definitional clarity is not unique to teacher leadership, as York-Barr and Duke (2004) comment in their study, which is widely considered a seminal work on teacher leadership. York-Barr and Duke (2004) mention Leithwood and Duke's (1999) statement:

It is important to be clear from the outset that what has been learned about leadership in schools over the century has not depended on any clear, agreed-upon definition of the concept, as essential as this would seem at first glance. (p. 45)

Although Leithwood and Duke's comment is now almost 20 years old, it continues to be cited because the situation has not changed since that time (Harris, 2005; DeHart, 2011;

Boyaci and Oz, 2017; Nguyen and Hunter, 2018). Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) express concern that ‘the term teacher leadership has crept into educational vocabulary. There has been a lack of sustained and robust debate either about the term or about its use and misuse in schools’ (p. 331). Researchers have noted the existence of overlapping and competing definitions of teacher leadership (Frost and Harris, 2003; York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Harris, 2005; Harris and Spillane, 2008). Furthermore, York-Barr and Duke (2004) highlight that ‘in writing about teacher leadership, many authors readily assert its importance but usually fail to define it’ (p. 260). Additionally, Harris (2005) argues that ‘teacher leadership has become an “umbrella phrase”, often meaning different things in different settings’ (p. 204). These comments are particularly pertinent to this study because it was conducted in a non-Western context. Trying to define a term that is not clearly defined in the language it is used in can be even more difficult if it is translated to other languages.

As previously noted, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers are expected not only to provide information, but ‘to lead change, ideas, schools, and each other ... to become teacher leaders’ (Blegen and Kennedy, 2000, p. 2). Augustsson and Boström (2012, p 4) claim that ‘being a teacher means not only being competent in a subject area, but also, above all, leading students’ learning within a didactic room’. In other words, they are very much responsible for what they do, when, how, where, to whom, and why. Augustsson and Boström (2012, p. 174) go on to describe the teaching role as ‘to lead and organize teaching, tutor, instruct, motivate, inspire, set limits, and manage conflicts’, among other things.

Katzenmeyer and Moller claim in their book *Awakening the Sleeping Giant* that ‘most teachers do not see themselves as professionals because they are working in the confines of the classroom’ (2009, p. 31). Their claim may be true in some instances, depending on the type of school leader support and school culture. If so, it needs changing because teachers play a vital role in sustaining a democratic society (Blegen and Kennedy, 2000). To encourage democratic practices, students need to see and be inspired by school practices that consider students’ and teachers’ voices rather than viewing them as passive soldiers in the field. Some studies perceive teachers as the foot soldiers or personnel on the front line (Anderson, 2004; York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Birky, Shelton and Headley, 2006). These contributions from teachers might be considered part of teacher leadership (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009). Some studies have highlighted the importance of improving economic and social conditions in nations through education (El-Baz, 2009; Boyaci and Oz, 2017). Others suggest one of the main purposes of teaching is to transfer cultural values and aspirations from one generation to another (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

## Defining teacher leadership

In the previous sections, we saw how some scholars tried to define *leadership* in their own words, while others recycled previous definitions. Now, we will look, specifically, at *teacher leadership*. For some authors, teacher leadership is primarily about teaching and learners. For example, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009, p.17) suggest teacher leaders have a willingness and ability to ‘lead beyond the classroom and contribute to the community of learners’ (2009, p. 17). In similar vein, Andrews and Crowther (2002) define teacher leadership as ‘the power of teaching to shape meaning for children, youth, and adults’.

Other authors broaden the concept of teacher leadership to include a focus on colleagues and schools. For example, York-Barr and Duke (2004) suggest that ‘teacher leadership is the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement’ (pp. 287–288). Likewise, for Smylie and Eckert (2018, p.570), it means teachers participating in school decision-making and having the chance to lead school-wide improvement. (p. 570). Within this broader conceptualisation, Wasley (1999) notes the importance of relationships: teacher leadership is ‘the capability to push colleagues to change, to do things they would not ordinarily consider without the influence of the leader’ (Wasley, 1999, as cited in Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014, p. 177). So, a key way for teacher leaders to exert influence over their colleagues is to provide professional development.

This study builds on previous definitions in an attempt to promote agreement and a common understanding. Leadership, in the current study, is identified as the process of influence, reflecting York-Barr and Duke’s definition mentioned above. It is also accepted that teacher leadership practices go beyond ordinary and expected roles because teachers can influence many different aspects of teaching and learning, directly and indirectly.

Having said this, it is important to highlight that some scholars have defined teacher leadership by defining teacher leaders instead. It is obvious that the background of teacher leaders comes from two roles: teaching and leading. York-Barr and Duke define teacher leaders as those who ‘are or have been “teachers with significant teaching experience, are known to be excellent teachers, and are respected by their peers”’ (York-Barr and Duke, 2004, p. 267). Sirotnik and Kimball (1996) suggest that linking the word teacher to leadership does not primarily convert its meaning, as it is still the use of influence by a leader over a follower (as cited in Anderson, 2004, p. 100). A few voices have claimed that researchers need to differentiate between teachers who have leadership roles, serving as ‘representatives’, and those who do not lead or make change (Grenda and Hackmann, 2014).

There is debate, however, regarding variances among administrative duties and teachers. For example, Anderson (2004) claims that ‘there are some tensions between teaching and administrative roles that should not be swept under the rug of collaboration, shared decision-making, empowerment, and the like’ (Anderson 2004, p. 100). This claim is based on the results from 28 interviewees from six schools. Conflict between the admin and teaching staff was mentioned on more than one occasion. This tension might have been because teachers’ desire for autonomy clashed with the bureaucratic requirement of hierarchical authority in a school system or because they faced time constraints in which to teach and carry out administrative work (Margolis and Nagel, 2006). Generally, teachers are not familiar with the detailed bureaucratic requirements of administrative work as they focus on teaching and learning and might not have been exposed to management and leadership skills (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009).

Augustsson and Boström (2012), in their study titled ‘A theoretical framework about leadership perspectives and leadership styles in the Didactic Room’, state that many scholars do not use the term *leadership* in their studies about teacher leadership practices. They give an example from Walker (2016) who uses the following terms to describe teacher leadership practices in the classroom: *authoritative*, *authoritarian* and *permissive*. These terms describe the approach according to the level of control and care. ‘The authoritative approach combines high control and a high degree of care. The authoritarian shows a lower degree of care and high level of control, while the permissive combines a low degree of control with a moderate degree of care’ (p. 173). Some studies focus on teacher leadership practices in classrooms, while other studies describe teacher leadership in schools in general or outside schools.

Although Augustsson and Boström build their concept on the definitions of leadership found in Burns (1978), Northouse (2007) and Yukl (2010), as they report, there might not be much difference between their definitions and York-Barr and Duke’s definition. Both understand teacher leadership as a process that includes all stakeholders, although Augustsson and Boström prefer to link it to the didactic room.

Augustsson and Boström identify five leadership perspectives that teachers might apply depending on the surrounding conditions: structural, symbolic, political, human and self-awareness. ‘The structural perspective is characterized by the teacher’s definition of the relation between a particular policy and curriculum and a particular set of ongoing activities’ (p. 175). This perspective is based on the assumption that teachers are responsible for the activities in the classrooms more than the students themselves. It considers stability and order as positive attributes. The symbolic perspective ‘assumes the teacher’s awareness of the fact that the students’ feelings of social belonging to the application of the policy and curriculum in use, inspire security and enhance self-esteem’ (p. 176). In this perspective, group membership is essential for each student. Third is the political perspective, which ‘helps the teacher discover that, within a group larger than two people, loyalties and disagreements usually develop between

individuals, leading to negotiations, haggling, and competition’ (p. 178). The core of this perspective concerns social processes among individuals and the group. Teachers benefit from this approach by considering different points of view and recognising a variety of interests. Based on this perspective, teachers might work on solving conflicts. The human perspective ‘helps the teacher recognise that people need to know and see evidence that they are developing both individually and as a group’ (p. 179). Teachers take into account the importance of mutual give-and-take between individual and groups of students. Although the researchers link this to students, it might also be important to recognise that other teachers are developing as well as students. The fifth perspective is the self-consciousness, which assumes that ‘teachers are aware of themselves, which allows them to influence their impact on students and on what is currently happening in the didactic room’ (p. 180). The power of self-awareness provides opportunities to reflect and look at themselves through the eyes of others, to learn from their experiences and correct their mistakes. Once again, these perspectives could be shaping practice within and beyond classrooms.

### **Defining teacher leaders**

Wenner and Campbell (2017) define teacher leaders as ‘teachers who maintain K–12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities, while also taking on leadership responsibilities outside of the classroom’ (p. 7). Patterson and Patterson (2004) see a teacher leader as ‘someone who works with colleagues for the purpose of improving teaching and learning, whether in a formal or an informal capacity’ (p. 74). However, Akert and Martin (2012) cite Danielson’s definition (2006): ‘a set of skills demonstrated by teachers who continue to teach students but also have an influence that extends beyond their own classrooms to others within their own school and elsewhere’ (p. 286).

Remaining a teacher while practising leadership is part of what distinguishes teacher leaders from other educational leaders. Yet one should be cautious about linking it to a set of skills because doing so requires close attention and specific measures to evaluate these skills. Furthermore, these skills require some kind of agreement between educators to identify them. This study employs the following definition of *teacher leaders*: teachers who maintain K–12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities while also taking on formal and informal leadership responsibilities and influence others directly and indirectly. This definition is adapted from Wenner and Campbell’s definition, adding formal and informal leadership responsibilities without considering leadership outside the classroom, as some teacher leadership roles might be carried out inside classrooms.

As there are various leadership roles within schools, Reeve and Church (2013) claim that these roles are not reserved for individuals with assigned roles, and any person can assume them. However, Normore (2004) acknowledges that the transition from being a



teacher to taking on administrative roles is a complex process. It involves reflection and observation, leading to a different level of practice and role identity. Many studies which explore the question ‘Who are teacher leaders?’ show that teacher leaders have a recognised teaching experience, are usually known to be excellent teachers and are respected by their peers (Harris 2005; York-Barr and Duke 2004). Over the years, teachers have accepted positions as department chairs, grade leaders and subject leaders (Fairman and Mackenzie, 2012), yet the ways teachers practise leadership are as diverse as the teachers themselves. An additional characteristic is that they have generally learned the new role just by doing it (Normore, 2004).

Consider Harris and Lambert’s statement that ‘When we equate “leadership” with “leader”, we are immersed in “trait theory”: if only a leader possessed these certain traits, we would have good leadership’ (2003, p. 4). This highlights the need to be aware of the impact of definitions on our practices and knowledge. Furthermore, it is clear that translating such a term into other languages can cause confusion (Burdett and O’Donnell, 2016).

Fairman and Mackenzie (2014) develop a conceptual model that they named *Spheres of Teacher Leadership Action for Learning*, based on their qualitative case studies of seven schools in Maine, USA. They suggest that the term *teacher leader* may be ‘counterproductive’ if it is understood to mean ‘advancing the focus on school improvement and a shared accountability for the learning of all children’ (p. 1). This point needs bearing in mind, especially when studying teacher leadership in different cultures or contexts. Four issues arise. First, the term *teacher leader* implies a focus on the role of one person/teacher instead of enhancing collaboration. Second, although teacher leadership is an umbrella for many other terms, e.g. professional development coordinator, committee representative etc., using the single term *teacher leader* implies that there is only one role or position. Third, school structures may not have such a title or term. Fourth, although teacher leadership includes informal as well as formal roles (as will be discussed in the next section), the term *teacher leader* might fail to recognise voluntary contributions.

Many researchers use *teacher leader* and *leader teacher* interchangeably (Bosler and Bauman, 1992), while a few mention the difference between these terms. Use of *leader teacher* indicates the creation of a learning organisation in any sector, not only in education (Heifetz and Laurie, 2003), while a teacher leader is someone who still works in the classroom and practises leadership roles. Another term is *lead teacher*; Ali argues that ‘the concept of “lead teacher” subsumes all those roles and responsibilities associated with the notion of teacher as leadership’ (2014, p. 353). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) report that some teachers reject the title ‘leader’ as it indicates power, which has negative connotations, while ‘leadership’ means sharing power and leadership. They also contrast positional power, which is easily gained by one’s position

and the structure, with personal power, which is an individual's skill and ability to influence people regardless of his/her position.

Teacher leadership is well known among teachers who practise leadership in their classrooms. A few scholars identify students as the main followers of teachers who practise leadership (Augustsson and Boström, 2012). This implies that all teachers whose students follow them are leaders. Other scholars, in contrast, link teacher leadership to the education of colleagues, which indicates that the followers are other staff (Henning, 2006; Lowery-Moore, Latimer and Villate, 2016). If the teacher leader has formal power and authority, it may be easy to identify the colleagues who follow him/her. If the teacher leader is practising leadership informally, this may not be the case. Followers may be harder to identify and the composition of the group may change over time. 'Teachers could benefit from knowing more about practicing leadership. They are not always the formal leaders, nor do they always aspire to be, but they do influence. At any given time, leaders and followers may change or blend roles' (Anderson, 2004, p. 100). Another benefit of practising leadership is being able to 'develop into a learner-to-learner relationship where participants serve as leaders and followers at different times depending on their expertise' (Lovett, 2018, p. 62).

Based on the previous discussion, I raise another issue, namely, 'Are all people leaders?' This question has two aspects: first, can anyone practise leadership? And second, can everyone be a leader? Many scholars argue that anyone can practise leadership because leadership practices vary and they work at different levels (Muijs and Harris, 2003; Harris and Spillane, 2008; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2012). Being a leader requires mastering certain skills and being consistent in leadership practices. Furthermore, some scholars have claimed that teacher leadership indicates the capacity to practise leadership and to be a leader (Mullen and Jones, 2008; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2012; Levin and Schrum, 2016), yet do not assume that all teachers have to lead (Harris and Spillane, 2008). In other words, teacher leadership showed that teachers might go beyond their typical and normal duties according to their individual capabilities, abilities and skills.

The current study focused on clarifying how participants understood the concept of teacher leadership and avoided assumptions because it was conducted in Arabic; I found clarification essential to gain a better understanding of the teacher leadership concept. In addition, teachers need to be equipped and educated with a common understanding of how to deal with being a teacher leader and handle leadership roles.

### **Teacher Leadership Roles and Responsibilities**

Some researchers claim that the literature is unequivocal in describing the various roles teachers can play as leaders inside and outside their classrooms or schools (Lieberman

and Miller, 2005; Smylie and Eckert, 2018). However, the reviewed literature focused on instructional and managerial roles, and needed more investigation to explore and identify other roles teachers might assume to enhance student achievement and personality.

As already explained, teacher leadership is not a new concept; however, there is increased recognition of teacher leadership and the expansion of teachers' roles and contributions to schools' improvement. Teacher leadership is essential in order to cope with the changes teachers face in their profession. To prepare students to deal with these changes, teachers must expand their own abilities and assume greater leadership roles.

Many researchers argue that all teachers and teacher leaders' roles and responsibilities should focus more on learning and improvement of schools and student performance than on leading (York-Barr and Duke). Consistent with the various definitions of teacher leadership, many researchers have identified various teacher leadership roles (Frost and Harris, 2003; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Akert and Martin, 2012). In some cases, a specific 'teacher leader' role is expected when teacher leadership is mentioned; in others, the expectation is that teachers who have already adopted a formal managerial role will be representative teacher leaders. A further category for teacher leaders' role is one that enhances professional development and research roles. A fourth category is simply leadership exercised by teachers regardless of position or designation.

Some researchers have tried to categorise teacher leaders' roles. For example, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) identify three dimensions of teacher leadership roles: 1) students, 2) operational tasks and 3) decision-making. Likewise, York-Barr and Duke (2004) identify three major functions of teacher leadership: 1) managers, 2) curriculum leaders and 3) central to the process of re-culturing schools. These classifications are similar and both demonstrate the importance of teacher leadership and its role in change. However, it is clear that teacher leadership is related to teachers practising leadership. Therefore, these leadership roles should support them, not distract them from teaching and being with students. It is worth noting that these roles could be ever-expanding, especially with rapid changes in the world, e.g. new technologies.

Although some studies have tried to list leadership roles practised by teachers, Leithwood (2003) associates many formal designations with teacher leadership, including lead teacher, master teacher, department head, union representative, member of school governance council and mentor. Other studies add coach, academic coordinator, curriculum coordinator, professional development teacher and trainer (Killion and Harrison, 2006; Muijs and Harris, 2006; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Ali, 2014). It is notable that most of these roles are assigned formally to teachers. In contrast, it would be hard, maybe impossible, to list all the voluntary work done by teachers.

## **Formal vs informal teacher leadership**

The previous sections began to define terminology related to teacher leadership and showed that some of these terms can cause confusion. In addition to those terms (leadership, leaders, teacher leadership), other terms such as *informal*, *non-positional* and *non-formal* can also lead to confusion, particularly when used interchangeably (Muijs and Harris, 2006; Bangs and Frost, 2015). Other studies related to learning differentiate between formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Green's thesis (2016) summarises Danielson's opinion of formal, non-formal and informal teacher leaders. Danielson (2006) compares formal and informal teacher leaders, describing formal leadership positions as those created based on the need for specific skills and knowledge, e.g. coaches and department heads. Danielson refers to formal leaders who are specially appointed to specific positions: 'Informal teacher leaders, on the other hand, emerge organically through their own initiative and ultimately earn the trust and respect of others through hard work and experience'. Similarly, many authors have defined formal teacher leaders as those given official and common titles, generally selected by the principal and compensated either by additional salary or in exchange for a lighter teaching load. In contrast, informal teacher leaders are recognised by colleagues and school leaders for their contributions or for volunteering to support others by introducing new ideas and sharing expertise (Bartlett, 2004; Mihans, 2008; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014). Informal teacher leadership effectively fills such roles as these teachers can 'draw on diverse sources of power beyond formal authority' (Bowman, 2004, p. 187).

Grant (2006, p.525) presents a helpful four-zone model of teacher leadership as a result of research in South African schools. It focuses on instructional practices and professional development in and outside schools. Level 1 relates to the classroom; level 2 means working with other teachers; level 3 involves whole-school development; level 4 is beyond the school into the community. However, informal teacher leader roles vary according to teachers' expertise in almost every type of educational settings (York-Barr and Duke 2004), e.g., choosing textbooks, designing the new curriculum and buying resources for schools (Boyce and Bowers, 2018).

Levin and Schrum (2016) adopt a rather different three-fold classification, in which they list formal and informal teacher leadership practices in schools, and leadership practices outside schools (see Table 5, below). Their list is interesting as it includes social programmes and volunteer positions in religious organisations. It also contains a variety of leadership practices (e.g. hiring new staff, initiating family reading programmes and arranging social activities) that many schools might not encourage. These examples go beyond the paths and practices expected of teachers. They also go beyond the school walls. Different factors may support or inhibit these formal and informal roles, such as school culture, role clarity, principal and peer support and recognition (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Ross and Gray, 2006; Mokhele, 2016). This will be discussed in more

detail later in this chapter.

Table 5: *Examples of Formal and Informal Teacher Leadership Practices Inside and Outside Schools*

Formal Teacher Leadership in Schools	Informal Teacher Leadership in Schools	Teacher Leadership Outside Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving on the school improvement committee or leadership team</li> <li>• Assisting in hiring new staff</li> <li>• Overseeing the school website</li> <li>• Mentoring and coaching new teachers</li> <li>• Creating school-wide policies for grading, assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranging social programmes for faculty and staff</li> <li>• Encouraging voluntary service activities for students and teachers</li> <li>• Initiating a family reading programme at the school library</li> <li>• Supporting parental involvement activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading a scout group</li> <li>• Chairing a committee in a civic organisation</li> <li>• Leading in a religious organisation</li> <li>• Heading a funding event</li> <li>• Leading a sports team</li> </ul>

*Note:* Adapted from Levin and Schrum, 2016, p. 39

Gunter (2016) also offers a three-fold classification but this time the headings are *educational leadership*, *school leadership* and *leadership of schools* (see Table 6 below). *Educational leadership* refers to trained and certified professionals who may or may not work in schools, while *school leadership* is a term for accredited professionals who work for schooling and organisational purposes, e.g., planning, budgets and human resource management. This distinction is helpful because education does not occur only in schools these days, e.g. in the cases of online courses and home-schooling. Gunter's third element, *Leadership of Schools*, is not so obvious in the models previously mentioned in this chapter. It refers to 'political and economic elites outside of schools' (e.g. entrepreneurs and civil servants) who, Gunter claims, determine and control what *school leadership* can do.

Table 6: *Definitions of Educational Leadership, School Leaders and Leadership of Schools*

Educational Leadership	School Leadership	Leadership of Schools
Leadership is directly linked to educational purposes and practices. Trained and accredited educational professionals in schools and local authorities develop pedagogy and curriculum, with a focus on learning and achievement	Leadership is directly linked to organisational purposes (planning, human resource management, marketing, budgets). Trained and accredited educational professionals in schools and businesses (e.g. entrepreneurs, philanthropists, consultants) work on the organisational efficiency and effectiveness of schools to deliver data-driven outcomes from pedagogy and the curriculum	Those who work in schools (e.g. teachers, principals and children) may use titles and the language of leader, leading and leadership, but in reality, they tactically implement externally designed and regulated change. Power lies elsewhere, and leadership strategy is determined and controlled by political and economic elites outside of schools (e.g. entrepreneurs, philanthropists, consultants, government ministers and civil servants) who network with preferred elites in civil society

*Note:* Taken from Gunter, 2016, pp. 29–30

Most schools apply a hierarchical structure that separates roles and responsibilities and this may highlight a major obstacle in empowering teacher leadership (Galland, 2008). Although teachers’ work is based in classrooms, researchers recognise that their role has extended beyond the school walls, e.g., at the school level (with students, colleagues, head teachers) and the school community level (with parents, families, the school district personnel, consultants, resource people, and administrators (Mack, 2002; Huff, 2003; Du, 2007; Bangs and Frost, 2015; Boyaci and Oz, 2017). Fairman and Mackenzie (2012), in their qualitative case studies of seven Maine, USA, schools, identify nine spheres of teacher leadership action for learning and found that:

Teacher leadership emerged within many different contexts: individual and collective efforts; informal and formal actions; narrowly focused and broader school-wide improvement efforts; a school climate of isolation and mistrust or one of collegiality, shared vision and trust. (p. 238)

Another difference is that formal teacher leaders are usually compensated either by additional salary or in exchange for a lighter teaching load. Moreover, formal teacher leaders are generally selected by the principal and are also given a title according to the school structure. In contrast, informal teacher leaders usually volunteer and/or are recognised by their peers and administrators to lead new projects, supporting other teachers, introducing new ideas and promoting the mission of the school (Mullen and Jones, 2008; Kelley and Dikkers, 2016). Some scholars note that most of teacher leaders’ duties focus on teaching and learning rather than on school management (Muijs and Harris, 2006; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009). Yet, Moller *et al.* (2001) find that teacher leadership roles are uniquely dependent on the school context in which the teacher is working (as cited in Angelle and DeHart, 2011).

Previous studies indicate that most teachers who perform leadership roles do not see themselves as leaders, considering the principal or district supervisor the ‘leader’ whilst their leadership roles are seen as part of sharing expertise and collaboration (Angelle and Teague, 2014). Roles of teacher leadership documented in the literature are also presented as ‘sharing knowledge with colleagues, reflecting on work, engaging in action research, mentoring, possessing social consciousness, taking risks, nurturing relationships, encouraging professional growth, helping others with change, challenging the status quo, taking a stand for change’ (Angelle and DeHart, 2010, p. 5). Therefore, reviewing teacher leadership might require main keywords to facilitate building on previous findings and disseminating results.

Researchers have identified additional aspects of the teacher leadership role, such as undertaking action research (Frost and Durrant, 2003; Harris, 2005), initiating peer classroom observation (Harris, 2003) or contributing to the establishment of a collaborative culture in the school. The current study follows the concept that ‘the basic principle of teacher leadership is to accept that all teachers have leadership skills and a tendency to take the lead’ (Kılınç, Cemaloğlu and Savaş, 2015, p. 3). This claim might be acceptable as leadership can be identified in those following the motto ‘Lead from where you stand’ (Carver, 2016).

Some studies have listed the main roles of teacher-leaders and others have tried to categorise them. Muijs and Harris (2003) suggest that there are four visible and discrete dimensions of the teacher leadership role. These dimensions show how teacher leadership ‘*translate* the principles of school improvement into practice, *increase* teachers’ participation, *mediate* to establish a sense of ownership and *forge* strong relationships’ (p. 316).

Another study conducted by Uribe- Flórez *et al.* (2014, p. 7) highlights eight categories for teacher leaders’ roles and responsibilities:

- guide or facilitate a group,
- professional communication,
- change agent,
- knowledgeable of practices and/or content,
- data driven,
- have students in mind,
- management, and
- being a link between administration and teachers.

Angelle and DeHart (2011) analyse five themes derived from work on teacher leadership (educational role model, decision maker, visionary, designee and supra-practitioner) in order to develop a model containing four factors, namely Sharing Expertise (SE), Sharing Leadership (SL), Supra-Practitioner (SP), and Principal

Selection (PS). *Sharing Expertise* relates to pedagogical and classroom management and sharing these skills to bolster other teachers' leadership practices in school. *Sharing Leadership* describes teachers' willingness to engage in leadership and the opportunities principals provide to teachers. *Supra-Practitioner* refers to teachers' ability to go beyond their prescribed roles. *Principal Selection* indicates the hierarchical structure in principalships.

Table 7 (below) compares the different teacher leadership typologies provided by Muijs and Harris (2003), Angelle and DeHart (2011) and Uribe- Flórez *et al.* (2014). Some of their categories/dimensions are clearly the same (even though they use different words). Other links are more speculative. So, for example, all three typologies include a theme around practical skills. Muijs and Harris (2003) describe this as *translating the principles of school improvement into practice*, while Angelle and DeHart (2011) label it *Sharing Expertise*. Uribe- Flórez *et al.* (2014) use three phrases (*professional communication; knowledge or practices and content; students in mind*) that cover roughly the same ground. Similarly, what Muijs and Harris (2003) label *participative leadership*, Angelle and DeHart (2011) label *Sharing Leadership*. In Uribe- Flórez *et al.* (2014), the same concept is divided into *management and change agent*. Other points of comparison are more questionable. *Forging close relationships* (Muijs and Harris, 2003) and *guide and facilitate a group* (Uribe-Florez *et al.*, 2014) are clearly similar. Whether they link to *principal selection* (Angelle and DeHart, 2011) is not so certain. Finally, one element of Uribe- Flórez *et al.*, (2014)'s typology, *data driven*, seems to be missing from the other two models.

Table 7: *Comparison of Teacher Leadership Typologies Among Researchers*

Muijs and Harris (2003)	Angelle and DeHart (2011)	Uribe-Florez <i>et al.</i> (2014)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translating role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing Expertise</li> <li>• Supra-Practitioner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional communication</li> <li>• Knowledge of practices and content</li> <li>• Students in mind</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participative leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing Leadership</li> <li>• Supra-Practitioner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Change agent</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediating role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supra-Practitioner</li> <li>• Principal Selection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link between administrators and teachers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forging close relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal Selection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide and facilitate a group</li> <li>• Data driven</li> </ul>

It is important to recognise the various roles of teacher leadership to educate teachers and prepare them for these roles both inside and outside the classroom. Moreover,



before thinking of school improvements, teachers need to work on building their own capacity to influence others and articulate the changes needed. For example, they might need to develop their ability to work with adult learners and to facilitate cooperation to ensure targets are effectively met (Ali, 2014).

Another reason for the importance of recognising various roles is to provide the widest possible range of formal and informal opportunities. ‘Some of these opportunities may include teachers working together on matters such as curriculum, developing school improvement plans and visiting other schools’ (Ali, 2014, p. 358). There seems to be wide agreement in the literature that professional development programmes aimed at developing teacher leadership should include core teaching competencies such as content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Borko, Koellner and Jacobs, 2014; Struyve, Meredith and Gielen, 2014). However, the literature suggests that there should be greater emphasis on enhancing teacher leaders’ research or inquiry and reflective skills in order to help them develop as researchers and reflective practitioners (Snell and Swanson, 2000; O’Keeffe, 2015). Also noteworthy is the difference between teachers coordinating and leading research-based activities and teachers utilising research findings in their practices.

An important reason is improving school cultural conditions to facilitate teacher leadership, including a ‘school-wide focus on learning, inquiry, and reflective practice, encouragement for taking initiative, an expectation of teamwork and of sharing responsibility’ (Al-Zboon, 2016, p. 2). These factors will be discussed in the Conditions Affecting Teacher Leadership section later in this chapter. In addition, another reason is to understand the differences between school levels, as ‘elementary teachers are more likely than secondary teachers to possess prototypes that include traits and behaviours, and transformational leadership practices’ (Anderson, 2004, p. 111). Because teachers are required to differentiate teaching strategies to meet students’ needs at different school levels, it is essential that the teachers’ professional development needs are met and recognised.

Some studies have identified teacher leaders by a set of characteristics rather than roles. These characteristics include demonstrating a focus on student achievement, maintaining relationships and leading and managing change. Leithwood (2003) summarises the results from Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach’s (1999) study of six secondary school teachers’ perceptions of informal teacher leadership. The findings are grouped under four headings: 1) traits, e.g. quietness, humour, being a hard worker; 2) capacities, e.g. declarative knowledge, problem-solving ability; 3) practices, e.g. organising events, being on committees; and 4) outcomes, e.g. being respected by staff and students. Table 8 summarises the characteristics most frequently mentioned by the interviewees in the above study in each category. Some of the findings, such as the need for teacher leaders to be fair and hardworking, are unsurprising. Others, such as the need to be quiet, are unexpected. Moreover, some of the capacities that interviewees

highlighted, such as the need for declarative knowledge, are not mentioned in other studies. Declarative knowledge means ‘knowledge about specific aspects of the profession, e.g., knowledge about government education policy; knowledge about education in general; knowledge about the school, students and the community; knowledge about specific subjects; and knowledge about union issues’ (p. 107). Moreover, the teaching and learning practices that distinguish teacher leadership from other leadership characteristics seem to be absent.

Table 8: *Categories of Teachers’ Perceptions of Informal Teacher Leadership*

Traits	Capacities	Practices	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiet</li> <li>• Unassuming, soft-spoken</li> <li>• Mood</li> <li>• Values</li> <li>• People-oriented</li> <li>• Having a sense of humour</li> <li>• Hard-working</li> <li>• Appreciative toward others</li> <li>• Unselfish</li> <li>• Intelligent</li> <li>• Genuine</li> <li>• Humble</li> <li>• Energetic</li> <li>• Committed to the school and/or profession</li> <li>• Holding strong beliefs</li> <li>• Fair</li> <li>• Having a strong work ethic, a category which included being determined, not appearing to be ‘empire-building’, being a visionary and having high standards</li> <li>• Responsibility was discussed 34 times, steady and dependable</li> <li>• Physical characteristics: tall or big</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedural knowledge</li> <li>• Declarative knowledge</li> <li>• Relationships with staff</li> <li>• Problem-solving ability</li> <li>• Relationships with students</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Self-knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working administrative periods in the office</li> <li>• Being on committees</li> <li>• Organising specific events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gained the respect of staff and students</li> <li>• Activities involving the leader were invariably implemented well</li> </ul>

*Note:* Adapted from Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach’s study (1999) as cited in Leithwood (2003)

In the same vein, Jackson, Burrus, Bassett and Roberts (2010) compared four previous studies of teacher leaders and identified seven common characteristics, as shown in Table 9 (below). These are work ethic, teamwork, leadership, openness, positive effect

and risk-taking. However, the categories they mention are too general and are not accompanied by clear definitions, e.g., the leadership trait is strongly interconnected with the teamwork trait.

Table 9: *The Teacher Leader's Characteristics*

Characteristics	Studies
Work ethic: being committed, task-oriented and passionate	(York-Barr and Duke, 2004)
Teamwork: building positive relationships with all stakeholders, communicating effectively and building trust	(Danielson, 2006; Killion and Harrison, 2006)
Leadership: engaging and supporting others to improve	(Bascia, 1996)
Openness: being open-minded, creative, and exploring and using inquiry to develop practices	(York-Barr and Duke, 2004)
Vision: identifying opportunities and seeking them out instead of waiting for them, positively influencing beyond the walls of their classrooms	(Danielson, 2006)
Positive effect: being optimistic, enthusiastic, confident and willing to collaborate	(Danielson, 2006)
Risk-taking: not minding if they fail or are criticised	(Danielson, 2006)

*Note:* Listed by Jackson, Burrus, Bassett and Roberts (2010, pp. 8–9)

Regarding the personal traits of teacher leaders, many studies have followed the five-factor model of personality commonly referred to as the Big Five in personality literature. This model provides an integrated framework to describe and measure personality according to five principal domains: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experiences (Xu *et al.*, 2014; Phaneuf, Boudrias, Rousseau, and Brunelle, 2016). Other researchers explore other personality variables, e.g. locus of control and extraversion/introversion (Badri *et al.*, 2017).

Another study conducted by Killion and Harrison (2006) classifies the characteristics of effective teacher leaders into six main categories (Table 10): beliefs, teaching expertise, coaching skills, relationship skills, content expertise and leadership skills. The authors' reference to *effective teacher leaders* suggests there are levels of teacher leader performance, some more effective than others. However, many of the traits in Table 10 (e.g. has moral purpose, reflects on their own practice) are relevant to all teachers, not just those who practise teacher leadership. In addition, both formal and informal teacher leaders can apply each trait mentioned below; for example, teachers might help and support other teachers to develop their skills. This might be planned by teachers or just happen during their day-to-day routines. Moreover, they are not only innate qualities but can be learned or developed. In spite of these differences among researchers in labelling the personality traits, it is important to explore the related characteristics' impact on teachers' practices.

Table 10: *Characteristics of Effective Teacher Leaders*

Beliefs	Teaching Expertise	Coaching Skills	Relationship Skills	Content Expertise	Leadership Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is willing to learn</li> <li>• Has a passion for ongoing development and learning</li> <li>• Holds the attitude that everyone is important</li> <li>• Believes in the capacity of others to grow and develop</li> <li>• Does not assume to have 'The Answer'</li> <li>• Is committed to continuous improvement</li> <li>• Has moral purpose</li> <li>• Can let go of being responsible for another person's behaviours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is skilled in instructional planning</li> <li>• Has strong classroom organisation and management</li> <li>• Fluent in multiple methods of delivering instruction</li> <li>• Uses multiple methods for student assessment</li> <li>• Demonstrates success in their work as classroom teachers</li> <li>• Articulates their practice</li> <li>• Reflects on their own practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands and applies of knowledge about adult development</li> <li>• Listens skilfully</li> <li>• Communicates effectively</li> <li>• Uses effective questioning skills</li> <li>• Understands and employs a specific reflection process</li> <li>• Diagnoses the needs of teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desires to be part of a team</li> <li>• Works effectively with teachers and principals</li> <li>• Builds trusting relationships</li> <li>• Is respected by peers</li> <li>• Has patience for the learning process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possesses and applies appropriate, in-depth content knowledge</li> <li>• Uses extensive research and theory to support instructional decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands and applies knowledge about change</li> <li>• Communicates the vision of the school</li> <li>• Aligns work with school goals</li> <li>• Uses data to drive decisions</li> <li>• Engages others in developing plans for improvement</li> <li>• Maintains a productive culture</li> </ul>

*Note:* Taken from Killion and Harrison (2006, p. 99)

A few of these traits might be debatable and difficult to measure, e.g., being passionate. 'Passion has been defined in many different ways in psychology and practice, but overwhelmingly it is viewed as positive, involving things that people love or that they find pleasure in' (Cardon, 2008, p. 81). Interestingly, Cardon builds a model to facilitate the contagion of one's own passion to others. Although this model is built for entrepreneurs, it can be applied in teaching contexts, especially now that some scholars have introduced 'teacher entrepreneurship' and begun studying related factors (Oplatka, 2014; Neto, Rodrigues and Panzer, 2017).

Moreover, some major categories are not included, e.g. personal traits like sense of humour, although it is mentioned in other studies (Leithwood, 2003; Schmerler *et al.*, 2009). Although the trait mentioned by Leithwood known as 'declarative knowledge' is not found in other studies, it is equally as important as other traits because it helps teachers and educators know and protect their rights. All these studies give examples of effective teacher characteristics that can help identify teacher leaders. In addition, selecting specific categories might guide teacher preparation programmes generally and teacher leadership empowering and supporting programmes specifically. Additionally, Du (2007) mentions the importance of developing teacher preparation and training

programmes which ‘develop beliefs among pre-service teachers that collaboration is an integral part of their future work and that leadership is not a privilege for a few’ (p. 204).

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) listed 21 types of ‘responsibilities’ (Table 11) based on a meta-analysis of 300 studies on effective school leadership over the last 35 years. Each responsibility is identified as having a positive correlation with student achievement. These responsibilities were all found necessary, in different degrees, to support day-to-day administration of a school. This list is provided here because of its results, which show the impact of these responsibilities on student achievement. Moreover, teacher leadership responsibilities have evolved, which indicates that teachers should be given more opportunities to support school leadership and the responsibilities mentioned in this list could offer new insight.

Table 11: *The 21 Responsibilities of School Leaders Which Correlate to Student Academic Achievement*

- 
1. Affirmation
  2. Change Agent
  3. Contingent Rewards
  4. Communication
  5. Culture
  6. Discipline
  7. Flexibility
  8. Focus
  9. Ideals/Beliefs
  10. Input
  11. Intellectual Stimulation
  12. Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
  13. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
  14. Monitoring/ Evaluating
  15. Optimizer
  16. Order
  17. Outreach
  18. Relationships
  19. Resources
  20. Situational Awareness
  21. Visibility

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*Note:* From Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005

One last point to note in this section is that many studies have explored teachers’ self-awareness, self-regulation and self-efficacy, as most teachers do not consider themselves teacher leaders (Angelle and Teague, 2014). In addition, their colleagues may not recognise their roles if they volunteer and may not identify teacher leadership characteristics. Furthermore, researchers have emphasized that teachers need to learn how to develop teacher leadership skills and knowledge, and reflect on their practices. They need to understand who they are, recognise the importance of their role and reflect on their role to be able to embrace the expectations as a teacher leader (Kelley, 2011; O’Keeffe, 2015).

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

The UNESCO Education for All (EFA) Monitoring Report (2014) states, ‘An education system is only as good as its teachers. Unlocking their potential is essential to enhancing the quality of learning’ (as cited in Bangs and Frost, 2015, p. 1). For more than 30 years, researchers have studied teacher leadership and its links to school effectiveness. Many authors (Frost and Harris, 2003; Harris and Muijs, 2002; Muijs and Harris, 2006; York-Barr and Duke, 2004) have reviewed previous studies of teacher leaders’ impact on school improvement, school effectiveness and the achievements of their colleagues and students. It has been claimed that developing teacher leadership can bring positive change to a school by converting the school into a place of adult professional learning as well as student learning (Schmerler *et al.*, 2009). Teacher leaders are said to have a positive impact and value on students, peers, and stakeholders (Granville-Chapman, 2012).

Having said this, York-Barr and Duke (2004), in their famous systematic review, raise the concern that most studies are purely descriptive and rely on untriangulated data. Over a decade later, Wenner and Campbell (2017), in their systematic review, found that these concerns still exist. Moreover, they state in the results of their study that no research in the literature they review examines the impact of teacher leaders on student learning. However, they acknowledge that some research links overall school leadership and student learning. Therefore, teacher leadership continues to face challenges. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) state, ‘Although progress has been made in recognizing that the principal’s job is about creating a culture in which principals and teachers lead together, our experience is that this perspective is not widespread’ (p. 84).

Despite the positive features attributed to teacher leadership by some researchers (Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014; Harris, 2005; Shumate *et al.*, 2005), the transition from teacher to teacher leader can lead to confusion and even guilt as teachers let go of earlier role conceptions (Carver, 2016). ‘In their efforts to act as leaders and influence change, teacher leaders report encountering resistance and isolation from their peers and even administrative leaders when they question the status quo, challenge existing practices, and assume authority beyond their classroom responsibilities’ (Carver, 2016, p. 3). It is worth bearing in mind the dearth of studies that examine the impact of teacher leadership on teachers, themselves, and how teachers utilise their leadership practices.

Despite some researchers’ insistence that teacher leadership offers major benefits to the school, teachers and students who learn there (Harris, 2005; York-Barr and Duke, 2004), Murphy highlights that ‘empirical evidence is limited in quantity’ (as cited in Harris, 2005, p. 207). In addition, these studies include some evidence of the negative impact of teacher leadership, at least in the form of linked opportunity costs. Murphy’s study provides an important opportunity to explore the impact, if any, of teacher leadership

from teachers' perspectives. In addition, this study explored to what extent, if at all, teachers' perspectives towards the impact of teacher leadership differed and what factors affected teacher leadership practices.

### **FACTORS INFLUENCING TEACHER LEADERSHIP**

Although there is a lack of empirical studies on the importance of teacher leadership and its effect on student achievement, many researchers have described teacher leadership as successful and stated that it grows in cultures based on trust, support and learning (Frost, 2011; Bangs and MacBeath, 2012; Meristo and Eisenschmidt, 2014; Mokhele, 2016). York-Barr and Duke (2004) list the main factors affecting teacher leadership, as follows: supportive culture, supportive principal and colleagues, time, resources and development opportunities. Similarly, Muijs and Harris report that:

a range of conditions needed to be in place in schools for teacher leadership to be successful, including a culture of trust and support, structures that supported teacher leadership but were clear and transparent, strong leadership ... and engagement in innovative forms of professional development (Muijs and Harris, 2003, p. 1).

Before discussing some of the main factors affecting teacher leadership that were selected for the current study based on the theory developed by York-Barr and Duke (2004), it is important to acknowledge that even though everyone faces obstacles, 'the willingness to climb those walls and the ability to find ways to do so are the real measure of a leader' (Bowman, 2004, p. 92). Some conditions might be seen by some teachers as obstacles, while others see the same conditions as types of support.

#### ***School culture***

Brooks and Normore (2010) summarise 12 school-culture norms which might affect schools' improvement, as identified by Saphier and King (1985). These norms are: '(a) collegiality; (b) experimentation; (c) high expectations; (d) trust and confidence; (e) tangible support; (f) reaching out to the knowledge bases; (g) appreciation and recognition; (h) caring, celebration, and humour; (i) involvement in decision making; (j) protection of what's important; (k) traditions; and (l) honest, open communication' (p. 58). Similarly, Roby (2011) asked 195 teachers to assess the culture of their schools using a school culture review scale in order to identify some of the norms mentioned previously. Having these norms categorised or listed helps researchers and practitioners sustain and develop positive cultures and focus on the main areas to enhance personnel leadership practices and sharing of leadership. Some of these norms might be expected, e.g., open communication, while others might be less obvious e.g., humour.

School culture can be thought of as working conditions. Berry, Smylie and Fuller (2008, p. 7) summarise the main working conditions that affect teachers. These include the facilities; infrastructure and equipment; workload according to the structure and collegial arrangements; sociological components; political features; cultural dimensions, e.g. values and traditions; psychological and personal issues; and educational policies such as teacher education and curriculum. Note that it might be difficult to discuss each condition in detail according to individuals' needs and perspectives. For example, mention of facilities might include the type of staff rooms and whether each teacher can work in such a place or would prefer a private room, which might be difficult to provide for all teachers. Alternatively, even having covered car parking might be essential in some countries, especially in the heat in the MENA region. All favourable working conditions could not be listed in this changing world.

Berry, Smylie and Fuller (2008) claim that there are alternative ways to conceptualise different aspects of teachers' working conditions besides those traditionally mentioned in sociological and organisational research. These ways could be 'in terms of their psychological and political properties, so one might think about and define working conditions in terms of concepts such as autonomy and self-determinism, certainty and ambiguity, coherence and fragmentation, flexibility and rigidity, and stability and turbulence' (pp. 33–34).

With the continuous changes, there are increasing uncertainties. Teacher preparation programmes and school design should differ to suit the different needs of learners. Schools should 'focus on flexibility and continuous improvement to adapt to and innovate in increasingly ambiguous and turbulent environments. For example, virtual teaching and learning' (Berry, Smylie and Fuller, 2008, p. 34).

### *Time*

Designing an organisational structure that allows enough time for staff to meet all the requirements and cope with them as they change might be difficult. Teachers in general are required to utilise their time in teaching and learning. Research findings demonstrate the importance of collaborating with others and sharing experiences, and thus structure should include collegial arrangements. Berry, Smylie and Fuller (2008) mention that most of these studies are qualitative. Findings indicate that when teachers do joint work, it helps them develop new ideas. In addition, 'Common planning time in the context of teacher induction programmes had the greatest influence on reducing novice attrition rates' (Ibid).



In the same study, Berry, Smylie and Fuller (2008) highlight that ‘While teachers may report that there is time to collaborate, the actual content of what they do during their joint work is important’ (p. 8). In other words, enquiries should be made about how much time teachers spent on different tasks and whether this was time well-spent. Was there a difference in time spent planning, serving as critical friends, developing new strategies or organising school assemblies? The quality of some activities, e.g. time spent organising an assembly, might have been underestimated. In my opinion, teachers need to plan for school activities like any other lesson, i.e. with clear objectives and a method to evaluate the impact. The objectives of each activity should be identified, and teachers should provide diverse opportunities for students, eventually creating a learning experience for everyone.

Furthermore, teachers usually work on school-related activities outside of the regular school day. Researchers have begun to document that teachers are working longer hours than ever before. Some of this additional time may be compensated, e.g. for grading papers, depending on the country and its policies. In addition, there is a misconception about the shortened workday and workweek due to the redistribution of the workload. ‘As teaching becomes a more complex job in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers claim they need more time to learn new skills and collaborate with their colleagues in figuring out what works best for the diverse students they teach’ (Berry, Smylie and Fuller, (2008), p. 9). Lack of time seems reasonably connected with the stresses and difficulties teacher leaders reported in these roles. These issues are ‘critical to consider in assessing the role that “time” plays in framing teacher working conditions and their impact on teacher retention and effectiveness’ (Berry, Daughtrey and Wieder, 2010, p. 4).

Teachers are also required to do administrative tasks and paperwork as part of their workload, although researchers have found these requirements contribute to teacher dissatisfaction and withdrawal from the profession. Studies exploring teachers’ perspectives toward paperwork claim that ‘Teachers spent their time on test preparation and paperwork that did little to assist them in serving students’ (Berry, Smylie and Fuller, 2008, p. 29).

### ***School principal and colleagues’ support***

Another factor which might affect teacher leadership is the school principal and the support of colleagues. Studies have shown that teacher leadership can only be successful if supported by school leadership (Harris and Muijs, 2002; Angelle and DeHart, 2011). Although teachers can practise leadership roles in all situations, the literature suggests they are more likely to be successful and considered part of the school culture if supported by the principal and school leaders. ‘Teachers who were given the

opportunity to share in leading by the principal gained values and beliefs of selfless and democratic work for the good of the school' (Angelle and DeHart, 2011, p. 145).

Surveying 116 teachers, Smylie (1992) found that the principal–teacher relationship had a statistically significant effect on a teacher's willingness to participate in both curricular and instructional decisions and in general administrative decisions. The principal's positive relationship is required for teacher leadership to make a difference to school improvement (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Angelle and Teague, 2014). These relationships can be improved if teachers have a clear job description and procedures for leadership roles.

In addition to effective communication between principals, teachers and teacher leaders, the teacher leaders in Borchert's study (2009) highlighted the importance of a job description that provided details about the required tasks: 'the analysis of data, goal setting, and how to communicate within their departments' (p. 106). Because of the complexity of leadership in this century, it should come as no surprise that a principal's support gives rise to enthusiasm amongst teacher leaders. The principal's support should include identifying the teachers' strengths and expertise, providing opportunities, selecting the right person for the task, building a positive culture in which teachers are not afraid to try new things, distributing leadership roles and involving the team in decision-making.

This relationship is dynamic and affects both parties. Anderson (2004) discusses three types of principal-teacher leader relationship (*Buffered*, *Contested* and *Interactive*) and their impact on school improvement and culture. These types vary in nature, from the principal being isolated by teacher leaders, the principal being opposed to teacher leaders, or the principal distributing tasks and sharing decision-making (interactive). However, Anderson gives examples which indicates that, in many cases, teacher leaders can influence principals and change the type of relationship they share.

Regarding a colleague's relationship with teacher leaders, ironically, when classroom teachers do embrace leadership opportunities in their schools or school districts, fellow teachers often chastise them for exhibiting a hunger for importance or a thirst for control. Colleagues might feel jealous or refuse to cooperate with teachers who are new to leadership positions (Leblanc and Shelton, 1997). Some of these feelings are normal and to be expected, but they can be negative and act as barriers. A teacher in one study was so consistently antagonised by her peers after she was given some authority in a new coaching position that she joked, 'I have to wear a bullet-proof vest to those [eighth-grade] meetings' (Margolis and Doring, 2012, p. 300).

Unconsciously, teachers might fear taking leadership roles because the 'essence of leadership lies in the capacity to deliver disturbing news and raise difficult questions in a way that moves people to take up the message without killing the messenger' (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002, p. 74). Teachers have different ways of dealing with these thoughts,

and some change jobs as a result. Although many studies have reported findings related to principals and colleagues, other types of relationships might be important and, therefore, need investigating. For example, teacher relationships with parents and students might be more challenging than those with colleagues.

### *Professional development*

Professional development is as critical in education as in many other sectors (Darling-Hammond, 2017). There is agreement that teachers are facing many challenges in this century, e.g. continuous development of technologies (Riel and Becker, 2008). Many studies emphasise the role of teacher leadership in enhancing instructional and pedagogical practices and sharing new ideas. However, few studies of professional development cover all possible teacher leadership contributions, e.g., their role in buying resources, planning school assemblies and other activities. In addition, the literature is less clear about making distinctions in the roles that teachers enact for themselves.

General comments from teacher leaders about how they learnt new roles by practising them with a 'sink or swim' attitude have raised questions about the effectiveness of current teacher preparation programmes and professional development (Muijs, Chapman, Armstrong, (2013). Another, possibly related, query was about teacher leadership practices: Should teacher leadership be part of teacher development programmes, or should teachers be specially trained to become teacher leaders?

Wenner and Campbell (2017), within their systematic review, discuss the importance of different types of professional development, how practical and relevant this development is to teachers in their context, and how it builds on the teachers' prior knowledge. In this context, the Teacher Leader Model Standards represent a major development in the field (Berg, Carver and Mangin, 2014). Importantly, the need to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach (Bush, 2018) is also highlighted.

Teacher leadership can be fostered through professional development by increasing confidence, building expertise and providing opportunities to increase responsibility for school-wide leadership. Encouraging teacher leadership leads to both individual and organisational benefits that can influence student learning (Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014). It offers individuals greater opportunities to learn from one another based on the concept that everyone can practise leadership according to their own expertise, while also enabling the organisation to capitalise on multiple sources of expertise and experience. All these professional development opportunities should be linked to the context in which the individual works and to his/her demographic characteristics.

### *Demographic characteristics*

Angelle and DeHart's (2011) conducted a quantitative study titled 'Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Leadership: Examining Differences by Experience, Degree and Position' during the course of two administrations in 43 schools in seven US states. They found significant differences in teacher leadership 'between elementary school teachers and middle/high school teachers, teachers with a bachelor's degree and teachers with graduate degrees, formal teacher leaders and teachers in no leadership position' (p. 141). Specifically, elementary teachers showed significant results in Supra-Practitioner activities such as coming in early, staying late, and taking on extra responsibilities. Aliakbari and Sadeghi's later findings agree. They found 'significant differences in teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership practice with reference to their educational degree and the level they taught. However, teachers' age, gender, and years of teaching experience did not appear as significant factors (Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014, p. 1).

Not many studies have explored teacher leadership with respect to gender. This might be because of the assumption that both genders have the same rights and leadership is part of equality. In studying teacher leadership 'prototypes', Leithwood and Jantzi (1997), as cited in Anderson (2004), describe three demographic characteristics found in their study. They state that:

Women teachers are more likely than men teachers to possess leader prototypes, which include female traits, and behaviours, and transformational leadership practices. Younger and less experienced teachers are likely to possess leader prototypes, which include transformational leadership practices. In addition, Elementary teachers are more likely than secondary teachers to possess prototypes that include traits and behaviours, and transformational leadership practices. (p. 111)

The mentioned factors should only be investigated in context in order to understand the social impact on the findings. Teacher leadership has always been thought of as a culturally sensitive concept (Boyce and Bowers, 2018). In Li's study (2014) titled 'The Culture of Teacher Leadership: A Survey of Teachers' Views in Hong Kong Early Childhood Settings', kindergarten/preschool teachers on the senior management team were asked to complete a questionnaire concerning various aspects of leadership. Li (2014) reports that factor analysis was unable to replicate the clear patterns found in Western countries, which broadly differentiated between transactional and transformational styles of leadership. Instead, a mix of styles was more often reported. This is an example of how findings can differ according to the context.

Likewise, in his study conducted in Pakistan, Ali (2014) claims that:

It is imperative to problematize the 'for-granted' notion of teacher leadership in a context like Pakistan where one's right to become a leader in the society or inside school is not judged by an individual's ability and qualification to

perform certain tasks, but rather considerations such as gender, race, cast, kinship, and so forth, and other social influences drive such decisions. (p. 353)

This point might play out differently in other contexts; for instance, the GCC countries give priority to their own citizens, rather than expatriate workers, when selecting staff for leadership positions (Romanowski and Nasser, 2010; Al-Fadala, 2015).

Another example comes from Turkey. According to Ozcetin (2013), as cited in Boyaci and Oz (2017), school managers who tried to support teacher leadership faced financial difficulties, passive teachers, low family support for schools, emotional difficulties, time management problems and low vision. Moreover, school managers emphasised the courage, sense of entrepreneurship and positive characteristics of teachers and their working environment. These examples show the importance of studying the context and the culture when examining teacher leadership in different countries.

Many studies highlight the negative impact of borrowing educational policies and programmes from Western countries for use in Arab and other countries. Dr Khalifa AlSuwaidi compares borrowed educational practices to ‘a penguin in the desert’. He explains how these foreign elements are imposed on Arab communities without scrutiny, analysis or evaluation and argues they lack compatibility with Arabic culture, as cited in Romanowski, Alkhateeb and Nasser (2018). Therefore, after the theories and conceptual frameworks underpinning the current study have been explained, the literature review will end by exploring teacher leadership specifically in Arab countries.

## **THEORETICAL BASIS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP**

In their systematic review, Wenner and Campbell (2017) identify more than 25 different theories studied by researchers to conceptualise teacher leadership (Table 12 below). It is important to note that many other theories are not in the list. For example, the social exchange theory of leadership (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005), the leader–member exchange theory (Runhaar, Konermann and Sanders, 2013) and the systems leadership theory (Boylan, 2016) are missing. This section reviews several theories and concepts in order to position the current study appropriately and identify the conceptual frameworks which will be followed here. These theories have been selected because of their connection to the research questions. Additionally, I tried to select theories that were linked to teacher leadership’s four phases of evolution (see below).

Table 12: Wenner and Campbell's List of Theories Cited in Literature

Theory	Authors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory</li> <li>• Bethune's Founding Principles</li> <li>• Boundary Crossing</li> <li>• Contemporary Planning Theory for Adult and Continuing Education</li> <li>• Democratic/Constructivist Leadership</li> <li>• Distributed Leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friedman (2011)</li> <li>• Watson (2007)</li> <li>• Pegg (2010)</li> <li>• Westfall-Rudd (2011)</li> <li>• Shiu, Chrispeels, and Doerr (2004); Gonzales (2004)</li> <li>• Anderson (2012); Chamberland (2009); Gigante and Firestone (2008); Grant (2009); Hands (2012); Harris and Townsend (2007); Hoang (2008); Muijs and Harris (2006); Supovitz (2008); Vernon-Dotson and Floyd (2012)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecological Policy Analysis</li> <li>• Friere's Theory of Critical Consciousness</li> <li>• Giddens' Structure and Agency</li> <li>• Gordon's Model of Instructional Leadership</li> <li>• Lave and Wenger's Sociocultural Teacher Learning Models</li> <li>• Mental Models</li> <li>• Micropolitical Theory</li> <li>• New Cultural Theory</li> <li>• Organizational Leadership Theory</li> <li>• Organizational Role Theory</li> <li>• Parallel Leadership</li> <li>• Resilience</li> <li>• Sensemaking in Cognition</li> <li>• Social Networks</li> <li>• Teacher Subject-Matter Knowledge</li> <li>• Theories of Power</li> <li>• Transformational/Transactional Leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Margolis (2012)</li> <li>• Bradley-Levine (2012)</li> <li>• Hoang (2008)</li> <li>• Margolis and Huggins (2012)</li> <li>• Margolis and Doring (2012)</li> <li>• Shiu et al. (2004)</li> <li>• Brosky (2011)</li> <li>• Scribner and Bradley-Levine (2010)</li> <li>• Scribner and Bradley-Levine (2010)</li> <li>• Gordin (2010)</li> <li>• Chew and Andrews (2010)</li> <li>• Yonezawa et al. (2011)</li> <li>• Hoang (2008)</li> <li>• Margolis (2012)</li> <li>• Hoang (2008)</li> <li>• Anderson (2012); Podjasek (2009)</li> <li>• Adams and Gamage (2008); Robinson (2009); Siers and Gong (2012)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wenger's Communities of Practice</li> <li>• York-Barr and Duke's Dimensions of Practice</li> <li>• York-Barr and Duke's Teacher Leadership for Student Learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edge and Mylopoulos (2008)</li> <li>• Hanuscin et al. (2012)</li> <li>• Fairman and Mackenzie (2012)</li> </ul>

*Note:* From Wenner and Campbell, (2017, p. 16)

*Note:* Many authors (e.g., Margolis, 2012; Scribner and Bradley-Levine, 2010) used multiple theories to inform their work.

Researchers have suggested that teacher leadership has grown through four waves (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Pounder, 2006). In the first wave, teachers were assigned formal managerial roles, e.g. head teacher, master teacher and performed management tasks. The second wave was the creation of instructional leadership roles, e.g. curriculum leader. However, the third wave was more about linking teaching and leadership. In this wave, teacher leadership is seen as a process rather than a position

(Pounder, 2006). The fourth wave of teacher leadership, transformational leadership, is guided by the third wave's transformational characteristics (Pounder, 2006).

Many scholars have defined teacher leadership according to their position or their school's structure. Previous studies have used various terms to describe teacher leadership contributions, such as '*leading from behind*' (Anderson, 2005), '*leading from below*' (Boylan, 2016) and '*leading from the middle*' (Naylor, Gkolia and Brundrett, 2006). There are many differences between these concepts, which might lead to differences in practice. In the current study, the strongest claim might be of leading from 'where you stand', given that teacher leadership is dynamic and not a rigid, fixed role.

It is worth noting that the studies reviewed so far do not mention managerial skills directly nor use the term *teacher managers*. They discuss positional leadership, e.g., head teacher and coach, and non-positional teacher leadership. This is surprising because teacher leadership evolved from a first phase in which teachers engaged in managerial tasks and/or in the formal organisational hierarchy (Pounder, 2006). Bolden (2004) is a notable exception. He claims that managerial skills are important to sustain leadership results. He asserts that management is just as vital as leadership and that teacher leaders should be doing managerial tasks because this helps schools the most.

Management might have negative connotations. 'The term "management" is often used in relation to an organisational hierarchy, with those occupying higher (management) positions in the hierarchy having more power and responsibility than those lower down the (management) hierarchy' (Connolly, James and Fertig, 2019, p. 3). This perspective is linked to delegating and sharing responsibilities. Connolly, James and Fertig (2019) highlight that 'Even the act of assigning the responsibility for the functioning of a system to another person, which is central to our sense of understanding the essence of management, is an influencing act and therefore a leadership act'.

Teacher leadership is derived from many theories and generally indicates positive impact. Although the purpose of the current study is not to compare theories, it is important to explain the conceptual frameworks underpinning it. To do this, four theories were selected and they are reviewed in this section. The first is *instructional leadership*, which is linked to the second wave of teacher leadership. The second is *distributed leadership* (i.e. selecting teachers and allocating leadership roles according to the level of teachers' managerial, leadership or instructional experiences), which is linked to the first and second waves of teacher leadership. The third theory is *York-Barr and Duke's theory of teacher leadership actions*, which is linked to the third wave. The fourth theory is *transformational leadership*, which is linked to the fourth wave.

With the increasing emphasis on student assessment and achievement, teachers are expected to increase student achievement and improve teaching and learning. 'Historically under the purview of the principal but increasingly including teachers, instructional leadership expressly targets curricular and instructional quality' (Reeves

and Lowenhaupt, 2016, p. 177). Pellicer and Anderson (1995) conceptualise teacher leadership using the instructional leadership theory, and they highlight that ‘Instructional leadership does not necessarily begin and end with the principal. Rather, instructional leadership must come from teachers if schools are to improve and teaching is to achieve professional status’ (cited in Muijs and Harris, 2003, p. 441). Teachers’ instructional leadership practices involve participating in decisions related to curriculum and assessment, coaching and providing professional development. All this is relevant to teacher leadership as it reflects teaching practices. However, teacher leadership can include more than just instructional activities, as many teachers volunteer for tasks that are not related directly to teaching, such as organising events and assemblies.

Another common theory used as a basis of teacher leadership is distributed leadership. In their systematic review, Wenner and Campbell (2017) show that 19% of the studies they reviewed used distributed leadership theory to frame their research. However, they reveal that previous studies seemed to define teacher leadership slightly differently and that ‘There was quite a bit of variety in the foci of the studies’ (p. 28).

Scholars have reported that distributed leadership focuses on leadership practice considerably more than on leaders or structures. While other theories view leadership as a product of individuals’ knowledge and skills, this perspective explains leadership as the interactions between people and their situations. Moreover, researchers who liken teacher leadership to distributed leadership indicate that ‘All teachers have the potential to contribute to leading organisational development and change’ (Frost and Harris, 2003, p. 480). Researchers have also begun to produce evidence regarding the benefits of distributed leadership, which could help school leaders move away from micromanagement of staff and towards developing their teachers’ capacity (Bangs and MacBeath, 2012; Bangs and Frost, 2015; Goksoy, 2016). It is important to note that there may be confusion between shared and distributed leadership. After reviewing previous research, Goksoy (2016) summarises the differences as follows:

Shared leadership practice is not related to the knowledge and skills of only one leader, but a participative perspective in which individuals and situations interact with each other. The shared leadership approach is related to the participation of many individuals in leadership activities.... While distributed leadership is distributing leadership practices. In this leadership style, the leader and his/her followers interact. (pp. 297–298)

In the current study, shared leadership is when many individuals participate in leadership formally and informally and might not even be noticed or recognised, while distributed leadership is based on leaders’ distribution of leadership roles or activities. Some researchers have claimed that the distributed perspective recognises the work of all individuals who practised leadership, whether or not they are formally selected (Bond and Hargreaves, 2014). This claim is debatable, as leadership practices vary according to individuals’ skills and abilities. In addition, it is difficult to recognise what is unidentified.



The last point deserves mention, as distributed leadership might be studied using other terms. Hopkins and Higham (2007) argue that distributed leadership could be extended to system leadership. One of the several meanings of system leadership, as Boylan (2016) defines it, is ‘Leadership in the system beyond the leader’s own organizational home’ (p. 12). Although Hopkins and Higham claim that system leadership is based on distributed leadership, they do not present strong evidence and their claim might be questionable. In addition, Boylan’s definition posits that system leadership might be linked to instructional leadership.

The third theory to be discussed in this section is York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) theory of action for teacher leadership. There are seven components in their framework. These are shown in Figure 3 (below) and described as follows:

The first three serve as the foundation characteristics of teacher leaders, the type of leadership work engaged in by teacher leaders, and the conditions that support the work of teacher leaders. The next three components suggest the path by which teachers lead to affect student learning. These components identify the means by which teachers lead, the targets of their leadership influence, and the intermediary outcomes of changes in teaching and learning practices. Student learning, the seventh component, completes the theory of action. (York-Barr and Duke, 2004, p. 289)

Many researchers, including Fairman and Mackenzie (2012; 2014), have used this model in their studies. This theory also outlines the conditions that support teacher leadership and clarifies the different targets and outcomes. The previous sections followed themes related to this framework, e.g., teacher leaders’ characteristics. The next section shows what conditions support or inhibit teacher leadership, what the main roles are and whether these conditions differ according to the context or culture.



Figure 3. Teacher leadership for student learning: Conceptual framework (Taken from York-Barr and Duke, 2004, p. 289)

The fourth theory is transformational leadership. Shields, Dollarhide and Young (2017) argue that two different terms, transformational and transformative, are confusingly used as though they were synonyms. ‘Transformational leadership focuses on the four major organizational dimensions of setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional programme, while Transformative Leadership has been more broadly and explicitly focused on addressing inequity and promoting justice in education’ (p. 2). Pounder’s (2006) study shows that teacher leaders employ transformational leadership qualities in the classroom that lead to the perception that they are exemplary teachers. It is possible that they may not even be aware of these qualities. In my opinion, this theory is linked to instructional and professional development practices because it is linked to classrooms and teacher relationships with students and colleagues.

Understanding the theories behind teacher leadership is important because this knowledge arms educators and teachers with effective ways to enhance it. Some researchers have seen capacity-building as relevant to talent management and innovation (Harris and Lambert, 2003; Duignan and Bezzina, 2006; Mullen and Jones, 2008; Goh, 2009; Hunter, 2012; Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014; Bangs and Frost, 2015). This view differentiates between teachers sharing expertise and new ideas as leadership practices and teacher leadership as a learning opportunity. These studies suggest that teacher leadership is a learning journey – learning through practising, not only learning new theories. However, it depends on teachers’ reflection and on awareness. On the contrary, teacher leadership might be rejected if it is ‘considered as another label for continuing

professional development or simply rejected when linking capacity building with professional learning communities because of the complexities of viewing teachers' leadership within a hierarchical school system where leadership responsibilities are very clearly defined' (Harris, 2003, p. 314).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The current mixed methods study was underpinned by two conceptual frameworks. First, the quantitative phase adopted the four-factor model of teacher leadership developed by Angelle and DeHart (2011). An operational definition of the four factors is essential to understanding the findings from the current study. Angelle and DeHart (2011, pp. 149–150) describe the four factors as follows:

- Factor 1 is designated as **Sharing Expertise (SE)**. The five items in this factor focus on the sharing of pedagogical or classroom management knowledge. These items measure not only the perceptions of teacher leader skills but also their willingness to share these skills and knowledge with fellow teachers.
- Factor 2, **Sharing Leadership (SL)**, encompasses the mutuality of leadership in a school, that is, the willingness of the principal to share leadership and the willingness of the teacher to accept the challenges to lead.
- Factor 3, the **Supra-Practitioner (SP)**, measures perceptions of teacher behaviours that are not only beyond the prescribed roles but are also engaged in willingly by the staff. A desire to act on what is important to them is characteristic of teacher leaders. Teacher leaders lead in the classroom as well as in the school.
- Factor 4, **Principal Selection (PS)**, paints a picture of a principal who provides leadership opportunities and distributes tasks between many members.

According to Angelle and DeHart (2010), these four factors are based on earlier research by Ryan (1999) and Andrews and Lewis (2002). The Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) was chosen to measure differences among the variables selected in the current study and the four factors. The table below summarises the definitions and items for each factor.

Table 13: *TLI Factor Definitions*

Factor	Sub-Factor	Definition	Items
Sharing Expertise* (SE)		Perceptions of teachers' pedagogical and classroom management skills and their willingness to share those skills with their colleagues	Item 1: Teachers ask one another for assistance when we have a problem with student behaviour in the classroom. Item 2: Other teachers willingly assist me if I have questions about how to teach a new topic or skill. Item 3: Teachers here share new ideas for teaching with other teachers such as through grade level/department meetings, school-wide meetings, professional development, etc. Item 4: Teachers discuss ways to improve student learning. Item 7: As a faculty, we stay current on education research in our grade level/subject area.
Sharing Leadership (SL)	Leadership engagement* SL <sub>g</sub>	Perceptions of teachers' willingness to engage in leadership opportunities	Item 5: Teachers are involved in making decisions about activities such as professional development, cross-curricular projects, etc. Item 6: Teachers are actively involved in finding ways to improve the school as a whole. Item 13: Teachers plan the content of professional learning activities at my school.
	Leadership opportunities** SL <sub>o</sub>	Perceptions of principals' willingness to offer leadership opportunities to teachers	Item 12: The principal responds to the concerns and ideas of teachers. Item 14: Teachers have opportunities to influence important decisions even if they do not hold an official leadership position. Item 16: Time is provided for teachers to collaborate about matters relevant to teaching and learning.
Supra-Practitioner* (SP)		Perceptions of teachers' willingness to go above and beyond prescribed roles	Item 8: Teachers willingly stay after school to work on school improvement activities. Item 9: Teachers willingly stay after school to help other teachers who need assistance. Item 10: Teachers willingly stay after school to assist administrators who need volunteer help.
Principal Selection** (PS)		Perceptions of how principal controls which leaders may participate in leadership activities	Item 11: Administrators object when teachers take on leadership responsibilities. Item 15: The principal consults the same small group of teachers for input on decisions. Item 17: Most teachers in leadership positions only serve because they have been principal-appointed.

\*Component of the Teacher-Driven Leadership (TDL) factor for the two-factor model. \*\*Component of the Principal-Driven Leadership (PDL) factor for the two-factor model.

*Note:* From DeHart, 2011, p. 55

In addition to the four-factor model of teacher leadership developed by Angelle and DeHart (2011), this study utilised the theory of action developed by York-Barr and Duke (2004) after they had searched for material on teacher leadership in the ERIC database, Education Abstracts, reference lists from scholarly works and recent books from leading education publishers. In all, 140 potential sources published between 1980 and 2004 were reviewed with a total of 100 being cited in York-Barr and Duke's (2004) journal article. On the basis of these articles, the authors define teacher leadership as 'the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement' (pp. 278–288). The review concludes with a framework identifying seven dimensions of teacher leadership as explained previously (Figure 3 above). The authors present their framework as dynamic rather than a rigid hierarchy of teacher leadership dimensions. Fairman and Mackenzie (2012) developed their nine spheres of influence based on this

framework by using it to filter data and frame the findings from qualitative data and linking it to quantitative data.

I used the frameworks developed by Angelle and DeHart (2011) and York-Barr and Duke (2004) to analyse data and to frame the findings. This was because my own research purposes and questions were similar to those in Angelle and DeHart's study conducted in 2011. In doing this, I was agreeing with Wenner and Campbell's (2017) claim that using theories applied previously provides more consistency.

## **TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN ARAB COUNTRIES**

The Arab world consists of 22 countries that share a common language. 'The Arab world is defined by language rather than ethnicity. 'The League of Arab States, formed in 1945, consists of all countries in which (a dialect of) Arabic is the spoken language of the majority' (Rauch and Kostyshak, 2009, p. 165). Although Arab countries speak the same language, they have a diversity of accents, cultures and habits. In addition, there are many differences in their economic and social conditions as discussed in the first and second chapters. Many Arab countries have launched educational reform with different educational policies and outcomes. In their study, Rauch and Kostyshak (2009) disaggregate the Arab world into three groups, namely: Arab sub-Saharan Africa, Arab fuel-endowed economies, and a remainder they call the Arab Mediterranean in order to compare the human development diversity to that of Latin America. Although their strategy is not related to the current study, it gives an indication of the differences between Arab countries.

Researchers have highlighted the importance of indigenous research paradigms. Hart (2010) argues that 'Several of us are now actively working to ensure our research is not only respectful, or "culturally sensitive", but is also based in approaches and processes that are parts of our cultures' (p. 1). In this section, the main gaps/issues between Western and Arab nations related to the current study are addressed. These include the importance of terminology and definitions, gender and working conditions.

This chapter has mentioned the definition of education used throughout the current study, whilst acknowledging that there are many interpretations of education in the Western context. It is noteworthy that Arabs usually use two words interchangeably to refer to education (*Tarbiyah* and *Ta'leem*). *Tarbiyah* mainly links the practices to social development (see below) and *Ta'leem* is mainly about instruction and the teaching and learning process (Ahmed, 2012; Paramboor and Ibrahim, 2013). These two terms guide Arab educators' practices.

*Tarbiyah* and *Ta'leem* might be used interchangeably or together as a translation of 'education'. For example, some countries call the Ministry of Education (*Wazarat Tarbiyah and Ta'leem*), and in other countries, it is *Wazarat Ta'leem*. *Ta'leem* might be translated as 'instruction', and Ahmed (2012) defines *Tarbiyah* as 'holistic upbringing'.

Teachers are called *Muelim* in most Arab countries, while Morocco and a few other countries use *Usthadh* and *Mudares* according to their teacher preparation programmes. Kazmi (1999) draws attention to another Arabic word (*Murabbi*), noting that ‘*Murabbi* is not simply a teacher, as we understand this word today, but rather an exemplary human being and ideal Muslim’ (p. 223). He goes on to argue that, in the case of a *Murabbi*, his/her life is the living proof that what he/she teaches is worth learning. Non-Muslims also use *Murabbi* to describe a person with positive values who develops others and takes care of them. Kazmi (1999) emphasises that the absence of the word *Murabbi* from the modern educational landscape has changed people’s thinking about the curriculum.

In defining these terms, one needs to take into consideration the historical background and the context of each country. In Patai’s book entitled *The Arab Mind*, he tries to ‘provide the elements that define the culture and mind-set of the entire half-billion-strong Arab world’ (Haque, 2002, p. 145). Although many people reject this book saying it is racist, mainly used by politicians, and could mislead readers, it might be helpful to examine its claims. One of its main arguments is about the ‘heroic age’, which is how Arabs describe phases in their history and which influences individuals’ expectations of their leaders and leadership.

Another example that illustrates how definitions vary across countries is research by Brook and Normore (2010) that states ‘Although some cultures do not seem to have the same definitions of “fairness” or “respect” (e.g., in fundamentalist Islamic cultures as compared to European definitions), other moral virtues are shared across many cultures’ (p. 60). This is important for the current study because teachers in Qatar come from different Arab countries.

Another gap that can be found in the literature relates to gender. Although many countries are empowering women and providing new opportunities, Arab countries have a reputation for high levels of discrimination against girls and women. Al-Ghanim and Badahdah (2016) developed the Arab Adolescents Gender Roles Attitude Scale (AAGRAS). This is the first known reliable and valid Arabic measure of gender-role attitudes to be used in Arab countries to develop educational and intervention programmes that encourage adolescents to identify, confront and avoid prejudice. This scale evaluates the tools used in studies conducted in Arab countries and generalises the results for other contexts. The conditions under which women work, especially in segregated schools, are worth highlighting and investigating in depth.

*Wasta* is another influential concept in Arabic countries, particularly when selecting candidates for specific roles in organisations. The culture of the region is based on the underpinning of strong family networks, or *Wasta* connections. In Arab countries, political boundaries and the philosophies of governments are surface phenomena compared to the deeper infrastructures of belief and family (Iles, Almhedie and Baruch,

2012). ‘Management in the Arab world is greatly influenced by culture, Islam, and the role of “*Wasta*”/“piston” (connections/pull), as well as by national and global politics’ (Iles, Almhedie and Baruch, 2012, p. 465).

Similarly, Kemp and Williams (2013) note the influence of culture in their study of how meetings are conducted in three big organisations in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). They conclude:

Meeting times were treated rather flexibly in this cultural setting, with lateness, interruptions and a lack of time boundaries. Similarly, meeting space was fluid in this environment, with regular disruptions, open doors, and haphazard seating. Another observation is that the ethnic origin of the chairperson of the meeting determines many of the participant behaviours at these meetings. (p. 220)

Kemp and Williams (2013) argue that some individuals’ perspectives relating to time or working conditions in an Arab country need to be seen from a different viewpoint and researchers should not build their findings on assumptions related to practices in Western countries. In their study, Kemp and Williams (2013) described the UAE as ‘a country where ethnic diversity across the workforce is prevalent’ (p. 230). This also applies to Qatar, where there are many expatriates who need to have a working visa and sponsorship to be able to live and work in the country. These details or conditions need to be considered in any study conducted in an Arab country, along with many other conditions.

Note that there is a scarcity of studies conducted about teacher leadership in the Arab world (Frost, 2011; Ramahi and Eltemamy, 2014; Al-Zboon, 2016; Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017). Moreover, teacher leadership is a new concept to some countries, as this term is not commonly used in Arab countries.

## SUMMARY

This chapter began by defining the main terms used in this study, namely: leadership, leader, teacher leadership and teacher leader, and demonstrated the lack of agreement with regard to definitions of teacher leadership and teacher leaders. Many scholars report that teacher leadership is an ‘umbrella term’ ( Klassen, Tze, Betts and Gordon., 2011; Campbell, 2017; Gülbahar, 2017), and that many other terms, for example, *head teacher* and *professional development coordinator*, have been used in previous studies. Teacher leadership can refer to positional and non-positional leadership roles occupied by teachers. Some studies explore middle school leaders (Naylor, Gkolia and Brundrett, 2006; Mulford, 2008), and others study teacher coaches in schools (Killion and Harrison, 2006). Using different terms can be confusing for researchers. It also hinders attempts to build on the results of previous research. It is noteworthy that terms from the Arabic and Islamic perspectives have been explored and introduced in Western literature relating to teachers, e.g., *Murabbi* (Kazmi, 1999).

The chapter then looked at the importance of teacher leadership. Many authors write about the benefits of teacher leadership. However, there are very few empirical studies that investigate the link between school leadership and student learning and none, as far as I know, that investigate the link between teacher leadership and student learning.

The third section of this chapter reviewed the factors affecting teacher leadership, including school culture, time, school principal and colleagues' support, professional development and demographic characteristics. It was noted that all these factors are context-dependent. So, there is no one-size-fits-all with respect to which conditions support or inhibit teacher leadership.

Teacher leadership has evolved through four waves and these were outlined in the section on the theoretical basis of teacher leadership. The first wave was about formal, managerial positions. The second wave was about instructional leadership. The third wave was about leadership-in-action and the final wave was about transformational leadership.

It was then explained that the current study would use two conceptual frameworks from the literature, namely, the four-factor model of teacher leadership developed by Angelle and DeHart (2011) and the theory of teacher leadership action developed by York-Barr and Duke (2004). These were chosen because they are a good fit for the research questions of the current study and because they have been extensively used by other researchers since the authors originally developed them.

This chapter ended with a short section on teacher leadership in Arab countries. Despite the vast population and numerous universities in Arab countries, there are only a few studies of teacher leadership. The current study is an attempt to fill this gap.



## 4. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Educational leadership and management is a relatively new research topic and it draws from social science theories and practices (Briggs, Coleman and Morrison, 2012). Briggs, Coleman and Morrison (2012) state that ‘educational leadership research may be seen as twin-focused’ (p. 25). It is a systematic inquiry that is both a way of thinking about educational phenomena and a way of investigating the phenomena as an activity.

Conceptualising research within educational leadership is linked to practice and knowledge. Investigating a specific topic does not rely only on the research questions but on understanding reality, truth and the methods used to answer the research questions. Scholars should be concerned if the papers they read contain no mention of philosophy or the philosophical foundations of the research questions or designs, especially in theses or dissertations (Aliyu, Singhry, Adamu, and Abubaker, 2015).

Essentially, there are many ways of knowing, understanding and explaining the world; therefore, it is vital to clarify researchers’ assumptions in order to understand the meanings researchers make of their inquiries and to judge their work in a way that accords with their starting premises and intents (Taskakkori and Teddlie, 2010). Notably, academics within the social sciences have debated the nature of research to the extent that epistemology (theory of knowledge) has been inspected widely to understand how knowledge is gained and how it is affected by researchers’ paradigms ( Sommer Harrits, 2011; Aliyu *et al.*, 2015).

### PARADIGMS

Paradigms describe how individuals see the world and are defined as a ‘set of philosophical dichotomies like realism versus relativism (as ontological stances) or objectivism versus subjectivism, as epistemologies of conventional-positivist and new-interpretive paradigms, respectively’ (Niglas, 2010, p. 4). Researchers’ paradigms can be identified in research by clarifying the ontological perspective of the form and nature of reality, the epistemological perspective of the basic belief about knowledge and the methodological question of the researcher’s choice of how he/she will go about finding out whatever he/she believes can be known (Aliyu *et al.*, 2015). However, defining a paradigm also takes place in many alternative ways (Taskakkori and Teddlie, 2010; Shannon-Baker, 2016). Shannon-Baker (2016) shows that paradigm definitions have changed considerably, from a way to describe researchers’ beliefs to tools or a stance. However, a few researchers have reported that the concept of paradigms is not helpful (Biesta, 2010).

Paradigms include, but are not limited to, positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism. Some scholars have linked mixed methods to pragmatism (Creswell, 2003; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson and Gray, 2010), while other scholars have suggested that mixed methods can be used with any paradigm (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Shannon-Baker (2016) states that perspectives/paradigms are used mainly for mixed methods approaches, e.g., for pragmatism, transformative-emancipation, dialectics and critical realism, although there has been no agreement on labelling them paradigms; they might be called stances or approaches by other researchers.

As it might have been difficult to dedicate a section to comparing the types of paradigms in this study, I began reflecting on my own position as a positivist, interpretivist or pragmatist and on my own beliefs and preferred practices. However, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of issues concerning paradigms. Table 14 (below) compares paradigms and their positioning according to epistemology and ontology as presented by Aliyu *et al.* (2015). Acknowledging the differences between them, I explored the three main paradigms which I thought of applying here, namely positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism.

In the current study, I found it difficult to start as a pure post-positivist as this is a self-reported study on an unfamiliar topic in Qatar, part of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, from which some of the respondents come. I needed to interpret the Qatari findings and other factors that may have influenced interviewees' answers and even my own interpretation. By using mixed methods, I aimed to explore and understand teacher leadership and provide data that would help other researchers gain in-depth knowledge about this topic and about certain scenarios of mixed methods research.

Table 14: *Comparison of Paradigms and Ontological and Epistemological Questions*

Questions for Analysing Paradigms		Positivism /Post-Positivism	Interpretivism	Pragmatism
Ontological question	Nature of reality or human being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consists of stable pre-existing patterns or order that can be discovered</li> <li>• Reality is not time- nor context-bound</li> <li>• Reality can be generalised</li> <li>• Shaped by external factors (same cause has the same effect on everyone)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The world is complex and dynamic and is constructed, interpreted and experienced by people in their interactions with each other and with wider social systems</li> <li>• Reality is subjective and people experience it in different ways</li> <li>• Reality can only be imperfectly grasped</li> <li>• People are social beings who create meaning and who constantly make sense of their worlds</li> <li>• People possess an internally experienced sense of reality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reality is external, can be seen in multiple views which will be selected to enable answering of research question</li> </ul>
Epistemological question	Nature of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge can be described in a systematic way</li> <li>• Knowledge is accurate and certain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge is based not only on observable phenomena, but also on subjective beliefs, values, reasons and understandings</li> <li>• Knowledge is constructed</li> <li>• Knowledge is about the way in which people make meaning in their lives, not just that they make meaning, and what meaning they make</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge can be provided by observable phenomena, subjective understanding and beliefs by investigating different perspectives to help answer the research questions</li> </ul>
	Role of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncover reality, i.e. natural laws</li> <li>• Scientifically explain/describe, predict and control phenomena</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study mental, social, cultural phenomena to understand why people behave in certain ways</li> <li>• Describe multiple realities</li> <li>• Grasp the 'meaning' of phenomena</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop achievable propositions to answer the research questions</li> </ul>

*Note:* Adapted from Aliyu *et al.* (2015, pp. 4–9)

Positivism is a philosophy that sees the social world as separate from individual understanding and cognition (Doyle, Brady and Byrne, 2009). Researchers within the positivist paradigm rely on facts and consider the world external and objective. One of its main principles is that science must be value-free and should be judged only by logic. As positivist researchers see it, reality is tangible and a measurable fact. They abide by

the 'scientific' method as an analytical process since they believe objectivity is the key to research methods and therefore the emotions, desires and values of the researcher should not influence the object being studied, i.e., people. Moreover, reality is permanent and shows unchanging laws and rules of causation, impartiality and repeatability quantitatively. Positivist research deals only with what can be seen or measured. Empirical facts exist separately from personal thoughts (Aliyu *et al.*, 2014; Tubey, Rotich and Bengat, 2015). Positivist purists reinforce the importance of using a systematic protocol and techniques such as standardised tests and surveys. Aliyu, Bello, Kasim, and Martin (2014) argue that 'Positivism is a poor choice for labeling quantitative researchers today. A term that better represents today's practicing quantitative researchers is post-positivism' (p. 24). Post-positivism might be considered an upgrade for positivism as 'it is more cautious concerning strong and one-sided interpretations and restrained regarding the too extensive (or obsessive) use of (quantitative) data and methods' (Adam, 2014, p. 5). Post-positivism might be linked to the first quantitative phase of the current study as it is exploring and trying to understand teacher leadership in Qatar rather than predicting or building models.

In contrast, interpretivist researchers assume that the researcher's social skills and intellectual creativity are more necessary than his/her technical competence. The interest in this paradigm lies in understanding teachers' perspectives. An individual can construct meaning and create a social world and social reality. Reality is based on individual relationships, values and beliefs (Sommer Harrits, 2011; Aliyu *et al.*, 2014). Interpretivism has had an important impact on education research, as educational researchers who follow this paradigm insert themselves into the constant process of meaning construction to be able to understand reality (Morrison, 2012). 'Qualitative purists also are characterized by a dislike of a detached and passive style of writing, preferring, instead, detailed, rich, and thick (empathic) description, written directly and somewhat informally' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14).

Pragmatism is widely described as America's distinctive philosophy, and many researchers have attempted to explain and identify it. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) endorse pragmatism as a 'philosophy that can help to build bridges between conflicting philosophies' (p. 17). According to Leech *et al.* (2010), 'Pragmatism can be defined as research using both qualitative and quantitative methods and mixing the two methods when beneficial' (p. 18). (Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) state that 'Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy or reality. Pragmatist researchers focus on the "what" and "how" of the research problem' (p. 12). They place 'the research problem' as central and apply all approaches in order to be able to understand the problem (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Shannon-Baker (2016, p. 322) states that this paradigm/approach places importance on research questions, and claims that a pragmatic researcher is 'able to maintain both subjectivity in their own reflections on research and objectivity in data collection and analysis'. This paradigm uses inquiry

strategies drawn from different data collection methods either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand the research problem. In general, pragmatism can be described not only as a philosophy, but also as an attitude, highlighting a concern with what works. After reviewing several studies related to the mixed methods paradigm and philosophical approach (Biesta, 2010; Symonds and Gorard, 2008; Taskakkori and Teddlie, 2010; Sommer Harrits, 2011; Shannon-Baker, 2016), I chose to follow pragmatism in this study because it supports achievement of the aim of this study and has commonly been used in similar studies.

The following are some of the main characteristics of pragmatism as described by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p.18):

- Views current truth, meaning, and knowledge as tentative and as changing over time. What we obtain on a daily basis in research should be viewed as provisional truths.
- Human inquiry (i.e., what we do in our day-to-day lives as we interact with our environments) is viewed as being analogous to experimental and scientific inquiry. Replaces the historically popular epistemic distinction between subject and external object with the naturalistic and process-oriented organism–environment transaction.
- Endorses fallibilism (current beliefs and research conclusions).

The paradigms listed above are not the only ones that can be employed in educational leadership studies (Briggs, Coleman and Morrison, 2012). Johnson and Gray (2010, p.4) report that ‘instead of classifying research methodology into a small number of clearly separate paradigms or movements, it is more appropriate and helpful to conceptualize methodology as a multidimensional set of continua. This kind of anti-dualistic stance is called synechism’ (p. 4). Essentially, it is not an issue of which one is better, as scholars will continue the argument and I contend that is one of the beauties and strengths of paradigms. Therefore, it is a matter of utilising methodologies to best explore our understanding of a context. Many scholars reject the idea of a paradigm war (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Newman and Hitchcock, 2011). As Feilzer (2010) writes, ‘Ultimately pragmatism brushes aside the quantitative/qualitative divide and ends the paradigm wars’ (as cited in Biddle and Schafft, 2015, p. 326). This suggests that the most important issue is ‘the extent to which, in the end, research has effectively been able to provide compelling answers to the questions posed by the researcher’ (as cited in Biddle and Schafft, 2015, p. 326). Table 15 summarises the main methods linked to the paradigms mentioned above and their corresponding data collection tools as reported by (Mackenzie and Knipe (2006).

Table 15: *Methods and Paradigms*

Paradigm	Methods (primary)	Data Collection Tools (examples)
Positivist	Quantitative. 'Although qualitative methods can be used within this paradigm, quantitative methods tend to be predominant ...' (Mertens, 2005, p. 12)	Experiments Quasi-experiments Tests Scales
Interpretivist	Qualitative methods predominate, although quantitative methods may also be utilised	Interviews Observations Document reviews Visual data analysis
Pragmatist	Qualitative and/or quantitative methods may be employed. Methods are matched to the specific questions and purpose of the research	May include tools from both positivist and interpretivist paradigms

Quantitative and qualitative approaches should not be used synonymously with paradigms (Taskakkori and Teddlie, 2010; Shannon-Baker, 2016). I favour Biesta's argument that research is not quantitative or qualitative; data can be quantitative or qualitative, but research is more than that (Biesta, 2010). Table 16 shows the main procedures used in quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods.

Table 16: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods producers

Quantitative Research Methods	Qualitative Research Methods	Mixed Methods Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predetermined, instrument-based questions</li> <li>• Performance data</li> <li>• Attitude data</li> <li>• Observational data</li> <li>• Census data</li> <li>• Statistical analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerging methods</li> <li>• Open-ended questions</li> <li>• Interview data</li> <li>• Document data</li> <li>• Audio-visual data</li> <li>• Text analysis</li> <li>• Image analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both predetermined and emerging methods</li> <li>• Both open- and closed-ended questions</li> <li>• Multiple forms of data drawing on all possibilities</li> <li>• Statistical and text analysis</li> </ul>

*Note:* adapted from Creswell (2003, p. 17)

## RESEARCH DESIGN

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, pp. 69–70) list six types of mixed methods design that can be identified according to interaction, priority and timing as follows: convergent parallel design, explanatory sequential design, exploratory sequential design, embedded

design, transformative design and multiphase design. I used the explanatory sequential design, which consists of two separate phases: quantitative followed by qualitative. The first phase was intended to be sent to the entire population to gain as much information as possible about this new topic in Qatar, and the interviews were planned to clarify the quantitative phase results. The use of qualitative data to explain quantitative findings can be thought of, as Bryman (2006) describes it, as ‘putting the meat on the dry bones of quantitative findings’ (as cited in Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007, p. 63).

When considering the best approach for my research, I reviewed my research questions and chose a mixed methods design to enrich the study with different sources of data (questionnaire and interviews) and tried to utilise the strengths of both methods. The paradigmatic shift between being post-positivist, interpretivist and pragmatist and applying both quantitative and qualitative methods made it acceptable to employ a multi-method approach, which could help me achieve greater depth and potentially better results (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The advantage of using different methods, as Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) argue, is that the limitations of one method can be solved by the strengths of a complementary one, e.g. the benefit of using words and narratives to clarify numbers. The use of mixed methods was beneficial to examine specific aspects of the research questions as well as to triangulate the data (Creswell, 2003; Merriam and Tisdell, 2009) (Figure 4). Triangulation through converging operations uses both methods, which helps to reduce bias. It also contributes to increasing the validity and reliability of the research instruments because it allows double-checking, as I will demonstrate in the discussion chapter.

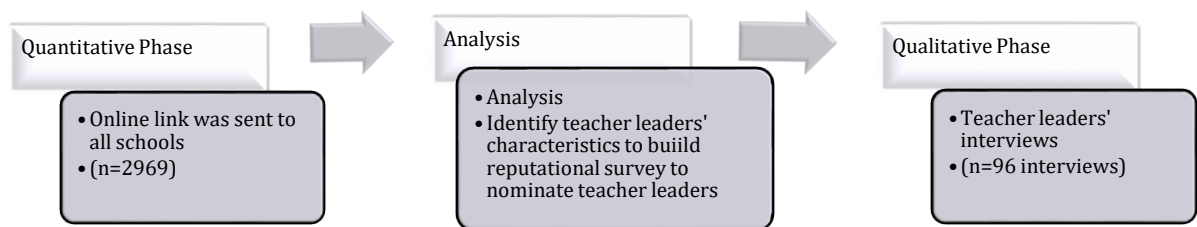


Figure 4. Phases of this study

Figure 4 (above) shows the sequence in this study using an explanatory sequential design, where the qualitative phase was intended to explain the quantitative and to give in-depth analysis. Questionnaires and interviews are often used together in mixed methods studies investigating educational research. Each method has different, possibly complementary, strengths and weaknesses, as will be discussed later in this chapter. By and large, questionnaires are viewed as the most objective instrument for large sample sizes and can produce generalisable results. However, ‘Results can be threatened by many factors including: faulty questionnaire design; sampling and non-response errors; biased questionnaire design and wording; respondent unreliability, ignorance,

misunderstanding, reticence, or bias; errors in coding, processing, and statistical analysis; and faulty interpretation of results’ (Harris and Brown, 2010, p. 2). In contrast, interviews are most likely to be used with a small number of interviewees compared to quantitative and the results are difficult to generalise.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall purpose of selecting this mixed methods design was to explain some questionnaire items results in-depth using interviews as they provide what Phillips and Burbules (2000) call ‘multiple perspectives or opinions or beliefs (depending on the specific phenomenon being described) rather than multiple realities’ (cited in Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18).

Table 17: *Methods and Research Tools by Research Question*

Research Question	Methods	Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do teachers and school leaders in Qatari government schools understand by the term ‘teacher leadership’?</li> </ul>	Quantitative and qualitative	Questionnaire and interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the nature of teacher leadership in Qatari schools?</li> </ul>	Quantitative and qualitative	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent, if at all, are any differences in their perspectives related to their position (age, gender, qualifications, school level, years of experience, school size and leadership position)?</li> </ul>	Quantitative	TLI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What conditions support or inhibit teacher leadership in Qatari schools?</li> </ul>	Qualitative	Semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions in the questionnaire

Table 17 (above) shows how the research questions are linked to the methods and data collection tools. The rest of this chapter will outline the methodological procedure and design of the study and address the following elements:

- Research instruments (questionnaire, interviews)
- Translation
- Reliability, validity and trustworthiness
- Pilot study for each phase
- Ethical procedures
- Population and sampling

Researchers of teacher leadership draw on many conceptual frameworks. Wenner and Campbell list more than 25 theories and give examples of researchers who have followed each theory. Although researchers select their studies’ conceptual frameworks



based on their research purposes, Wenner and Campbell (2017) recommend that ‘Future research exploring teacher leadership consider the theories that have been applied previously as well as the emphasized aspects of those theories so as to work toward a theory of teacher leadership’ (p. 28).

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

This section provides an overview of the instruments used in this study, namely questionnaires and interviews.

### Questionnaires

The first quantitative phase covered all government schools in Qatar and explored whether there were any significant differences in teachers’ perceptions of teacher leadership with reference to gender, age, educational level, teaching experience, school size, leadership position and the level at which they teach. I considered questionnaires the most appropriate instrument for the large number of respondents in this study.

It is very common to use questionnaires in social research. As with any other data collection technique, there are advantages and disadvantages (Bourque and Fielder, 1995). I have summarised some of those considered in this study in the following table:

Table 18: *Questionnaires’ Advantages and Disadvantages*

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used for a large sample at the same time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data entry and data analysis can be time consuming</li> <li>• Some respondents might not understand the question or give honest answers</li> <li>• Some types may have a low response rate, e.g. online questionnaires</li> </ul>

Questionnaire items can be closed or open-ended. Open-ended questions are mainly used to seek a more in-depth response and to explore reasons for choices. Both types have advantages and disadvantages, as I summarise from previous studies in Table 19:

Table 19: *Comparison Between Closed and Open-Ended Questions in Surveys*

Type of Questions	Advantages	Disadvantages
Closed questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easier to quantify them</li> <li>• Respondents may find them easier to answer and respond faster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions need to be constructed carefully</li> <li>• Questions may not be clear to the respondents</li> <li>• Do not allow respondents to give their opinion</li> </ul>
Open-ended questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easier to construct the questions</li> <li>• Allow opportunities to express opinions and comments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time-consuming and require more effort in data analysis</li> <li>• Respondents may not write in a clear way</li> </ul>

Questionnaires can be classified into the following types: self-completed, group-administered, online and postal. According to Bourque and Fielder (1995), a self-administered or self-completed questionnaire is one completed by the respondents. The second type is the group-administered questionnaire, for which the researcher contacts the respondents and asks them to complete the questionnaire in the same place and the same time. The postal questionnaire is mailed to the respondents to answer and return. In addition, there are online questionnaires, which can be answered through an online link. Table 20 presents the advantages and disadvantages of each type of questionnaire.

Table 20: *Comparison Between Questionnaire Types*

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Self-administered questionnaire	Usually known for high response rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents' responses might be affected by the explanation they receive from</li> </ul>
Group-administered questionnaire	All respondents can be interviewed at the same time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May lead respondents to give the same answers or copy from others</li> </ul>
Online questionnaire	<p>Can be sent to large sample at the same time</p> <p>Can be analysed easily</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents may not be familiar with technologies</li> <li>• Low response rate</li> <li>• No opportunity to correct misunderstanding or to help</li> </ul>
Postal	Can be sent to large sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low response rates;</li> <li>• Respondents with poor literacy skills may not be able to communicate</li> <li>• No opportunity to correct misunderstanding</li> <li>• Cannot check incomplete responses</li> <li>• Could be answered by people other than the targeted sample</li> </ul>

*Note:* Adapted from Bourque and Fielder (1995)

Due to the need to access a large number of respondents (more than 14,000) within a short span of time, a quantitative questionnaire seemed the most appropriate method to use. To achieve the goal of this study, I found it better to use a pre-existing questionnaire. Although originality is required in each study, one of the main reasons for using pre-existing questionnaires is that they have been extensively tested at the time of first use (Hyman, Lamb and Bulmer, 2006). I reviewed many instruments, such as the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) (Short and Rinehart, 1992) and the Leadership Capacity Staff Survey (Lambert, 2003), and then selected the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) tool developed by Angelle and DeHart (2011) for the quantitative phase. I found that the TLI covered the same ground as both of the other

instruments, but its language was simpler and more relevant to the Qatari context. Appendix A shows the tool and the permission letter from the researcher.

Although the information in Table 21 (below) about the TLI was discussed in the Literature Review, it is useful to present it in this section and in the findings chapter. I chose the TLI to help answer my research questions. It was beneficial to provide a map for the assessment of current norms, to define best practices within a specific context and to ‘measure the level of collective leadership in a learning community’ (Angelle and DeHart, 2010, p. 5). Angelle and DeHart developed the TLI through a multi-stage process, which they describe as follows:

In the first phase of the instrument development, described in Angelle and Beaumont (2006), 14 administrators and 51 teachers were interviewed. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions aimed at obtaining a clear picture of teacher leadership within the social context of the school. A constant comparative analysis was conducted using QDA Miner software, and the following five themes of teacher leadership emerged from the analysis: educational role model, decision maker, visionary, designee, and supra-practitioner.

In the next stage, the results of the previous qualitative analysis were used to construct a 25-item survey intended to measure the extent of teacher leadership at the school level. The survey was examined by experts from three separate universities, whose suggestions were incorporated into a revised version. This revised survey was administered to a focus group by doctoral students consisting of teachers, school-level administrators, and district-level administrators. Further suggestions for improvement came from the focus group and a final version of the survey was created. (2011, p. 148)

Although the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) was designed by Western researchers, it was selected for several reasons:

- TLI items help to answer some of the research questions and convey the meaning as the research intends.
- Using a pre-existing tool can help with comparing results, especially since this study is the first of its kind in Qatar. Researchers highlight the importance of both cross-cultural and empirical studies in order to better understand specific features of teacher leadership, e.g. the impact of teacher leadership on student achievement (Wenner and Campbell, 2017).
- Qatar borrowed most of its educational systems, policies and programmes over the last decade from Western countries. Therefore, it would be helpful to use a tool designed in one of those countries to assess how much and how well these policies and programmes are being utilised.
- The TLI has been refined through multiple phases of research, starting with the qualitative, then progressing to the quantitative. It started as a three-factor model. Then, it developed into a five-factor model and, finally, the four-factor model (outlined in Angelle and DeHart, 2011) that the current study uses.

- The results of the pilot study demonstrated that the instrument was relevant to the Qatari context and that its language was clear to respondents.

Table 21: *Factors, Definitions, and Survey Items for the Four Models of Teacher Leadership*

Factor	Sub-Factor	Definition	Items
Sharing Expertise* (SE)		Perceptions of teachers' pedagogical and classroom management skills and their willingness to share those skills with their colleagues	Item 1: Teachers ask one another for assistance when we have a problem with student behaviour in the classroom. Item 2: Other teachers willingly assist me if I have questions about how to teach a new topic or skill. Item 3: Teachers here share new ideas for teaching with other teachers such as through grade level/department meetings, school-wide meetings, professional development, etc. Item 4: Teachers discuss ways to improve student learning. Item 7: As a faculty, we stay current on education research in our grade level/subject area.
Sharing Leadership (SL)	Leadership engagement* SL <sub>g</sub>	Perceptions of teachers' willingness to engage in leadership opportunities	Item 5: Teachers are involved in making decisions about activities such as professional development, cross-curricular projects, etc Item 6: Teachers are actively involved in finding ways to improve the school as a whole. Item 13: Teachers plan the content of professional learning activities at my school.
	Leadership opportunities** SL <sub>o</sub>	Perceptions of principals' willingness to offer leadership opportunities to teachers	Item 12: The principal responds to the concerns and ideas of teachers. Item 14: Teachers have opportunities to influence important decisions even if they do not hold an official leadership position. Item 16: Time is provided for teachers to collaborate about matters relevant to teaching and learning.
Supra-Practitioner* (SP)		Perceptions of teachers' willingness to go above and beyond prescribed roles	Item 8: Teachers willingly stay after school to work on school improvement activities. Item 9: Teachers willingly stay after school to help other teachers who need assistance. Item 10: Teachers willingly stay after school to assist administrators who need volunteer help.
Principal Selection** (PS)		Perceptions of how principal controls which leaders may participate in leadership activities	Item 11: Administrators object when teachers take on leadership responsibilities. Item 15: The principal consults the same small group of teachers for input on decisions. Item 17: Most teachers in leadership positions only serve because they have been principal-appointed.

\*Component of the Teacher-Driven Leadership (TDL) factor for the two-factor model. \*\*Component of the Principal-Driven Leadership (PDL) factor for the two-factor model.

Note: From DeHart, 2011, p. 55

The questionnaire used in the current study was developed by adding new sections before and after the TLI. The first section (questions 1-12) elicits personal and professional information from the respondents, such as length of teaching experience and highest degree obtained. Question 13 asks respondents to choose which responsibilities they expected teacher leaders to demonstrate. These come from Marzano *et al.* (2005). Drawing on 35 years of literature, Marzano *et al.* (2005) identify the 21 responsibilities that have a significant impact on student learning.

The second section is the TLI, unchanged from the original tool. Angelle and DeHart (2011) showed that Cronbach's alpha (to test reliability) in the original study showed 0.85 for the entire instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered "acceptable" in most social science research situations, and thus a value of 0.85 shows

high internal consistency. For the current study, after translating the instrument (see below), Cronbach's alpha was 0.83.

The next phase of data collection began after analysis of the online questionnaire and the most important teacher leader characteristics had been identified. Teachers in two K–12 ‘complex’<sup>9</sup> schools were asked to respond to a confidential questionnaire by nominating teacher leaders in their schools. The selected schools enrol students at all levels from K–12 under one management on each campus; more information about these schools will be provided later in this section. My intention was to learn about the experiences of teachers who practised leadership, and only teachers who were nominated by their colleagues were invited to participate. This selection process was based on the nature of this mixed methods study and purposeful sampling of participants was vital. I specifically utilised criterion sampling in order to ensure quality, authenticity and credibility in the second phase (Preissle and Le Compte, 1984).

### Interviews

In addition to questionnaires, interviews were used in the final stage of this study. The teacher leaders who were nominated by their colleagues in each school were selected and interviewed (96 interviewees). Face-to-face interviews were conducted in order to achieve better communication and understanding during the interview. In Table 22, I list the advantages and disadvantages of interviews that are relevant to this study.

Table 22: *Interview Advantages and Disadvantages*

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides in depth data and real stories</li> <li>• Known for a high response rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influenced by the interviewer's subjectivity and prejudice (Cohen <i>et al.</i>, 2001)</li> <li>• Costly and time consuming to schedule for each interviewee and spend time during and after the interview transcribing responses</li> </ul>

Interviews can be categories in three main ways, based on the questions, wording and sequence: the standardised or structured interview, the semi-structured interview and the loose or unstructured interview. Each type of interview has advantages and disadvantages. The main strengths and weaknesses of the three types have been taken from previous studies (O’Connor and Gibson, 2003; Briggs, Coleman and Morrison, 2012; Seidman, 2012) and listed below in Table 23.

<sup>9</sup> The complex schools in Qatar are schools with all levels, K–12, under one management and leadership.

Table 23: *Comparison Between Interview Types, Summarised by the Researcher*

Type	Definition	Advantage	Disadvantage
Structured	Asking the respondents the same questions in the same way	Data is ready to be decoded  Anyone other than the researcher can perform the interview	Interviewer cannot add other questions and the interviewee is restricted to the questions asked
Semi-structured	Includes a set of questions; interviewer may change the order or add other questions during the interview	Questions can be asked in a flexible way	Interviews might include unnecessary discussion
Unstructured/loose	Incorporates a number of topics rather than fixed questions	Provides more freedom to the interviewee and interviewer	Very time-consuming to complete the interviews and then code them

Interviews can also be categorised according to the way they are conducted, i.e. face-to-face, email or telephone. However, face-to-face interviews have long been the dominant interview technique in the field of qualitative research (Opdenakker, 2006). Telephone interviewing, computer-mediated communication and other types are becoming more and more common, but the preferred method for collecting information remains the face-to-face interview, if the distance involved is not too great, because the interviewee's social cues are considered important information sources for the interviewer (Opdenakker, 2006).

The use of online questionnaires and semi-structured interview techniques provided additional data that helped in addressing the research questions. Using these two techniques allowed attainment of a higher degree of validity and reliability in the measurement of the research data. Bulmer and Warwick (1993) indicated that it is very important to use various methods when collecting the data, especially in third-world countries. One possible reason is that people are not used to the culture of research and confidentiality in the process of a study.

Questionnaires were used to reach a large portion of the population and to answer some of the research questions. As explained earlier, the use of semi-structured interviews was based on the need to collect in-depth data that would explain or support the questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews have a mix of open-ended and structured questions that are used flexibly (Merriam and Tisdell, 2009). Probes and follow-up questions are encouraged. Probes consist of gestures, silences and requests for examples; follow-up questions aim to clarify misconceptions, request additional information or confirm a participant's perspective through echoing (Merriam and Tisdell, 2009; Briggs, Coleman and Morrison., 2012).

Interview questions focused on what teachers did as teacher leaders and what they needed to do to improve their performance. The interview questions were selected from two previous studies. The first was titled *Commonalities and differences in teacher leadership at the elementary, middle, and high school levels* (Stone, Horejs and Lomas, 1997). This study explored teacher leadership in different schools, at different levels, which supported understanding question 2 in this study and its exploration using TLI. In addition, the second study investigated reluctant teacher leaders and their perceptions of the principalship (Huff, 2003). The following list of interview questions was drawn from these two studies.

1. How do you define or perceive teacher leadership?
2. What are the characteristics of a teacher leader?
3. In what leadership activities do teacher leaders engage?
4. What specific leadership activities were you involved with as a teacher leader?
5. What leadership opportunities are available in your school with regard to the growth of leaders?
6. Describe the characteristics you possessed as a teacher leader.
7. How are teacher leadership positions designed, and who selects the leaders?
8. Why do some teachers assume a leadership role?
9. What are the desired outcomes of teacher leadership?
10. What factors/structures support teacher leadership?
11. What factors/structures constrain teacher leadership?
12. In what ways, if at all, does teacher leadership improve school performance, student performance and professional practice?
13. What barriers did you experience as a teacher leader?
14. If you were to develop a teacher leadership programme, what would it look like?

These questions were reviewed, combined and used in the interviews to answer the research questions in the qualitative phase. Appendix B includes all the material related to the questionnaire and Appendix C contains all the material related to the interviews.

#### **TRANSLATION**

After receiving approval to use the TLI from Dr. Angelle, I sent the data collection tools to experts at Qatar University (experienced and published researchers) to review the contents. These included all the items in the interview questions in addition to the instructions. Subsequently to the approval of the questionnaire and its relevance to the Qatari context, an expert translator translated all questions from English to Arabic. Although I am fluent in both languages, the translated documents were further sent for input from English-to-Arabic experts.

The experts were asked to make another translated version of the questionnaires, each independently of the other. The aim was to look for possible divergences between the

English and Arabic versions in terms of accuracy, clarity and content. The technique of 'back translation' (Peña, 2007) was utilised to confirm the translation. Though translation in cross-cultural research is acknowledged as a complex endeavour, trustworthiness was enhanced by my proficient bilingualism, which was supported and confirmed by the translator.

The Arabic version of the questionnaire was given to the pilot study group, and a few modifications were made to the questions, which will be presented later in this chapter. This updated version was sent to three experts at Qatar University and the Ministry of Education in Qatar to review the content. These experts affirmed the drafts unanimously and confirmed the appropriateness of the Arabic version. After the translation process was complete, the final drafts were shown to Dr. Angelle to approve the items and questions added to the TLI.

Similarly, the interview questions were given to experts from the College of Education to review the translation and content. All three experts confirmed the appropriateness of the Arabic version. All interviews were conducted in Arabic, with the exception of two interviews conducted in English with interviewees who did not speak Arabic. The interviews were transcribed in Arabic, as it was the language used in the interviews, except for the two interviews conducted in English. However, during the Arabic interviews, responses were often given in English.

All interviews were recorded and the transcripts were written in Arabic. The data presented in the findings involved paraphrasing of interviewee responses. It involved selection, grouping and abstractions of expressions. In addition, translation from Arabic to English was necessary, although some Arab interviewees responded in English. I often asked for their understanding of an English word they used in order to verify that they fully understood what it meant.

In the analysis, I will use quotation marks (‘’) to denote direct translation from Arabic to English, and parentheses ( ) to denote interviewees' responses spoken directly in English.

### **RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND TRIANGULATION**

Scholars have highlighted that the quality of educational and social research can be evaluated by its validity, reliability and triangulation (Taskakkori and Teddlie, 2010; Briggs, Coleman and Morrison, 2012). Although these concepts have been employed in quantitative studies, many scholars have discussed their use in qualitative studies as well (Golafshani, 2003; Merriam and Tisdell, 2009; Briggs, Coleman and Morrison., 2012; Imran and Yusoff, 2015). Brock-Utne (1996) stated that validity, reliability and triangulation are 'equally important in both traditions' (as cited in Bush, 2012, p. 76).



Reliability refers to the consistency of an instrument and whether the results are replicable (Kimberlin and Winterstein, 2008). There are multiple ways to check the reliability of questionnaires; one is the test-retest procedure, which involves administering the same questionnaire to the same group at different times and comparing the results, which should be about the same (Kimberlin and Winterstein, 2008). Another is the use of Cronbach's alpha to measure internal consistency. I used this method, as aforementioned.

Research findings might be reliable, but not valid. Scholars report that it is very important for any successful research to employ valid instruments (Golafshani, 2003; Kimberlin and Winterstein, 2008). Validity and reliability are concerned with eliminating bias and increasing truthfulness through triangulation. There are different types of validity: (a) content validity, (b) concurrent validity and (c) construct validity (Oppenheim, 2000). According to Oppenheim (2000), content validity 'seeks to establish that the items or questions are a well-balanced sample of the content domain to be measured' (p. 162), and construct validity is used to answer the question: 'To what extent does this test reflect the construct it is intended to measure?' (p. 169).

In this study, the content validity of the questionnaire was carefully reviewed due to the crucial importance and significance of this form of validity in social research. I relied on a number of procedures to determine the validity of the questionnaire instrument, including conducting the pilot study and considering the recommendations of experts. In order to achieve this, a number of experts in the field of education were approached for advice. These included lecturers at the University of Qatar and inspectors from the Ministry of Education. All experts in the panel agreed on the validity of the questionnaire.

For the qualitative phase, Golafshani (2003) highlight that 'reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality in the qualitative paradigm' (p. 604). Lincoln and Guba were credited in 1985 with establishing the first endorsement of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Trustworthiness evolved from raising the following questions: '1) How do researchers gain confidence in the truth of the findings that is known currently as credibility. 2) To what extent can the findings be applied in other contexts (transferability). 3) How is a researcher confident that the findings are from the participants and not from the bias (confirmability)' (Morgan and Ravitch, 2018, p. 3). Trustworthiness is both an aim and a practice, and the term is used to convey the procedures researchers employ to ensure the quality, rigor and credibility of a study. In the case of single-handed research, e.g., a dissertation, 'When the researchers want to probe or modify the questions, reliability could be compromised' (Bush, 2012, p. 78). As qualitative research traditions continue to grow, researchers are suggesting guidelines and tools to support researchers in conducting trustworthy qualitative research (Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules, 2017). In this study, I followed thematic analysis and repeated some questions during the interview; after a period of initial

contact, the same questions were asked. The interview procedure was double checked and planned in different methods of probing during the interview.

Triangulation in qualitative research relates to trustworthiness. Multiple indicators might increase credibility. Triangulation is defined as the use of two methods of data collection in the same study (Morgan and Ravitch, 2018). The essential purpose of triangulation is to use multiple strategies to overcome the weaknesses of any one method. ‘Scott (2007) identifies four types of triangulation: Data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theoretical triangulation and methodological triangulation’ (as cited in Bush, 2012, p. 85). Data triangulation is the use of different forms of data from diverse sources to gain comprehensive interpretations. Investigator triangulation includes the engagement of more than one researcher in a study to include additional insights during the investigation. Theory triangulation means using various frameworks. Finally, ‘methodological triangulation is typically seen as the use of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. However, qualitative researchers can also employ methodological triangulation by pairing different qualitative methods together’ (Morgan and Ravitch, 2018, p. 4). All types of triangulation were implemented in this study, as clarified in this section, except investigator triangulation.

## **PILOT STUDIES**

According to Robson (1996, p 301),

The first stage of any data gathering ... should be a “dummy run” of a pilot study. This helps you to throw up some of the inevitable problems of converting your design into reality. An experiment ... can and should be piloted on a small scale.

This section describes the pilot studies that were conducted to test the instruments and try to analyse the data before the actual study was conducted.

### **Quantitative phase**

The main purpose of the pilot study was to test the questionnaire. As clarified in the previous section, the questionnaire was translated and then piloted to assess the suitability of each item in terms of clarity and length of time needed for a response.

The pilot study sample was selected using a snowball technique. A cognitive interview technique was used with respondents to improve the reliability and validity (Desimone and Le Floch, 2004; Sopromadze and Moorosi, 2017). The six respondents answered the Arabic version of the questionnaire individually and were interviewed for one hour each about their experience of completing the questionnaire.

As cognitive interviews test validity using verbal reports from the respondents' thoughts, it was an interesting experience to collect the respondents' feedback regarding the challenges of using a web-based questionnaire and their responses to each item. Since web-based questionnaires are characterised by both visual and structural appearance (Desimone and Le Floch, 2004; Henson *et al.*, 2010), the respondents were asked to provide feedback about how to improve both areas, if needed.

The respondents answered the online<sup>10</sup> questionnaire items, affirmed their understanding of the items, suggested some modifications and commented on how they expected other teachers would understand the questions. All six respondents were interviewed individually, and all respondents emphasised the importance of this study, linking the questionnaire content to the current context in Qatar. None of the respondents commented on the visual and structural appearance. Most of the respondents' comments were related to simplifying the language of the items. Although an expert translator had translated the survey into Arabic, some of the words were modified to suit the respondents without losing the meaning. 'Translation cannot be expected to operate on a one to-one basis across languages' (Harkness and Schoua-Glusberg, 1998, p.6). One word that all respondents agreed on changing was the translation of the word *teacher*. This word can be translated as *Muelim* or *Mudares*. All of the respondents preferred *Muelim* because *Mudares*, which means 'schools' in Arabic, might confuse respondents. All the translated teacher leadership inventory items applied *Muelim* when needed.

One of the respondents suggested adding a definition of teacher leadership to the questionnaire's introduction, but I had concerns in this regard. First, studies do not have an agreed upon definition (Frost and Harris, 2003; York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Harris, 2005). Understanding the meaning of teacher leadership is one of my research questions, and there was a possibility of pre-judging the data. In addition, the definition may have needed further modification according to the study's findings. Although the introduction and demographic questions in the questionnaire in Appendix B were adapted from DeHart (2010, pp. 129–132) and from Galland (2008, pp. 107–111), I changed the introduction to clarify the idea of teacher leadership to the following way:

Thank you for participating in this study. This data is being collected for a research project as part of the requirements for a doctorate. This research project focuses on exploring the opportunities and challenges that teachers face within practising leadership roles in their schools. Sometimes teachers are appointed to fulfil these leadership responsibilities by the principal. Other times, teachers volunteer for these leadership responsibilities, motivated by their personal interest or expertise. Understanding teacher

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<sup>10</sup> [www.surveymonkey.com/r/tliran](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/tliran)

leadership, whether appointed or not, is important to understanding how schools function effectively. The responses are strictly confidential. I appreciate your cooperation.

Respondents in the pilot study were encouraged to comment on everything that occurred to them as they completed the questionnaire, e.g., what items they perceived as irrelevant and what items they thought were absent from the questionnaire. The respondents' feedback was coded according to the survey structure feedback and teacher leadership literature-based items according to the York-Barr and Duke (2004) and Angelle and DeHart (2011) frameworks (see the previous chapter).

Four respondents suggested adding an item related to the impact of organisational structure, culture and climate on learning and innovation, and on what is known as *Wasta* (nepotism) in Arab countries (Iles, Almhedie and Baruch, 2012). None of the respondents knew each other, and they all had different experiences. Based on my own experiences, I totally agreed that *Wasta* needed to be explored during the interview phase.

Three interviewees mentioned the importance of passion in teacher leadership. This encouraged me to explore this theme and see whether it had been investigated in previous studies. I added what I discovered to the literature review chapter. Aspects of passion that I researched included the definition of passion, whether there is a way to measure the passion of a teacher leader, whether passion should be considered in hiring and selecting teachers and whether it affects teacher leaders' performance and initiative (Gubman, 2004; Cardon, 2008; Wright and Nyberg, 2012; Cardon *et al.*, 2013). If an interviewee mentioned passion, I asked for further explanation during the interview.

Three respondents suggested deleting repeated items and changing the order of some questions in the section on demographic characteristics, e.g. the choices of the levels of schools and the number of students according to school size. After reviewing the survey, I changed the order as the respondents had suggested (see Appendix B).

## **Qualitative phase**

The interview protocol was piloted and refined via interviews with teacher leaders unconnected to the selected government schools. Teachers who participated in the pilot interview held formal leadership positions, e.g., subject coordinator and year leader, and informal leadership practices. The interview questions were presented with the request to reflect and briefly answer each one. If teachers found a question unclear or difficult to answer, they were asked to discuss any confusion.

The interview protocol was used to guide the interview rather than to dictate it (Appendix C). However, according to Rubin and Rubin (2012), responsive interviewers try to follow a path opened up by the participant. In order to form good questions that

would lead to information regarding teachers' perspectives towards teacher leadership, a variety of question types needed to be employed. Scholars have identified many types, e.g., the main questions, follow-up questions and probes mentioned by Rubin and Rubin (2012), while Patton (2002) suggests six types that emphasise the following: experience and behaviour, opinion and values, feelings, knowledge, and sensory and background/demographic information. These types were used during interviews to get in-depth understanding.

I sent invitations to potential respondents, including a consent form and information about the study. Those who agreed to participate were interviewed face to face for 30–45 minutes and were recorded with their approval. One of these transcripts was sent to my supervisor to check the coding and analysis process. Comments about the interview and probing were given. The probing was guided by the five leadership perspectives that teachers might apply according to surrounding conditions: structural, symbolic, political, human and self-awareness, identified by Augustsson and Boström (2012) as mentioned in the literature review chapter. For example, if the interviewees mentioned that they are responsible for the activities in the classrooms more than for the students themselves, that could mean that they have a structural perspective and sub-questions will be asked to clarify their perspective.

After each interview, personal reflection logs were compiled. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2009), reflection logs allow researchers to reflect and expand upon what was said in the context of the interview. Afterwards, I reviewed the commonality in the responses and coded them according to the identified themes derived mainly from York-Barr and Duke (2004). The responses were evaluated and linked to the findings of previous studies. Responses were categorised as follows: definition of teacher leadership, importance, roles and responsibilities and types of support. Comments related to these categories were highlighted and considered for their relevance. The interviews were summarised according to the themes and the respondents in each school.

## **ETHICAL PROCEDURES**

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval letter was obtained from the University of Warwick and Qatar University. Additional permission was obtained from the MoE and Qatari government school principals. Formal letters were given to me and sent to the schools by the MoE (Appendix D). All respondents signed consent forms (Appendix C). Prior to the interviews, the consent form was apparent in the introduction of the online questionnaire. In one case, a principal did not allow me to interview some of the nominated teachers. Every effort was made to convince her to change her mind. Eventually, I managed to interview two teachers at that school.

Confidentiality was ensured for the respondents. Yet, it is difficult in small countries like Qatar not to identify the individuals if multiple quotes refer to the same person. 'It

is argued researchers, research paradigms and the tools employed within those paradigms must be culturally and textually sensitive and appropriate' (Thomas, 2008, p. 78). Therefore, in presenting the findings from the interviews, names were not mentioned and it is not shown whether any quotes referred to the same person in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

After gaining the required approval letter from the IRB committee and the MoE-related departments, the MoE IT department sent an online link to the questionnaire that I developed, including the TLI, to Qatari schools between May 2016 and November 2016. These schools included all levels from preschool to secondary school, with around 14,000 teachers and subject coordinators. Then the qualitative phase employed semi-structured interviews with the nominated teacher leaders in two complex schools that included all levels from year 1 to year 12 and had male and female teachers.

To answer the research questions, multiple levels of data analysis were required. In the quantitative phase, descriptive statistics were utilised and computed. All tests were run using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software programme version 24. Mean (average) scores of Likert scale questions were computed. One-way ANOVA and the Mann-Whitney U test were run to measure differences primarily according to TLI factors and the selected variables. In the statistical tests performed in this study, one-way ANOVA was used in the TLI analysis because this study did not test the interactions between variables and the focus was on the relationship between the factors and the selected variables.

For the qualitative phase, open-ended questionnaire answers and interview data were classified according to themes. The final coding scheme used for the interviews and the open-ended questions in the questionnaire are included in Appendix E. There were different steps for collecting and analysing the qualitative data. First, to analyse data from the open-ended questions, the data was exported from the online form to an Excel spreadsheet. Then, a coding scheme was developed, and the codes were compared to York-Barr and Duke's framework and themes to compare the patterns, similarities and differences.

## **POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

As mentioned previously, this is the first study exploring teachers' perspectives towards teacher leadership in Qatar. As the population is well defined, the total population was selected in the quantitative phase to gain deeper insights and add strength to the study. Using the total population is considered a strength for the following reasons: 1) the data exists and has already been identified by the MoE. 2) The questionnaire will be completed by those concerned from the targeted population, which may ensure representativeness, minimise the effects of selection bias and allow a focus on the sub-population. In addition, this technique aims to avoid the bias potentially generated by selecting the sample from the total population when there are no clear selection criteria.

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) ‘distinguish between “selection” and “sampling.” In their view, selection involves making decisions concerning who or what is the focus of a study and characterizing the potential population from which the study's participants might be drawn’ (as cited in Roulston, 2010, p. 10). Sending the questionnaire to all teachers ensured all had the same opportunity to participate and no person or group felt ignored even if they chose not to respond.

The first quantitative phase covered all government schools in Qatar (299 schools at the time of writing) and explored significant differences in teachers’ perceptions of teacher leadership with reference to gender, age, educational level, teaching experience, school size and the level at which they taught. Table 24 shows the number of teachers and school leaders in Qatar (PSA, 2018), which totalled more than 14,000.

Table 24: *Number of Teachers and Staff 2017–2018 (MoE, 2018)*

	Total	Non-Qatari		Qatari		Number of Schools
		F	M	F	M	
Coordinator	1980	497	514	902	67	
Teachers	11559	5528	3056	2835	140	
Pre-primary	688	242	0	446	0	71
Primary	5345	3079	542	1703	21	110
Preparatory	2360	902	1036	369	53	63
General Secondary	3166	1305	1478	317	66	58
School principal	196	1	1	133	61	
Admin V.P.	193	1	1	132	59	
Academic V.P.	211	53	54	92	12	
Administrators	10715	2146	2150	5960	459	

To increase the response rate, I reviewed the mechanism and procedures of data collection (Punch, 2013). I asked the government schools office at the MoE to send the online questionnaire link with a memo to all schools, requesting that principals encourage their teachers to participate with a clear statement that it was voluntary. When I contacted the schools asking them to confirm receipt of the questionnaire link after midterm exams in spring 2016, I found that most schools had not read the email and many principals had not forwarded the email to their teachers. Therefore, I asked the IT department at the MoE to send the questionnaire link directly to the teachers in mid-fall 2016, before exams, when teachers and school leaders had more time to complete the questionnaire. This was the first time the MoE had agreed to send research material directly to teachers and opened the path for other researchers to do the same.

For the qualitative phase, I purposefully selected two schools called complex schools. At the beginning of the reform in Qatar, the Supreme Education Council (SEC) allowed school operators/principals to apply to run complex schools that taught both boys and girls (in single sex classes) from years 1 to 12. In Qatar, female teachers teach male

students in years 1–6.<sup>11</sup> There were more than 20 complex schools in 2006 but the number has gradually reduced since then. Each of the two complex schools chosen for the qualitative phase had four schools: two primary, one preparatory and one secondary. Like many other schools, they had formal and informal leadership teams.

The two complex schools were comparable in terms of school size, demographics and student assessment results. They were selected because they included all school levels under one management and leadership. Having one management and leadership team at each campus enabled this study to focus on the selected variables. One of the variables tested here is school level, and each campus has all levels. I acknowledge that these schools do not represent all government schools in Qatar. I do not consider this a problem, bearing in mind that the qualitative phase aimed to explain the results of the first phase and to gain in-depth data with examples from teachers' leadership practices in schools.

Since my goal in the qualitative phase was to learn about the experiences of teacher leaders in-depth, only teachers who were nominated as teacher leaders by their colleagues were invited to participate in the interviews. I sent the questionnaire in Appendix B to those two campuses (totalling eight schools) and asked teachers to nominate teacher leaders in their schools. Table 25 shows the results of their 146 nominations. The nominated teacher leaders were interviewed during March and July of 2017. Two schools' principals refused to allow me to interview all the nominated teachers and selected a few teachers from the list of nominees. The interviewees were either teachers, subject coordinators or project coordinators. All invitations were initially sent by email. These were followed up with several calls to the school principals.

The qualitative phase sample was selected by sending a simple questionnaire to teachers in two complex schools; these schools, as explained above, contained all levels from year 1 to year 12 under one management (school operator), and each school had a principal; each school level was housed in a separate building. I selected the qualitative sample from these campuses as other schools had faced too many changes, including changing school leaders, school systems and staff turnover. This study aimed to explore teachers' perspectives and their teacher leadership practices despite acknowledging that there are limitations in selecting this sample, i.e., it does not represent the overall population and does not reflect the true diversity. However, these schools witnessed all the MoE changes in the educational systems since 2000 that helped in exploring the opportunities and challenges teachers faced. In addition, both campuses had similar policies and enabled me to interview male and female teachers.

After receiving permission from MoE to conduct the study, an online questionnaire link was sent to the principals, who were asked to forward the link to teachers in their

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<sup>11</sup> Recently, the MoE started pilot schools for years 5–6 to be taught by male teachers.



respective schools. Principals were sent a follow-up reminder with the link and deadline for completion of January 2017 to February 2017. Informed consent was obtained through the online data collection process. In total, 96 people were interviewed from eight schools on two campuses. Table 25 shows the number of interviewees in each school and the total number of teachers and coordinators.

Table 25: *Number of Candidates Compared to Interviewees in Each School*

Code	Level	Number of Teachers and Coordinators	Number of Coordinators	Candidates	Interviewees	Nominations
A	Primary	93	14	21	16	56
B	Primary	80	14	23	18	57
C	Prep	78	9	10	7	46
D	Sec	84	9	23	15	53
E	Primary	78	13	23	2	38
F	Primary	80	11	22	14	59
G	Prep	74	10	23	8	37
H	Sec	74	10	20	16	49

Table 26 shows the number of nominations per candidate in each school, e.g. eight people received one vote at School A. I decided to interview all candidates as the nominations results varied tremendously, e.g., one teacher had one vote and was nominated by the school principal, and another candidate was a coordinator with eight nominations. Another coordinator had only one nomination. These results did not help me identify a criterion for selecting without bias; therefore, I interviewed all nominated teachers, which enriched this study with various perspectives as will be shown in later chapters.

Table 26: *Number of Votes/Candidate in Each School*

Vote	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	8	9	6	16	14	9	17	8
2	5	6	1	1	7	3	5	5
3	4	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
4	1	5	1	1	1	5	0	3
5	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	1
6	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
7	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
8	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
9		1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	21	23	10	23	23	22	25	20

Researchers have to be very careful when anonymity is promised. Identifying these schools can be very easy when the study is done in a small country like Qatar. Thus, interviewees' names have not been mentioned and it is deliberately not clear if two

quotes come from the same person. Many interviewees' comments might reveal their identities and might be easily recognised.

## SUMMARY

This chapter described the selected paradigm, methods and instruments; the study's translation process, pilot studies, data collection plan and phases; its validity and reliability; and the selected sample and population. Teachers' perceptions were chosen as the subject of study because conceptualisation and implementation are not the same. Individual actions are heavily influenced by a person's conceptualisation of a given factor (Kelley, 2011).

Pilot studies were conducted to test the questionnaire using a cognitive interview approach, and respondents recommended changing the translation of the word teacher to *Muelim*. All of the respondents preferred *Muelim* because *Mudares*, which also means 'schools' in Arabic, is potentially confusing. All the translated teacher leadership inventory items used *Muelim* when needed.

Ethical approvals were obtained, and it was decided that quotes would not include numbers or pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity as Qatar is a small country and respondents might be identified easily.

This mixed methods study used several methods and tools to answer the questions and achieve an in-depth understanding of current practices and the nature of teacher leadership in Qatar. I utilised the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI), which was sent to the total teacher population in government schools and answered by 2,969 respondents, to test the selected variables. The nomination questionnaire was sent to two complex schools to nominate teacher leaders, and 96 semi-structured interviews were conducted as a result. All interviews were done face-to-face using a semi-structured interview protocol. The majority of interviews were done in Arabic and were audio-recorded after respondents consented. The interviews lasted 30–45 minutes and were conducted between February and July 2017. All teachers who were nominated by their colleagues in each school were interviewed and are referred to as teacher leaders in this study. Interview questions focused on teachers' understanding of teacher leadership, what they do as teacher leaders and what they need in order to enhance teacher leadership practices. In addition, questions about the selected variables, e.g., gender, school level and years of experience, were added to the interview questions in order to explain the quantitative phase results.

All phases used self-reported methods in which respondents were asked to report directly regarding their perspectives, beliefs and behaviors. Although this method is commonly used in research, this study acknowledges its limitations. For example, respondents may choose answers they perceive as more socially acceptable and their answers depend on their interpretation of the questions (Lavrakas, 2008). However, I

tried to minimise the limitations by using a cognitive interview approach during the pilot study and by asking the interviewees to give examples or clarify the words/terms they were using.

The next chapter shows the results for each phase. The findings are presented according to the sequence of data collection, which followed the explanatory sequential design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

## 5. FINDINGS

The previous chapters showed that despite the increased interest in teacher leadership in Western countries, few studies have addressed teacher leadership in Arab countries. During the last 30 years, many studies have been conducted in Western contexts, most of them descriptive studies, as York-Barr and Duke (2004) and Wenner and Campbell (2017) stated in their systematic reviews of teacher leadership studies. The literature is rich in definitions, roles and responsibilities and factors related to teacher leadership and teacher leaders.

Researchers have applied many theories to conceptualise their studies of teacher leadership. Wenner and Campbell listed more than 25 theories and provided examples of researchers who followed each theory. Although researchers select their studies' conceptual framework based on their research purposes, Wenner and Campbell (2017) recommend that 'Future research exploring teacher leadership consider the theories that have been applied previously as well as the emphasized aspects of those theories so as to work toward a theory of teacher leadership' (p. 28). Thus, this mixed methods study employed two conceptual frameworks: the four-factor model developed by Angelle and Dehart (2011) and the teacher leadership theory of action developed by York-Barr and Duke (2004) to explore teachers' perspectives towards teacher leadership practices and what affects teacher leadership in Qatari government schools.

This chapter presents the results of the analysed data according to the phase of data collection.

### QUANTITATIVE PHASE

In the quantitative phase, the 2,969 respondents (21% of the total population) included 65% female and 35% male respondents. Teaching experience ranged from less than three years (4%) to more than 15 years (36%). Of the respondents, 83% held a bachelor's degree, 11% held a postgraduate degree and 6% held 'others', indicating they had an associate's degree, a technical certification or another education degree after the bachelor's degree. With respect to nationality, 23% were Qatari, 40% Egyptian, 17% Jordanian, 18% other Arab nationalities and the rest had dual citizenship such as with the UK, Canada and other Western nations. Primary school teachers totalled 1,143 respondents, whereas middle school teachers accounted for 670 and high school teachers accounted for 955 teachers completing the survey. Eighty-nine respondents worked in KG and 112 worked in complex schools. When asked if they held a leadership position at their school, 42% of the respondents confirmed that they did, whereas 58% stated they did not hold a position of leadership. A summary of respondents' demographic information is shown in Table 27.

Table 27: *Online Questionnaire Demographic Information*

		n	Percentages of Females	n	Percentages of Males
Age	22–29	305	15.8	75	7.2
	30–39	919	47.6	434	41.7
	40–49	612	31.7	412	39.6
	50–59	91	4.7	110	10.6
	Over 60	2	.1	9	.9
Qualification	Bachelor’s	1719	89.1	742	71.3
	Postgraduate	118	6.1	205	19.7
	Other	92	.7	93	8.9
Nationality	Egypt	619	32.1	591	56.8
	Jordan	272	14.1	226	21.7
	Qatar	661	34.3	35	3.4
	Other Arab countries	347	18	180	17.3
	Other nationalities	30	1.6	8	.8
Leadership position	Yes	819	42.5	442	42.5
	No	1110	57.5	598	57.5
Years of experience	Less than 3 years	108	5.6	9	.9
	3–5	291	15.1	39	3.8
	6–10	577	29.9	207	19.9
	11–15	413	21.4	275	26.4
	More than 15 years	540	28	510	49
School level	KG	89	4.6	0	0
	Primary	865	44.8	278	26.7
	Prep	375	19.4	295	28.4
	Secondary	498	25.8	457	43.9
	Complex	102	5.3	10	1
School size	Less than 250	250	13	123	11.8
	250–500	508	26.3	288	27.7
	More than 500	1171	60.7	629	60.5

At the time of writing, Qatari public schools had around 14,000 teachers and coordinators. In Qatar, coordinators are classified as teachers and not as school leaders due to their teaching load. Principal deputies (called vice principals in Qatar) do not teach according to MoE policies.

The questionnaire included the demographic information presented earlier, TLI items and two more questions about types of teacher leadership and selection of main leadership responsibilities (see appendix B). This phase examined the relationships between teachers’ perceptions regarding the extent of teacher leadership in their schools and the variables selected in this study, as will be discussed later in this section. Figure 5 shows each item’s frequency (the numbers represent the items; Table 28 includes the item statements). All items directed positive perspectives towards the extent of teacher leadership in their schools. The results showed positive understanding and contributions, and, surprisingly, some items showed results different from the previous studies’ findings, e.g., item number 16 shows that teachers were given time to plan and work together.

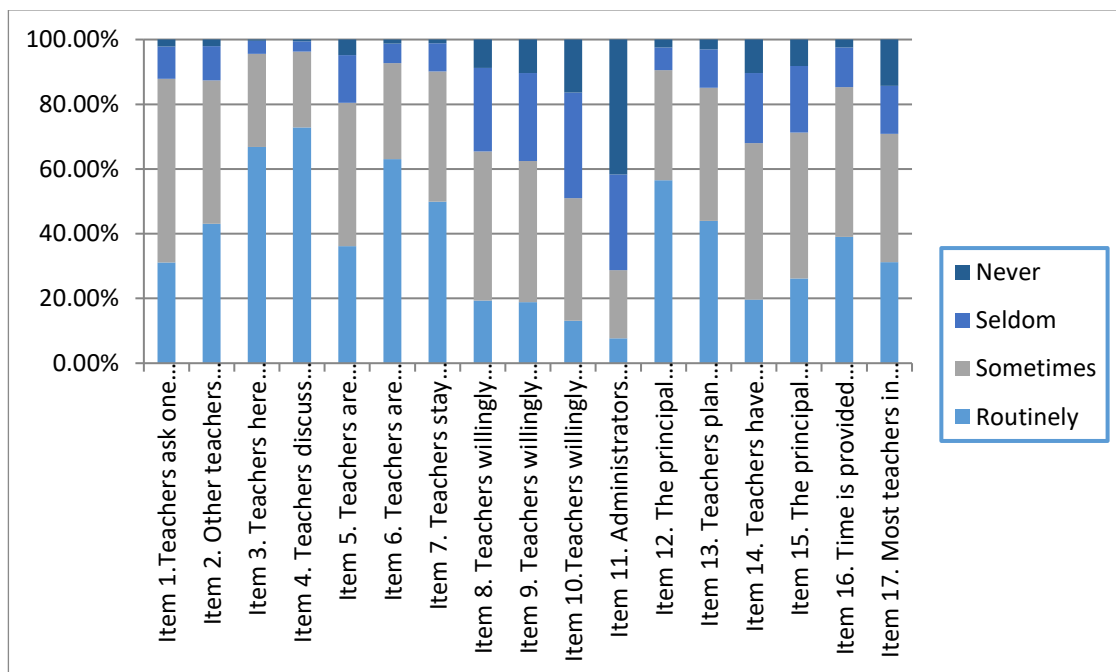


Figure 5 TLI frequency chart results

After analysing the frequency, I used the mean and standard deviation to show the central tendency of each response. The TLI uses a scale from 1 for “never” to 4 for “routinely”. I used the following scale to interpret the means: “routinely” for means between 3.25 and 4.00; “sometimes” for means between 2.5 and 3.24; “seldom” for means between 1.75 and 2.49; and “never” for means between 1 and 1.74. In general, the responses to questionnaire items suggested that respondents practised leadership and had positive perspectives about these practices (Table 28). The table shows the items’ means in descending order and the factor next to each item.

Table 28: *TLI Items' Means in Descending Order*

TLI Factor	TLI Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
SE	<b>Item 4:</b> Teachers discuss ways to improve student learning	3.65	0.011
SE	<b>Item 3:</b> Teachers here share new ideas for teaching with other teachers such as through grade level/department meetings, school-wide meetings, professional development, etc.	3.58	0.012
SL	<b>Item 6:</b> Teachers are actively involved in finding ways to improve the school as a whole	3.49	0.014
SL	<b>Item 12:</b> The principal responds to the concerns and ideas of teachers	3.40	0.015
SE	<b>Item 7:</b> As a faculty, we stay current on education research in our grade level/subject area	3.31	0.016
SE	<b>Item 2:</b> Other teachers willingly offer me assistance if I have questions about how to teach a new topic or skill	3.19	0.016
SL	<b>Item 13:</b> Teachers plan the content of professional learning activities at my school	3.17	0.017
SL	<b>Item 16:</b> Time is provided for teachers to collaborate about matters relevant to teaching and learning	3.12	0.017
SE	<b>Item 1:</b> Teachers ask one another for assistance when we have a problem with student behaviour in the classroom	3.08	0.015
SL	<b>Item 5:</b> Teachers are involved in making decisions about activities such as professional development, cross-curricular projects, etc.	3.01	0.018
PS	<b>Item 17:</b> Most teachers in leadership positions only serve because they have been principal-appointed	2.87	0.018
PS	<b>Item 15:</b> The principal consults the same small group of teachers for input on decisions	2.76	0.019
SL	<b>Item 14:</b> Teachers have opportunities to influence important decisions even if they do not hold an official leadership position	2.66	0.018
SP	<b>Item 8:</b> Teachers willingly stay after school to work on school improvement activities	2.58	0.019
SP	<b>Item 9:</b> Teachers willingly stay after school to help other teachers who need assistance	2.54	0.019
SP	<b>Item 10:</b> Teachers willingly stay after school to assist administrators who need volunteer help	2.31	0.019
PS	<b>Item 11:</b> Administrators object when teachers take on leadership responsibilities	2.07	0.016

Although the TLI follows the Angelle and DeHart (2011) framework, it also uses the conditions mentioned in the York-Barr and Duke (2004) framework. The conditions that affect teacher leadership practices, e.g., collaborative planning and school structure,

should allow time for planning and professional development. Some TLI items, such as 8 and 9, had lower results than the others. This difference was further explored during interviews and showed that MoE policies do not allow teachers to stay in school after working hours except in rare cases and with the principal’s approval. This will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

### **TLI analysis**

The same method of TLI analysis followed by Angelle and DeHart (2011) was followed in order to utilise the tool to compare the results and highlight major differences. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between the means of two or more independent unrelated groups, and it was conducted for each variable (i.e. school level, degree level and status of leadership position) and for the four factors of the TLI as shown in Figure 6. Factor scores were computed by calculating the means for all responses composing each factor. For some variables, Levene’s test revealed a violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance, so nonparametric bivariate procedures (Mann-Whitney U tests) were used. The TLI analysis answered the research question:

- Are there any significant differences in teachers’ perceptions of teacher leadership with reference to their gender, age, educational degree, teaching experience and the level at which they teach?

Sharing Expertise (SE)	• 1, 2, 3, 4, 7
Sharing Leadership (SL)	• 5, 6, 13, 14, 12, 16
Supra-Practitioner (SP)	• 8, 9, 10
Principal Selection (PS)	• 11, 15, 17

Figure 6: The TLI’s four factors and each factor’s items in the questionnaire.

In this study, the following variables were selected: age, gender, nationality, qualifications, years of experience, school level, school size and leadership position, while the study conducted by Angelle and DeHart (2011) tested qualifications, school level, and leadership position only. The other variables were added to this study for several reasons. The first was that schools are segregated according to gender as explained in chapter 2, and many studies explore the effect of gender on leadership practices in Arab countries. Killingsworth, Cabezas, Kensler and Brooks (2010) stated that gender is a genuine category of analysis. They also recommended analysing gender differences in humanities research. Leadership positions are given to locals in GCC countries, such as Qatar. Therefore that tendency was tested in this study. Table 29 shows the variables’ results in both studies.



Table 29: Results for Significant Variables' in Angelle and DeHart (2011) and This Study

Factor	Angelle and DeHart (2011) Variables' Results	Variables' Results in This Study
Sharing Expertise (SE)	School level, Degree level	Degree Level, Nationality
Sharing Leadership (SL)	Degree level	Leadership position, Nationality
Supra-Practitioner (SP)	School level, Degree level	Years of experience, Gender, Degree level, Nationality
Principal Selection (PS)	School level	Leadership position, Nationality, Years of experience

Although Angelle and DeHart's study (2011) showed significant results according to school level, in this study there were no significant results according to age or school level. The following sections present the results for each variable and show the tests used to examine the variables.

### 1. School level

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences in factor scores among the five school levels of preschool, primary, preparatory, secondary and complex. This study shows no significant results in factors according to school level. However, school level showed significant results in the study conducted by Angelle and DeHart (2011). They clarified that 'Elementary school teachers rated the factor Supra-Practitioner significantly higher than both middle and high school teachers. Elementary teachers also ranked Sharing Expertise higher than high school teachers' (p. 154). The results in this study may have been different for several reasons. It may be because the MoE applies a unified structure to all schools, and teachers can transfer their teaching skills between school levels. It may also be that teacher-training programmes are offered to all teachers in Qatar, irrespective of their teaching level. Before 2008, teacher preparation programmes in Qatar were general, (see chapter 2), and the MoE did not allow teachers to change school levels unless they had the required qualifications and training.

### 2. Qualifications (Degree level)

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences in factor scores among the three different levels of bachelor's degree; postgraduate studies, which included master's and doctoral degrees; and others, which indicated secondary degrees. Although significant differences were found for the factors of Sharing Expertise ( $F(2,2966) = 4.785, P = .008$ ) and Supra-Practitioner ( $F(2,2966) = 4.740, P = .009$ ) Levene's test revealed a violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance; therefore, a nonparametric bivariate procedure (Mann-Whitney U test) was used to assess any significant differences (Table

30). The analysis indicated no statistical significance in the other two factors, Principal Selection and Sharing Leadership. Table 30 illustrates the results of the ANOVA test for the TLI factors of Sharing Expertise and Supra-Practitioner and degree levels.

Table 30: *Results of One-Way ANOVA for Differences in Teachers' Degree Levels and TLI Factors*

		df	F	Sig.
SE	Between groups	2	4.785	.008
	Within groups	2966		
	Total	2968		
SP	Between groups	2	4.740	.009
	Within groups	2966		
	Total	2968		

Considering the lack of homogeneity of variance as indicated by Levene's test, nonparametric Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted between the three groups (bachelor's, postgraduate and others). For the factor, Sharing Expertise, teachers in the bachelor's degree group reported significantly higher scores than teachers in the postgraduate degree group. For the factor, Supra-Practitioner, the postgraduate degree group reported slightly higher scores than the bachelor's degree group. Supportive of the ANOVA, there were no significant differences among the Principal Selection and Sharing Leadership scores for the three groups. There were no significant results in the third group (others) for all factors. Results for these nonparametric tests are given in Table 31. Note that 80% of the teachers in this study had a bachelor's degree.

Table 31: *Summary of Mann-Whitney U Tests Comparing Degree Level and Teacher Leadership Factors*

Factors	Groups	n	M	U	Z	P
Sharing Expertise SE	Bachelor's	2461	1407.74	359953	-2.794	.005
	Postgraduate	323	1276.41			
Supra-Practitioner SP	Bachelor's	2461	1378.00	361765.5	-2.657	.008
	Postgraduate	323	1502.98			

### 3. Leadership position status

Differences in factor scores among teachers who held leadership positions was tested using a one-way ANOVA. The ANOVA results indicated a significant difference in scores for the factor of Principal Selection ( $F(1,2967) = 18.59, P = .000$ ; see Table 32).

Although the ANOVA results also indicated a significant difference in scores for the factor of Sharing Leadership, a Levene's test for equality of variance was violated for this factor. The ANOVA indicated no statistical differences between the scores for the other two factors.

Table 32: *Results of One-Way ANOVA for Differences in Teachers' Leadership Positions and TLI factors*

		df	F	Sig.
SE	Between groups	1	.862	.353
	Within groups	2967		
	Total	2968		
SL	Between groups	1	31.097	.000
	Within groups	2967		
	Total	2968		
SP	Between groups	1	.008	.930
	Within groups	2967		
	Total	2968		
PS	Between groups	1	18.590	.000
	Within groups	2967		
	Total	2968		

Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted between these two groups for the factors Sharing Leadership and Principal Selection. For Sharing Leadership, teachers who stated they held a leadership position in their schools gave significantly higher scores than teachers who did not hold leadership positions. Conversely, non-leadership teachers reported significantly higher scores on Principal Selection than the formal teacher leaders. This result is similar to Angelle and DeHart's result, supporting the results of the ANOVA. The results for these nonparametric tests are shown in Table 33.

Table 33: *Summary of Mann-Whitney U Test Comparing Leadership Roles and SE, PS*

Factors	Groups	n	M	U	Z	P
Sharing Leadership	No	1708	1410.89	950321	-5.507	.000
	Yes	1261	1585.38			
Principal Selection	No	1708	1539.70	983467.5	-4.095	.000
	Yes	1261	1410.91			

#### 4. Gender

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences in factor scores between the two groups. Gender was selected as one of the main variables of this study for several reasons. First, all government schools segregate male and female teachers and students, as do teacher preparation and training programmes. Second, Qatar and some Arab countries apply female empowerment programmes. This variable might offer other insights to be explored in teacher leadership preparation programmes. Moreover, a few previous studies have explored gender, e.g. Aliakbari and Sadeghi (2014). The ANOVA results showed that gender affects only the Supra-Practitioner factor ( $F(1,2967) = 1.517$ ,  $P = .000$ ; see Table 34). However, Levene's test for equality of variance was violated for this factor.

Table 34: Results of One-Way ANOVA for Differences in Gender and TLI Factors

		df	F	Sig.
SE	Between groups	1	1.205	.272
	Within groups	2967		
	Total	2968		
SL	Between groups	1	.651	.420
	Within groups	2967		
	Total	2968		
SP	Between groups	1	137.864	.000
	Within groups	2967		
	Total	2968		
PS	Between groups	1	.393	.531
	Within groups	2967		
	Total	2968		

Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted between female and male respondents for Supra-Practitioner as the ANOVA indicated no statistical differences between the scores for the other factors. For Supra-Practitioner, male teachers gave significantly higher scores than female, supporting the results of the ANOVA. Results for these nonparametric tests are illustrated in Table 35.

Table 35: *Summary of Mann-Whitney U Test Comparing Gender and SP*

	Groups	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>P</i>
Supra-Practitioner	Female	1929	1352.29	747077	-11.618	.000
	Male	1040	1731.16			

### 5. *Years of experience*

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences in the factor scores between the groups. Although this variable was not included in Angelle and DeHart's (2011) study, I was aware that it needed to be examined. The results show that Supra-Practitioner and Principal Selection were affected according to years of experience ( $F(4,2964) = 2.754$ ,  $P = .027$  and  $F(4,2964) = 2.850$ ,  $P = .023$  respectively). Multiple comparisons were conducted between groups which showed significant differences between teachers with 3 to 5 years of experience and teachers with more than 15 years of experience ( $P = .039$ ) in Principal Selection.

Table 36: *Results of One-Way ANOVA for Differences in Years of Experience and TLI Factors*

		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
SE	Between groups	4	.837	.501
	Within groups	2964		
	Total	2968		
SL	Between groups	4	1.474	.207
	Within groups	2964		
	Total	2968		
SP	Between groups	4	2.754	.027
	Within groups	2964		
	Total	2968		
PS	Between groups	4	2.850	.023
	Within groups	2964		
	Total	2968		

### 6. *School size*

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences in factor scores among the three groups. This study showed no significant variation in results in factors according to the

school level. Although this variable was not examined in Angelle and DeHart's (2011) study, it was tested in this study. It is worth mentioning that all schools in Qatar have identical building designs and most of them have the same number of students and teachers, with the exception of some schools outside Doha, the capital of Qatar. Preschools, on most occasions, are likely to have less than 250 students.

### 7. Nationality

Remarkably, nationality showed significant results in all factors' results according to one-way ANOVA results as shown in the following table.

Table 37: Results of One-Way ANOVA for Differences in Nationality and TLI Factors

		df	F	Sig.
SE	Between groups	4	4.407	.001
	Within groups	2964		
	Total	2968		
SL	Between groups	4	3.042	.016
	Within groups	2964		
	Total	2968		
SP	Between groups	4	3.544	.007
	Within groups	2964		
	Total	2968		
PS	Between groups	4	4.158	.002
	Within groups	2964		
	Total	2968		

Levene's test for equality of variance was violated for three factors (SE, SL and SP), and Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted between the groups for Sharing Expertise, Sharing Leadership and Supra-Practitioner. Table 38 shows the results between groups for these three factors, which demonstrate that teachers' perspectives from specific nationalities tend to have significant results more than other nationalities. Qatar, like many GCC countries, applies localisation policies, especially in selecting candidates for leadership positions. For example, all school principals should be Qatari according to MoE declaration.

Table 38: *Summary of Mann-Whitney U Test Comparing Nationality, SE, SL and SP*

Factors	Groups	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	U	Z	<i>P</i>
Sharing Expertise	Jordan	498	547.18	148244.5	-4.312	.000
	Qatar	696	633.51			
	Jordan	498	789.05	268697.5	-3.564	.000
	Egypt	1210	881.44			
	Jordan	498	489.55	119545.	-2.493	.013
	Other Arab countries	527	535.16			
Sharing Leadership	Jordan	498	796.43	272370	-3.137	.002
	Egypt	1210	878.40			
	Jordan	498	490.17	119856	-2.410	.016
	Other Arab countries	527	534.57			
Supra-Practitioner	Qatar	696	902.16	385347	-3.123	.002
	Egypt	1210	983.03			

### 8. *Age*

A one-way ANOVA test did not show significant results in all four factors. This might be because most teachers who participated were in the same age range. Additionally, 48% of respondents were aged 30 to 39 years.

Although the TLI was analysed using one-way ANOVA in the original study (Angelle and DeHart 2011), I used different analysis correlations to test the relationship between the factors, and the results show a strong relationship between Sharing Leadership (SL) and Principal Selection (PS) as the following table presents.

Table 39: Correlations Among the TLI's Four Factors

Correlations		SE	SL	SP	PS
SE	Pearson Correlation	1	.540**	.319**	.067**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	2969	2968	2966	2966
SL	Pearson Correlation	.540**	1	.412**	.095**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	2968	2968	2966	2966
SP	Pearson Correlation	.319**	.412**	1	.210**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	2966	2966	2966	2965
PS	Pearson Correlation	.067**	.095**	.210**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	2966	2966	2965	2966

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Question 13 in the questionnaire was analysed to highlight the most important teacher leader responsibilities (Figure 7) using multilayer perceptron analysis (SPSS 24). These responsibilities were chosen from a study conducted by Marzano *et al.* (2005) and helped in building the reputational questionnaire used to identify teacher leaders in two complex schools. The most important responsibility was knowledge of curriculum and assessment, most commonly mentioned in previous studies as pedagogical leadership practices (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Heikka, Halttunen and Waniganayake, 2016).

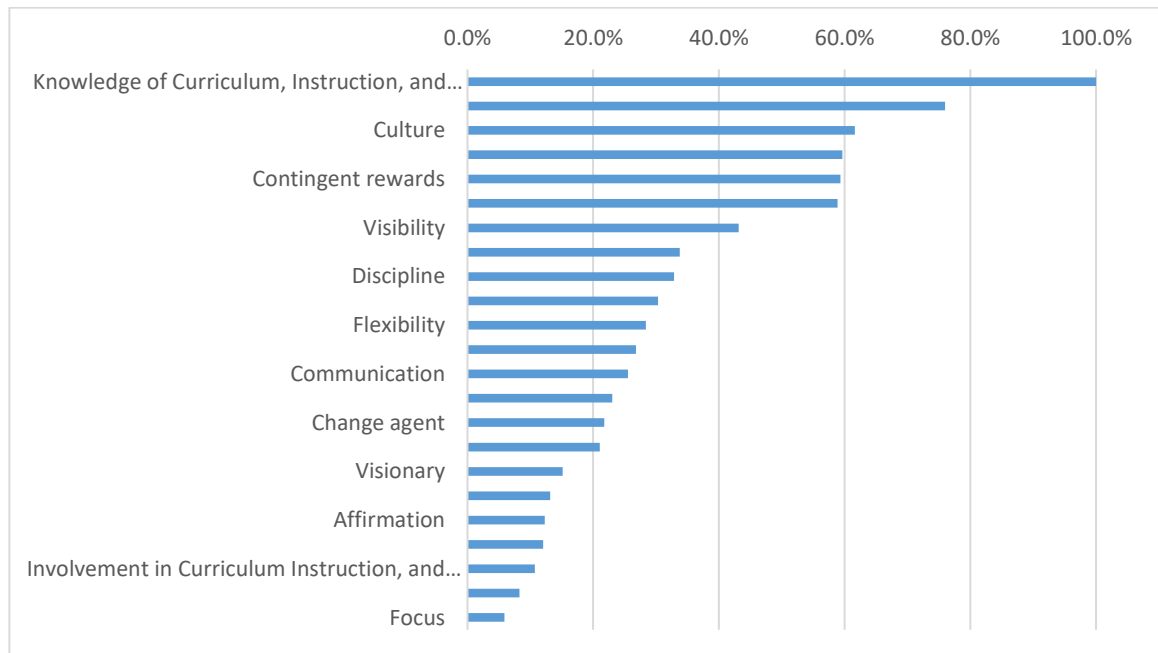


Figure 7. The main characteristics identified by the quantitative phase respondents.



Another question had been added to the questionnaire to explore respondents' perspectives towards teacher leadership titles and the main roles related to teacher leadership. Table 40 shows that Subject coordinator was chosen by 26.5%, followed by 21% for Teacher Trainer.

Table 40: *Teacher Leadership Main Functions*

Teacher Leadership Main Roles	Percentage
Subject coordinator	26.5%
Teacher trainer	20.6%
Proactive and support other teachers	19.2%
Supervise and mentor other teachers	18.8%
Developing curriculum	8.7%
Doing administrative tasks	6.3%

In the questionnaire used in this study, the last three questions were open-ended and respondents were asked about the impact of teacher leadership in their schools, whether teachers were compensated for their leadership roles and if they had other comments. It was interesting to review their comments and feedback. Most of their responses indicated strong positive impact related to school improvements, professional development and better classroom management, and an interesting point was raised about students' love of the nominated teachers. Many respondents stated that they had been compensated with a reduced workload, permission to leave early and verbal praise, while less than a hundred said that no one recognised them or their efforts. As mentioned previously, in the analysis, I will use quotation marks (‘’) to denote direct translation from Arabic to English, and parentheses ( ) to denote responses spoken directly in English. Below are some of the comments on the last question:

‘The leader teacher works without charge because he/she burns from the inside if he/she sees the task is not done as it should be. They will keep trying and will not relax ‘til it is done correctly.’

‘Teachers establish the ideal values to enhance school culture for all employees in the schools to promote and revive the educational situation. Please change the minds of teachers and administrators with the right teaching mission and do not assign unnecessary tasks for teachers.’

‘MoE should support the teacher who instils values in students in reality rather than on paper.’

Although most of these comments were consistent with the findings of previous studies, it is interesting how much they emphasised values and relationship with students.

This study used the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) tool to explore teachers and school leaders' perspectives and the main practices they led in Qatar. Were they teacher-

led or principal-led practices? A lack of significant results did not lead to any preference in selecting the sample, e.g. according to school level, age or qualifications. Therefore, I tried to explore these findings from schools that witnessed all the phases of educational reform in Qatar. In addition, I asked the interviewees to what extent, if at all, teacher leadership differed according to qualifications, age, years of experience and school level.

In other words, I wanted to clarify some of the relationships between variables and TLI factors in a real context where there were clearly several variables. Categories and sub-categories were created and then contrasted, and the properties of categories were tested against the concepts and the 'spoken realities' of the interviewees.

### **QUALITATIVE PHASE**

The sample for the qualitative phase was selected by sending a simple questionnaire to teachers in two complex schools. The questionnaire asked the teachers at each school level in each complex to nominate teacher leaders, including clarifying why they thought those teachers should be nominated, and to select teacher leaders' main responsibilities from the list of 21 responsibilities identified by Marzano *et al.* (2005).

After they submitted their nominations, I excluded the results of the 21 responsibilities as the respondents had selected all the items. The questionnaire also asked whether there were other characteristics or unique traits which made them select a specific teacher. Respondents listed more than 200 characteristics, which I categorised according to Killion and Harrison's (2006, p. 99) list of effective teacher leader characteristics. This list had been selected because it contained clear categories and included main characteristics mentioned by other researchers (see Table 10 in the literature review chapter).

These are some of the characteristics mentioned by the respondents, categorised according to Killion and Harrison's (2006) list:

**Beliefs:** love to learn, have moral purpose, passionate, love their profession

**Teaching expertise:** have good classroom management, have good pedagogical knowledge and practices

**Coaching skills:** support others, train and develop others

**Relationship skills:** communicate effectively, organised, caring, open-minded

**Content expertise:** knowledgeable, have excellent content knowledge

**Leadership skills:** courageous, change agent, develop plans, influence others

I also added these two categories as discussed in the literature review chapter:

**Personality:** energetic, optimistic, flexible, humble, honest

**General knowledge:** familiar with the laws of the country, know best suppliers and places to obtain materials and resources for activities and other tasks, can network with others in the school and other organisations

Table 41 shows the teacher leadership characteristics mentioned by teachers who nominated teacher leaders in their schools. They are grouped into the eight categories mentioned earlier and colour coded: purple for personality, blue for leadership skills, dark green for content expertise, light green for relationship skills, yellow for coaching skills, orange for teaching expertise, grey for general knowledge and pink for beliefs. The majority of the nominating teachers focused on personal characteristics. This table and each table in this section show the answers by school, which are coded using the letters A–H. In addition, this table shows the frequency of the selected characteristics. Some of the interviewees did not answer all the questions.

Interestingly, the most-listed traits were personal and relational. This might suggest that teachers found those two traits more important than the other six. Another possible explanation is that the 21 responsibilities were more closely related to teachers’ profession and performance, which might have forced them to focus on other characteristics that distinguished the nominated teachers from others.

Table 41: *Teacher Leadership Characteristics Mentioned in the Second Questionnaire Based on Teachers’ Perspectives and Frequency by School (A to H).*

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
A challenger (3)	A challenger (1)	A hard worker (1)	A challenger (1)	A challenger (1)	A leader (5)	A leader (10)	A leader (10)
A hard worker (2)	A hard worker (2)	A leader (13)	A leader (12)	A leader (4)	A manager (7)	A manager (2)	A manager (1)
A leader (11)	A leader (7)	A manager (1)	A manager (2)	Accurate (2)	A role model (1)	Accurate (1)	A manager (2)
A manager	A manager (3)	Active (2)	A motivator (2)	Active (1)	Accurate (1)	Balanced (1)	Active (1)
A role model (1)	An improver (1)	Ambitious (1)	A role model (1)	Ambitious (1)	Active (1)	Calm (1)	Alert (1)
Ambitious (1)	Calm (1)	Appreciative (1)	Accurate (1)	Committed (1)	Ambitious (1)	Communicator (1)	An improver (2)
An improver (1)	Committed (1)	Committed (1)	Calm (2)	Communicator (2)	Bears the burden (1)	Controller (1)	Bears the burden (1)
Appreciative (1)	Communicator (1)	Confident (1)	Cooperative (2)	Cooperative (2)	Committed (3)	Cooperative (3)	Committed (1)
Committed (2)	Cooperative (5)	Cooperative (7)	Creative (3)	Creative (5)	Communicator (5)	Creative (3)	Communicator (2)
Cooperative (2)	Creative (1)	Creative (2)	Eloquent (1)	Dedicated (4)	Confident (1)	Decision maker (2)	Cooperative (1)
Creative (1)	Eligible (1)	Enthusiastic (1)	Firm (1)	Fair (2)	Cooperative (3)	Dedicated (1)	Creative (3)
Dedicated (4)	Fair (2)	Fair (2)	Flexible (4)	Firm (1)	Creative (3)	Determined (1)	Dedicated (3)
Fair (1)	Flexible (1)	Flexible (2)	Has a strong personality (6)	Hard worker (2)	Dedicated (1)	Diligent (2)	Diligent (1)
Flexible (7)	Generous (1)	Has a strong personality (3)	Helpful (1)	Has a strong personality (2)	Distinctive (1)	Effective (1)	Effective (1)

Has a strong personality (1)	Has a strong personality (4)	Honest (1)	Honest (3)	Honest (2)	Entrepreneurial(1)	Experienced (4)	Experienced (6)
Honest (2)	Intelligent (1)	Intelligent (2)	Humble (1)	Innovative (1)	Experienced (5)	Friendly (1)	Fair (1)
Intelligent (1)	Joyful (2)	Joyful (1)	Kind (1)	Intelligent (2)	Firm (1)	Firm (1)	Faithful (1)
Knowledgeable (1)	Knowledgeable (1)	Lively (1)	Knowledgeable (1)	Kind (1)	Flexible (5)	Flexible (1)	Hard worker (2)
Lively (1)	Optimistic (2)	Optimistic (3)	Mannered (1)	Optimistic (1)	Has a strong personality (5)	Has a strong personality (3)	Has a strong personality (1)
Mannered (1)	Organised (4)	Organised (2)	Organised (1)	Outstanding (1)	Has IT skills (1)	Honest (2)	Honest (2)
Optimistic (1)	Outstanding (1)	Outstanding (1)	Passionate (4)	Outstanding (1)	Helpful (2)	Human Resource Development (1)	Humble (1)
Organised (2)	Outstanding (1)	Outstanding (2)	Persevering (2)	Passionate (3)	Honest (2)	Innovative (2)	Inspiring (1)
Outstanding (3)	Patient (1)	Persevering (1)	Polite (4)	Patient (1)	Proactive (2)	Knowledgeable (4)	Kind (2)
Passionate (3)	Proactive (3)	Polite (1)	Proactive (1)	Persevering (2)	Innovative (3)	Patient (1)	Knowledgeable (3)
Patient (1)	Problem-solver (3)	Proactive (1)	Professional (3)	Polite (5)	Intelligent (1)	Persevering (3)	Lovable (1)
Polite (1)	Punctual (3)	Problem-solver (1)	Punctual (4)	Problem-solver (2)	Kind (1)	Personal (1)	Mannered (5)
Proactive (3)	Qualified (4)	Punctual (1)	Qualified (3)	Punctual (1)	Lovable (1)	Persuasive (1)	Optimistic (1)
Problem-solver (2)	Team player (1)	Qualified (1)	Respectful (1)	Qualified (3)	Mannered (2)	Punctual (1)	Organised (1)
Punctual (4)	Visionary (1)	Respectful (1)	Responsible (1)	Responsible (2)	Organised (1)	Serious (2)	Passionate (4)
Punctual (2)	Wise (4)	Serious (1)	Team player (1)	Serious (3)	Outstanding (5)	Sincere (1)	Patient (1)
Qualified (2)		Sincere (1)	Trustworthy (1)	Wise (1)	Outstanding (1)	Wise (1)	Persevering (2)
Respectful (2)		Team player (2)	Wise (1)		Passionate (2)		Persuasive (2)
Responsible (3)		Understanding (1)			Patient (2)		Polite (1)
Serious (1)		Wise (2)			Persevering (4)		Proactive (3)
Sincere (3)					Polite (2)		Professional (1)
Team player (2)					Problem-solver (3)		Punctual (1)
Understanding (1)					Responsible (1)		Responsible (1)
Visionary (2)					Sincere (1)		Sapient (1)
Wise (4)					Supportive (1)		Team player (1)

(Purple for personality, blue for leadership skills, dark green for content expertise, light green for relationship skills, yellow for coaching skills, orange for teaching expertise, grey for general knowledge and pink for beliefs)

For the interview analysis, I considered the two main coding typologies identified by Miles and Huberman (1994): descriptive codes and inferential codes. However, Richards (2005) used the terms descriptive, topical and analytical coding (as cited in Punch, 2013, p. 173). In this study, working from the transcriptions, I summarised the descriptive codes and added repeated words or phrases. Then I developed categories

or themes for these codes from the previous studies, mainly from York-Barr and Duke (2004) and the answers from the quantitative phase, including:

- Defining teacher leadership
- Importance of teacher leadership
- Teacher leaders' characteristics
- Teacher leadership practices
- Variables that may affect teacher leadership (age, gender, qualifications, school level, nationality, school size, years of experience)
- Challenges and ways of supporting teacher leaders
- Principal selection and support

Each theme was supported by quotations from the interviewees' responses. Data reduction analysis techniques (Onwuegbuzie, Bustamante and Nelson, 2010) were also employed in coding interview transcripts. The transcripts were first analysed and coded. I then posted all identified themes as a data display. This was done manually, with some use of NVivo 11 as most of the interviews were conducted in Arabic and the programme does not support the Arabic language in all features. The quotes were not attributed to a particular person (via a number or a pseudonym) as this might have led to identification of the interviewees in a small country like Qatar.

As aforementioned, nine nominated teachers did not have any leadership role and did not participate in any committee officially, while the others had several leadership roles, formal and informal. These roles varied from being a research coordinator or representative of an academic or non-academic committee to leading an international team or parental involvement committee, identifying and teaching gifted students, administering reading competitions and even decorating the school. Hence, this was one of the reasons for not excluding any nominee and trying to interview them all (96 interviewees) to explore their experiences in depth and consider what could be added to the literature about teachers' perspectives of teacher leadership by this study.

Through the interview process, I learned what interviewees perceived the formal and informal roles of teacher leadership were and how they viewed their personal practice as well as how they perceived the reality of teacher leadership in their schools. Most interviewees spoke in a very personal way, telling me how success and failure made them feel and what they had experienced despite the questions addressing other subjects. I tried to be an active listener and be sensitive to the interviewees' energy levels and any nonverbal cues. This experience is worthy of a study in itself.

The purpose of this phase was to explore teacher leadership in Qatari government schools and to gain in-depth information and stories from those nominated as teacher leaders. I tried to explicate the results of the quantitative phase, which referred to teacher leaders' experiences. To recap, the quantitative phase showed that the

respondents held positive perspectives towards teacher leadership practices. There were significant differences in the results between teachers with bachelors' and postgraduate degrees, teachers with and without leadership positions, teachers with more or fewer years of experience and teachers with specific nationalities. Although these results were consistent with previous studies, it was surprising that school levels did not show significant results compared to those of previous studies (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014).

Table 42: *Demographic Information, Qualitative Phase*

	Female	Male	Total
<b>Age</b>			
22–29	12	0	
30–39	34	4	
40–49	19	9	
50–59	7	8	
Over 60	0	3	
<i>Total</i>	72	24	96
<b>Qualifications</b>			
B.A.	58	11	
B.A. & Diploma	6	4	
Master's	6	6	
Ph.D.	2	3	
<i>Total</i>	72	24	96
<b>Position</b>			
Teacher	42	17	
Coord	30	7	
<i>Total</i>	72	24	96
<b>School level</b>			
Primary	48	0	
Prep	6	8	
Sec	18	16	
<i>Total</i>	72	24	96
<b>Nationality</b>			
Qatari	26	2	
Non-Qatari	46	22	
<i>Total</i>	72	24	96

Demographic data was collected from the interviewees during the interviews. Table 42 shows a summary of their ages, qualifications, positions, school levels and nationalities. It is clear that there are more female than male teachers, as male teachers do not teach male primary students from years one to six in Qatar.

More than 25% of the quantitative phase respondents selected 'subject coordinator' when asked to identify the role of a teacher leader. Regarding the most important responsibilities, respondents most frequently selected 'being knowledgeable about curriculum and assessment', then 'having positive beliefs and good relationships with others'.

The qualitative phase started to explain these results and add some flesh and real stories about the interviewees' experiences and leadership contributions. It is noteworthy that all interviewees mentioned that they had never heard the term *teacher leadership* or *teacher leader* and asked for further explanation.

'Do you mean subject coordinator?'

'Are we talking about a subject coordinator? What do you mean by teacher leadership?'

I did not give a definition and tried to encourage them to share their own understanding and experiences of teacher leadership and their perspectives, despite a lack of familiarity with the term. I clarified that we were talking about teacher leadership more than a specific person (leader).

This section shows the findings according to the themes:

### **1. What do teachers and school leaders in Qatari government schools understand by the term 'teacher leadership'?**

This theme was related to the interviewees' answers to the following sub-questions:

- How do the interviewees define teacher leadership?
- What are the main characteristics of teacher leaders identified in this study?
- To what extent, if at all, are teachers able to be teacher leaders or to practise leadership?
- To what extent, if at all, do these teachers consider themselves teacher leaders?
- What is the impact or importance of teacher leadership?
- In what aspects are those teachers practising leadership?

This section shows the interviewees' perspectives towards these themes. Some of their answers were quantified, bearing in mind that some interviewees did not answer all the questions.

## *Defining teacher leadership*

The first question the interviewees were asked was designed to discover their perspectives of teacher leadership. I wanted to see if all teachers were given the opportunity to practise teacher leadership. Definitions of leadership varied tremendously. Some mentioned that leadership meant power and authority. For them, teacher leadership was connected to formal positions such as subject coordinator, while the majority viewed leadership as influencing others.

The interviewees' answers mainly focused on defining teacher leaders by listing their main characteristics, such as instilling values and building character. Thirty interviewees highlighted characteristics like being patient, open-minded or a lifelong learner or having courage or other traits. This list was analysed and will be mentioned later in this section. However, ten interviewees referred only to subject coordinators or vice principals as teacher leaders and insisted during the interview that this was what teacher leadership meant. In Qatar, most of the coordinators teach the minimum load; this load depends on the number of teaching hours in each subject. Yet some personnel, such as project coordinators and early childhood coordinators, do not teach.

Table 43 shows the main categories of interviewees' comments and their frequency. It was clear that interviewees referred to teacher leaders as having followers. However, their comments varied as to whether teacher leaders lead only students or all stakeholders. One of the interviewees stated,

‘A teacher leader is like a driver with different passengers’.

Table 43: *Interviewees' Definitions of Teacher Leader and Their Frequency*

Item	Frequency
Teacher leaders lead students only to enhance their learning and instil values	40
Teacher leaders are defined by their characteristics (each interviewee had a different list)	30
Teacher leaders lead all stakeholders and help improve teaching and learning practices	15
Teacher leaders are middle school leaders, e.g. subject coordinators	10
Missing data	1
Total	96

In addition, it was clear that teachers' definitions of leadership varied according to their own experiences and perspectives. Some defined teacher leadership based on teacher leader characteristics, and others defined it based on teacher leaders' roles.



‘Teacher leadership is related to teaching and learning and to remaining teaching while influencing others’.

‘Teacher leadership is being a *Murabbi* and changing students’ behaviours’.

All interviewees agreed that they had never heard this term, and no one could even suggest a term in Arabic that could be used as a translation of teacher leadership. I realised that this is a very complicated question when an interviewee said,

‘Well, in the Arab mind, leadership and leaders means a huge thing for the others and they have huge expectations’.

Five interviewees in different schools mentioned the ‘Arab mind’. When asked what he meant, one teacher answered:

‘Being a leader may bring to mind the great man theory and being a hero’.

Under this umbrella, all interviewees stated that teacher leadership is mainly about influencing students in classrooms because the main functions of teaching include classroom management, maintaining a good relationship with students and instilling values.

## **2. What is the nature of teacher leadership in Qatari schools?**

In order to explore interviewees’ perspectives of teacher leadership and not only of teacher leaders, I asked them the above question. Twenty-seven interviewees stated that it was impossible for all teachers to practise teacher leadership regardless of what was meant by the term because they believed not all teachers had the capacity or the desire to be leaders or to practise leadership (Table 44). One interviewee in this group explained:

‘Teaching is a gift like singing, and being a teacher leader is considered the same’,

Thirty-eight interviewees said that teachers could practise leadership sometimes if they had the desire or had been trained. In addition, all agreed that teacher leadership included formal and informal positions. Their comments included:

‘Teachers should be leaders as they influence everyone, especially students’.

‘Teachers should lead themselves first before anyone else’.

‘Yes, teachers should be leaders, but are they?’

As mentioned in the previous question, most of the interviewees’ answers were related to defining *teacher leaders*. While I tried to clarify that the interview was about teacher leadership and not only teacher leaders, it was difficult to emphasise this point without guiding their answers or giving them a definition rather than simply gathering their perspectives and understanding. Those who selected ‘not all teachers can be

leaders' might have had a different perspective towards teachers practising leadership who are not recognised as leaders.

Table 44: *Responses to 'Are all teachers teacher leaders?'*

	Leading Themselves	Yes	Sometimes	Impossible	I Don't Know	Total
A		6	3	4	4	17
B		2	9	2		13
C	1	4	1	2		8
D	1	1	8	4		14
E		1	6	6	1	14
F		2				2
G		1	8	6	1	16
H	1	1	3	3		8
Total	3	18	38	27	6	94
Missing data						2

### 3. To what extent, if at all, do these teachers consider themselves teacher leaders?

Another question explored interviewees' perspectives towards themselves, asking them if they saw themselves as leaders and what characteristics their colleagues recognised in them. Interviewees were asked to identify whether they saw themselves as teacher leaders or not, and why (see Table 45).

Table 45: *Responses to 'Do you consider yourself a teacher leader?'*

School	Maybe	No	Yes	I Don't Know	Total
A	2	1	12	2	17
B		3	7		10
C			7	1	8
D	1	1	11	1	14
E			2		2
F	1	2	8		11
G	2	2	9	3	16
H		2	4	1	7
Total	6	11	60	8	85
Missing data					11

The majority agreed and responded positively that they considered themselves teacher leaders and gave examples. Eleven interviewees did not see themselves as teacher leaders and they had been nominated solely based on their relationships with others. Those eleven interviewees participated in many committees and had many success stories. Interestingly, when I asked them why they did not consider themselves leaders, nine of the eleven referred to the importance of being humble and not seeing themselves in a more advanced position than their peers did. Six mentioned that it was unacceptable to show their abilities in order to avoid being arrogant. Some referred to this as an Islamic belief. For example, the Quran states, ‘Do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like anyone who is self-deluded and boastful’ (Quran 31:18).

‘Humility can guide us to Heaven, just as its opposite, arrogance [*kibr* in Arabic], can only lead us into Hell’.

‘It is not for me to say whether I am a leader or not; others should recognise this in me’.

In contrast, two teachers clearly stated:

‘The way I see myself is how others will see me, and the way I treat and place myself is how others will treat me’.

‘I consider being a leader part of being a teacher, and that is why I chose to work as a teacher’.

Although some interviewees answered that they considered themselves leaders, some commented that they had not shown their abilities yet and were waiting for a better opportunity. Moreover, they did not consider what they were doing at the time ‘being a teacher leader’ because they considered this a day-to-day task. I found this to be a very interesting point of view that might indicate underestimation of their work or a lack of knowledge of what leadership is.

Eleven teachers mentioned that they had not previously thought they had the skills and abilities to lead and had discovered them only when they were assigned leadership tasks. The following are examples of these interviewees’ comments:

‘School leaders need to discover talents in teachers just as in students and they need to know about talent management’.

‘In Qatar, I did things I thought I would never be able to do, such as using educational technologies and organising events’.

‘Yes, I still have a lot to offer, but have not found the right opportunity yet’.

#### 4. What are the main characteristics of teacher leaders?

When I asked the nominated teachers how they could identify teachers who practise teacher leadership, they mentioned more than 150 characteristics (see Table 46). Table 46 is similar to Table 41 (which summarises the responses of the teachers who nominated the interviewees). It uses the same colours shown in Table 41, but is darker, to differentiate between the tables in the two phases. The characteristics are grouped into the eight categories mentioned earlier and colour coded: purple for personality, blue for leadership skills, dark green for content expertise, light green for relationship skills, yellow for coaching skills, orange for teaching expertise, grey for general knowledge and pink for beliefs. The majority of the nominated teachers also focused on personal characteristics. This table and each table in this section show the answers by school, which are coded using the letters A–H.

Table 46: Interviewees' perspectives towards teacher leadership characteristics and their frequency by school

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Accepting (3)	Accepting (1)	Alert (1)	Ambitious (1)	Confident (1)	Educated (1)	Affectionate (1)	
Adventurer (1)	Ambitious (1)	Careful (1)	Appreciative (2)	Problem-solver (1)	Ambitious (1)	Ambitious (1)	
Alert (1)	Charismatic (1)	Confident (1)	Collaborative (2)	Responsible (1)	Change agent (2)	Caring (1)	Adventurer (1)
Ambitious (1)	Confident (3)	Cooperative (1)	Courageous (1)		Creative (3)	Caring (1)	Bold (1)
Bold (1)	Courageous (1)	Decision maker (1)	Dedicated (2)		Developer (1)	Creative (1)	Charismatic (1)
Charismatic (1)	Dedicated (1)	Dedicated (1)	Diplomatic (1)		Dynamic (1)	Doer (1)	Confident (1)
Committed (1)	Diplomatic (1)	Fair (1)	Disciplined (1)		Encouraging (1)	Encouraging (1)	Considerate (1)
Confident (2)	Encouraging (1)	Well-mannered (1)	Encouraging (1)		Faithful (1)	Fair (1)	Decision maker (1)
Decision maker (4)	Fair (2)	Has a position (1)	Firm (1)		Firm (2)	Firm (1)	Dedicated (1)
Dedicated (1)	Flexible (1)	Highly qualified (1)	Flexible (2)		Flexible (3)	Focused (1)	Disciplined (1)
Flexible (1)	Good listener (1)	Intelligent (1)	Friendly (2)		Friendly (1)	Highly qualified (2)	Dreamer (1)
Generous (1)	Guidance (1)	Organised (1)	Good listener (1)		Honest (4)	Honest (2)	Fair (1)
Good Listener (1)	Highly qualified (1)	Patient (1)	Good manners (1)		Inspiring (2)	Positive (2)	Flexible (3)
Has good time management (1)	Intellectual (1)	Problem-solver (1)	Highly qualified (2)		Lovable (1)	Proactive (2)	Friendly (2)
Helpful (1)	Kind (1)	Prompt (1)	Honest (4)		Loyal (1)	Professional (1)	Generous (1)
Highly qualified (2)	Knowledgeable (1)	Qualified (1)	Intelligent (2)		Open-minded (2)	Punctual (1)	Has good time management (1)
Honest (1)	Organised (1)		Kind (1)		Organised (2)	Researcher (1)	Intellectual (1)

<i>Intellectual (2)</i>	<i>Patient (1)</i>		<i>Mature (1)</i>		<i>Passionate (2)</i>	<i>Respectful (3)</i>	<i>Helpful (1)</i>
<i>Kind (1)</i>	<i>Proactive (1)</i>		<i>Organised (1)</i>		<i>Patient (2)</i>	<i>Role model (2)</i>	<i>Highly qualified (2)</i>
<i>Knowledgeable (1)</i>	<i>Problem-solver (1)</i>		<i>Passionate (3)</i>		<i>Positive (2)</i>	<i>Serious (1)</i>	<i>Intelligent (1)</i>
<i>Lovable (1)</i>	<i>Responsible (3)</i>		<i>Patient (1)</i>		<i>Professional (1)</i>	<i>Strong personality (1)</i>	<i>Kind (1)</i>
<i>Open-minded (1)</i>	<i>Strong personality (1)</i>		<i>Planning (2)</i>		<i>Qualified (3)</i>		<i>Reliable(1)</i>
<i>Organised (4)</i>	<i>Wise (1)</i>		<i>Positive (1)</i>		<i>Tireless (1)</i>		<i>Open-minded (1)</i>
<i>Passionate (1)</i>			<i>Professional (1)</i>		<i>Understanding (1)</i>		<i>Patient (1)</i>
<i>Patient (2)</i>			<i>Professional (1)</i>				<i>Persuasive (1)</i>
<i>Persuasive (1)</i>			<i>Qualified (3)</i>				<i>Positive (2)</i>
<i>Philanthropic (1)</i>			<i>Quiet (1)</i>				<i>Proactive (1)</i>
<i>Positive (1)</i>			<i>Role model (1)</i>				<i>Problem-solver (1)</i>
<i>Proactive (1)</i>			<i>Strong personality (4)</i>				<i>Professional (3)</i>
<i>Problem-solver (1)</i>			<i>Wise (2)</i>				<i>Qualified (1)</i>
<i>Qualified (2)</i>							<i>Researcher (1)</i>
<i>Reflective (1)</i>							<i>Responsible (2)</i>
<i>Respectful (1)</i>							<i>Serious (1)</i>
<i>Responsible (2)</i>							<i>Team player (1)</i>
<i>Role model (1)</i>							<i>Understanding (1)</i>
<i>Serious (1)</i>							<i>Visionary (1)</i>
<i>Strong personality (1)</i>							
<i>Understanding (1)</i>							
<i>Unforgettable (1)</i>							
<i>Wise (2)</i>							

Interviewees' comments varied. For example:

'They should know how to deal with everyone. It is not only about teaching'.

'Being understanding, flexible, patient, smart, a problem-solver and taking care of everyone'.

'I will not list leadership skills as that is obvious: he needs to be human'.

Most of the characteristics in the previous table were personal traits, which might indicate the importance teachers placed on personal traits. In addition, they tended to focus on the need to communicate effectively and respect others.

### **5. In which aspects could teachers practise leadership roles?**

All interviewees said that teachers could practise leadership in any aspect, inside or outside of schools. Some examples they mentioned were planning activities, training others, instilling values, helping novice teachers and conducting research. The following quotes describe ways interviewees saw teacher leaders practising leadership:

‘They always mention their opinion in every aspect and volunteer’.

‘Teacher leadership helps you in anything, even if it is unusual or odd’.

‘Those teachers spend more time with students’.

I found it interesting that they mentioned ‘instilling values’ as a leadership role. Some elaborated and described it as linking their values to every aspect of life, not only those on paper. Others mentioned being a role model.

It is noteworthy that all interviewees mentioned that teachers’ roles had changed over the previous decade due to the educational reform in Qatar. The systems applied by the SEC and MoE and the types of professional development and education available for teachers in Qatar had changed. Some of the interviewees’ comments were:

‘Teachers used to plan individually before the educational reform and only teach; now they plan together and do many other things like pastoral care, activities and administrative tasks’.

‘Teachers used to care only about students; now, they need to do lots of paperwork and share new ideas, especially about using new technologies’.

‘In the old days, during the MoE, before the educational reform, teachers used to have a smaller teaching load and only focus on teaching; we had to do nothing related to administrative work. The admin team used to run it all. Now we have committees led by teachers for activities, buying new equipment and resources, planning events and definitely for curriculum and assessment practices’.

Elaborating on their perspectives of paperwork and participating in committees, most reported that these were a waste of time and effort. One said,

‘No one ever reads these papers. Each year, new decisions are made, so we throw out the previous files’.

All interviewees stated that teacher leaders could participate in all aspects of school life, including administrative tasks, professional development, improving teaching and learning, leading activities like national holiday events, dealing with parents, running competitions and most importantly, leading their classrooms. Twenty interviewees mentioned that the teachers' role extends beyond the classroom and into the community.

Interviewees differentiated between teacher leadership roles and responsibilities at the beginning of the education reform and at the time of the interviews. At the start of the reform, teachers influenced school policies, curriculum development, communication with parents and students, assessments, school strategic plans and articulation of the vision. In contrast, at the time of the interviews, these roles had become centralised, planned by the MoE, and teachers only executed them and helped with day-to-day work. This transformation was described in chapter 2 (especially Table 4). Most of the changes were due to the unexpected consequences of the reforms, as RAND's famous report stated (Brewer *et al.*, 2007).

Teachers who witnessed that period acknowledged that they faced many challenges and that there was a lack of resources during that phase of the reform. However, they missed having more autonomy and practising as they had before, e.g., curriculum planning. This raises the question of how teachers can have more autonomy, yet ensure quality education and be able to apply new ideas without having a centralised system. Moreover, most interviewees had leadership roles, but according to them, they were requested to implement pre-planned guidelines, not to lead.

In terms of professional development (PD), all interviewees mentioned that teacher leadership included educating and helping others to improve teaching and learning. Bearing in mind that the MoE evaluated teachers' performance on items including educating (training) other teachers, I asked the interviewees what that meant, and they referred to types of professional development beyond the official workshops requested by the school leaders.

'When they develop their skills, they train others by showing practical examples and by spreading best practices'.

'In the old days, teachers used to do most of the tasks individually. Currently they need to plan together and work in teams and need teacher leaders' support in different areas'.

'The MoE requires utilising new educational technologies in daily practice. Not all of us are used to these applications and teacher leaders help us learn and use them in a better way'.

'Those teacher leaders are like diamonds. They cannot hide their radiance, their knowledge, skills and daily practices'.

Two mentioned that teachers could help everyone, including school guards and janitors, develop their work; a few mentioned that they could be involved in any aspect of education as long as their main goal was to increase student achievement. When I asked them how they would know a teacher's goal, their responses included the following statement:

'You will recognise them and know, they have a vision and clear goals'.

Although I understood what they were referring to, it might have been difficult for school leaders and other stakeholders to recognise every teacher's contribution. I believe no one can judge intentions. However, this might differentiate teachers who practise leadership tasks and roles without intention or consistency from those who are consistent in their practices in most or all cases and have a clear vision/purpose.

One interesting example was a teacher who did not participate in any committee. When I asked her why she was nominated, she said it was because she managed a financial<sup>12</sup> support programme for teachers and was always the project manager for social events for the teachers in all departments. This is a clear example of how not all teacher leadership practices were linked to student achievement. However, it can be argued that the above example of a financial support activity facilitated better conditions for teachers, and this enabled them to spend more time with students.

In general, there was confusion between middle school leaders' (coordinators) roles and responsibilities and formal and informal teacher leadership roles. This might be due to the changes the MoE enforced. At the beginning of the school reform, subject coordinators were considered school leaders, but the changes to the NPSTL categorised subject coordinators with teachers when they applied for licencing. However, all interviewees agreed that the main teacher leadership responsibilities were teaching and learning, and that aspects of teacher leadership extend beyond having formal authority.

## **6. Teacher leadership importance**

Some interviewees confused the definition of teacher leadership with its importance and impact. All interviewees agreed that teacher leadership was important, and when I asked them to elaborate, all of them stated that it is important to student achievement and to everything stakeholders do to enhance teaching and learning in

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<sup>12</sup> In Egypt (and other Arab countries), it was customary to collect a certain amount of money, e.g. 1000 QR, from a few teachers monthly, and each teacher in turn received the money for the next 10 months. They called it *Jameiyeh* (جمعية).



schools. Three teachers in three different schools used the word *octopus* to describe teacher leaders' ability to handle multiple tasks at once. One stated:

'Teacher leaders are like an octopus: they multitask, and they try to change and develop many things in schools and outside schools'.

Their comments also supported the notion that teacher leaders are necessary for school improvement as well as being learners themselves and educating others:

'We need teacher leaders in schools to be role models in implementing strategies effectively and spreading new ideas. The teachers who are now in leadership positions are not there because they know everything. They are also teacher learners; they are brave and try new things. They want to see improvements for everyone at all levels and they are willing to do the work'.

'Teacher leaders should be good thieves. Yes, I know, they need to steal any idea, even if it is not related directly to their work, and utilise it in their context in a creative way'.

'Teacher leaders do not only suggest new ideas, they give a clear proposal and lead the implementation'.

'Teacher leaders go beyond school walls; they are leaders even in the street and the neighbourhood'.

'Teacher leaders not only increase student achievement, they instil values and form good character'.

All the teachers gave great examples of how they influenced students and parents. For instance, one teacher helped a low-achieving child from a divorced family become one of the highest achievers. After 15 years, this student invited the teacher to his wedding and told her that she was his other mother.

Many examples were given showing how teacher leadership had a positive impact on teachers practising leadership of themselves.

'Everything has changed. I have become more confident and able to deal with people and manage different situations'.

'My mother says, "I do not know how they selected you for this task. They should see you at home!" Yes, she still sees me as that young girl with no experience'.

I have found that this last comment is so true in our daily lives; people tend to see the old version of one another and do not update their perspectives. This requires school leaders and other staff to be open-minded and not judge a book by its cover, especially when recognising others' abilities as they change and potentially develop over time. We change on a daily basis, but we do not see these minor changes that affect the way we behave or the decisions we make.

In listing the positive aspects of teacher leadership, no one made a direct link to student achievement. However, eight interviewees mentioned that teacher leadership could have a negative impact if the teacher leader had one or more of the following points:

- ***Lack of a clear vision***

‘Those teachers could harm the whole community if their vision is not good, intentionally or not’.

‘I have seen some teachers who influence others and work hard, but they are guiding others in the wrong direction and their objectives are not clear’.

Many teachers shared examples of incidents that occurred during the reform, when school leaders (principals, vice principals and subject coordinators) gave them a choice to select and design the curriculum, plan for the school and select programmes. However, this negatively affected student and teacher performance because those leaders did not have a clear vision. Although I agree with their examples, I find having leaders who do not have clear vision frightening, as not all teachers are used to reflecting and criticising or even have the courage to discuss the plans and information given to them.

- ***Distraction from their main tasks***

‘Teachers will not be able to perform their main tasks and may decline tasks if they are blamed for not performing well’.

‘Yes, teacher leadership has a positive impact. Students will increase their achievement, but on a negative note, he/she will be distracted from the main tasks and responsibilities’.

Although other teachers mentioned that teacher leaders are like octopuses, this could be linked to teachers’ personalities or the tasks given to them. There might be a different outcome, depending on the individuals and the circumstances under which the tasks are administered.

- ***Lack of qualification to complete the required tasks***

‘Positive – if they love the work. Negative – if they are doing the task for the first time and have minimal support or lack of training’.

‘Others may become jealous and do not know how much support you need to carry out leadership role tasks. Even if you have done it before, there is always a new context to learn and new members to relay the information to. There is also the importance of knowing the right terminology’.

Interviewees gave examples of how a teacher might be qualified enough for a specific task in one context, but the same teacher might not be able to complete a

similar task in a different context. Note that many expatriates participated in this study, and they highlighted that settling into a new city could make a difference. However, a new context can even be in the same school, but with different team members or a new set of tasks. Some people may assume that it is the same, but it is a different context and requires induction, training and support.

- ***Incitement of competition among other staff or feelings of inability to cope with the teacher leaders' efforts due to his/her performance***

'It is clear that teacher leaders will improve their performance, the students, colleagues and the whole school, but their efforts could be considered negative if their standards are too high and no one agrees to work with them'.

'I was offered the position of vice principal but refused because I was afraid I would be blamed, the achievement would not be as I expected or my colleagues would refuse to help me'.

These comments varied because they were just feelings and the teachers who shared them were not facing their fears. Contrary to their statements, their colleagues might have helped and supported them as some interviewees worked in the same team of those who gave the comments. In addition, they may have lacked understanding of the situation; this was especially true for one example, when the previous coordinator was supposed to become a member of the same team she had led.

- ***Selection of a less qualified or less ideal candidate that leads to loss of trust in school leadership selection***

Interviewees gave many examples of poor leadership selection, especially when the educational reform was launched in Qatar and unqualified teachers were selected to lead departments or even lead teams or execute new tasks. This might have happened for many reasons, such as a lack of principal experience or because principals selected their friends, as some interviewees mentioned. More about this point is presented in Principal Support of teacher leaders (see below). Here, I offer two examples of such a situation:

'Teacher leaders have a positive impact as role models and it can be negative when there is antagonism, anxiety and competition with others'.

'Yes, teachers might lose trust if someone unqualified is selected, and they will try to do things in front of the principal just to show off'.

In saying that, all of the interviewees agreed that teacher leaders enhance the schools' reputation and that schools will be known for having even one effective teacher leader. The impact of teacher leaders will be noticed in many areas, e.g. student achievement, student behaviour, teaching and learning strategies, dealing with parents, community service and articulating schools' visions.

This section showed that there was no agreement about defining *teacher leadership* or *teacher leader*. All interviewees agreed that being an excellent teacher in terms of instructional practices did not equal teacher leadership, as personal and communication skills were also required. All agreed that teacher leaders improve the school and their colleagues but highlighted the potential for negative impact of various kinds.

## **7. What factors affect teacher leadership?**

Although this question was answered using the TLI in the quantitative phase, the variables did not have significant results, which was inconsistent with previous studies (Stone, Horejs and Lomas, 1997; York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Grenda and Hackmann, 2014; Kale and Özdelen, 2014; Gülbahar, 2017). Therefore, I added a question to the qualitative phase to explore this inconsistency in depth. To explain the results, I asked the interviewees whether they thought teacher leadership practices differed according to school level, qualifications and gender.

### ***School level***

Remarkably, the majority of interviewees said there was a difference between teacher leadership practices in primary and other levels. Here, I quote three interviewees:

‘Teachers from different levels have the same training, meetings and MoE sessions, we speak about the same things, but it does not relate to what we do in actual work’.

‘Although the MoE sends memos with unified leadership tasks for all schools in all levels, there are needs for teachers and students in each level that are different from the others’.

‘Primary teachers need to plan collaboratively more than secondary teachers; the content of the curriculum and types of assessment are different and cannot be the same responsibilities’.

During the reform, any teacher could teach at any level, even if he/she did not have a teaching degree, while, at the time of writing, the MoE strictly regulates teacher hiring and transfer between school levels. Nevertheless, teachers of different subjects and school levels attend the same training models, which might lead to misconceptions about tasks and requirements.

Many interviewees brought up the fact that in Qatar teachers could change schools and teach different levels, so the main tasks were the same. That might have led to having the same practices at all levels in general. Interestingly, all teachers who had worked at multiple levels assured me that there were differences, as the students vary

in age and educational needs. The rest of the interviewees' answers varied between 'sometimes', 'I don't know' and 'no, there was no difference' between teachers' practices at each school level (see Table 47).

*Table 47: Differences in Teachers' Tasks/Practices Among School Levels According to Interviewees*

School Name	Sometimes	No	Yes	I Don't Know	Total
A	1		13	1	15
B	1	3	5		9
C			6		6
D	1	4	7	1	13
E			2		2
F			6	5	11
G	2	1	11		14
H			8		8
Total	5	8	58	7	78
Missing data					18

### *Age and years of experience*

In regard to age and length of teaching experience, interviewees held different opinions. Some differentiated between age and experience, while others said age was just a number. The majority highlighted that experience was the most important factor. Many said that it depended on the teacher's personality and whether they were able to utilise their experience.

'We may have a teacher who is 60 years old and she is keen to learn and develop her skills, and you may have a 35-year-old who is reluctant to change and lives in the past'.

Demographic information about interviewees was presented in Table 42, showing that female teachers were mostly 20–40 years old, while male teachers were mostly 40–60 years old. Six male interviewees had been given exceptions to continue working in Qatar (teachers are required by law to retire at age 60) because of their experience and performance and the lack of qualified male teachers in the country. This alone could indicate the importance of years of experience and age in Qatar.

## *Qualifications*

On the subject of qualifications, many teachers did not have a teaching certificate. As I explained in the background chapter, many Arab countries allow graduates from different major subjects to work as teachers despite not having a degree or certificate in education. All of them emphasised the importance of educational background and knowledge.

## *Gender*

Regarding whether gender affected teacher leadership practices, 55 of the 96 interviewees agreed that it did, 9 stated that it did not and 32 said that it depended on the individual, not the gender. Interviewees who agreed mentioned some of the main differences between female and male teachers:

### **Female teachers' comments**

'Female teachers apply the rules literally. They are very specific'.

'Being a female means you are not allowed to participate in many activities unless your family allows you. Those activities may be in Doha/local or international'.

'It might be hard for female teachers to stay after working hours as we have families'.

### **Male teachers' comments**

'Male teachers run things smoothly and do not focus on details'.

'Female teachers keep better documentation and better teaching strategies because they take care of details'.

Interviewees' comments showed that female teachers tended to pay closer attention to details and follow rules. When I asked for examples, many cited almost the same example:

'Female subject coordinators will not allow you to grade papers at home or finish your work and leave, while we know that working conditions at the boys' school are more flexible'.

Regarding keeping a better documentation system, the male interviewees stated that female teachers beautify their files and classrooms alike, and like to keep meticulous records of everything, but men just want to provide details of what they have achieved.

It is noteworthy that some interviewees argued that these differences do not indicate that being female or male is better or worse in this respect. However, their

acknowledgement that differences existed highlights that these differences need to be recognised and accommodated.

### **8. What kind of support do teacher leaders suggest would benefit them?**

All interviewees mentioned that teacher leadership comes from intrinsic motivation and responsibility, the desire to change and the pursuit of God's (Allah's) acceptance<sup>13</sup>. Yet, they mentioned different types of support: support from other staff/colleagues; support from school leaders/principals; support from their families, e.g. a spouse. The majority said the main thing that helps develop teacher leadership is helping teachers reflect and develop their practices individually. Clear expectations, clear procedures, team support, the previous leader's support and permission to try new things and practise the leadership role were main points mentioned by the interviewees.

#### *Staff support*

All interviewees highlighted administrative staff as a main source of support for teachers and did not have opinions regarding teachers' leadership roles and responsibilities. The MoE has separate units that supervise admin staff, teachers and school principals.

In response to the question of how other teachers and admin teams may have reacted to teacher leadership roles, all interviewees agreed that this might cause conflict and jealousy between teachers, depending on their personalities. Interestingly, all interviewees said similar things to the interviewee who noted:

‘You cannot succeed by yourself; leadership is building teams and working together’.

Other comments included:

‘Teacher leaders may start working on a task, but to achieve the goals and be sustainable, they need help and support from colleagues. Otherwise, it will be a battle and they will face difficulties’.

‘Teacher leaders need to be given the green light, clear procedures and support from their colleagues to flourish’.

‘We do not need the team to agree on everything, but we need space and open-mindedness’.

‘Trust and support are keys for me to work with others’.

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<sup>13</sup> Three interviewees told me they were non-Muslims although I did not ask about their religion. Yet, they mentioned the importance of faith in driving one's actions.

Teachers had good relationships with the administrative (admin) team; admin teams were comprised of school leaders and any staff that did not teach lessons in the classroom/school (See Figure 2 in chapter 2). Most admin employees, e.g., admin supervisor, had secondary degrees. All of the above comments were related to teachers and subject coordinators.

When referring to peer support, all the teachers said that, for the last 10 years, the educational reform had reinforced the need for collaboration. In addition, practices at the time of writing require teachers to share new ideas as they start to develop plans as a group and hold weekly professional development opportunities. School schedules should include time to meet and plan together. All interviewees mentioned that they helped each other and asked for help when needed, but that they asked a trusted person who would share their knowledge and not cheat them or hide important information.

One interviewee was surprised when a new teacher told her after one year that she was upset about her lack of support, and the interviewee clarified that she had thought it was clear that they shared ideas and supported each other. These assumptions might be clear for teachers who had worked in Qatari schools for a long time, but for new teachers or those in new teams further communication might be required.

### *Principal support*

In general, interviewees in this study said that principals selected teachers for leadership roles in their schools and assigned tasks according to their experience. They could be selected directly by the principal or by committees that recommended teachers for specific tasks. In addition, some schools may have asked other teachers to nominate colleagues. Five interviewees mentioned that this selection might have been based on *Wasta* without the candidate being qualified for the required role, while the other interviewees reported that the selection depended on the task or on the school's policies and criteria. Many interviewees mentioned that students, parents and even some stakeholders should be involved in selecting teachers for leadership roles, based on the task and expectations.

All teachers said that each school principal had a *WhatsApp* group on their mobiles to communicate with all teachers, and the principals applied an open-door policy. They encouraged good ideas; however, they might have selected certain teachers because there was no one else to do the task or they just wanted the easiest way and selected the same person every time.

During the interviewing process, two principals did not want me to interview certain candidates because they did not think these teachers were teacher leaders or had ever practised leadership. I negotiated hard with the principals to conduct the interviews and explained that it was part of the study to explore teachers' perspectives. In one case,



while I was waiting for the interviewee, the principal said negative things about a candidate and during the interview, this candidate mentioned that she faced a very difficult situation that affected her performance. When I asked her if the principal or the direct manager knew, the answer was no, as this was a personal issue and she did not think there was a need to inform her colleagues or line managers. This incident would seem to indicate the principal's role in governing opportunities for teachers.

In contrast, many interviewees gave examples of how their current or previous principals helped them try new roles and gave them advice.

'I will never forget how she [her principal] supported me and encouraged me to share my experiences and learn new things'.

'The principal was always there, and he shared new ideas with us and encouraged us to suggest, put forward and implement new ideas to enhance student achievement'.

'The principal was like this [he drew a few lines towards the centre]. He always entices us to achieve the school's vision and inspires us to do our best' (See Figure 8).

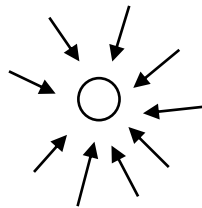


Figure 8 An interviewee describing his principal's impact on the teachers

'You know there are some nationalities principals might not select for leadership roles or some principals were patronising to certain individuals'.

Most of the interviewees praised their principals for having an open-door policy and welcoming new ideas and even allowing teachers to apply these new ideas. Only one interviewee mentioned that the principal did not encourage new ideas. Another highlighted the difference between being an old teacher in the school and being a new teacher joining the school, even with previous experience in other schools.

'In my country, I used to lead teams and do many great things. Here, this is my first year and they consider me the new teacher in school who is not allowed to lead yet'.

In Qatar, new teachers are those who are fresh graduates or come from another country, regardless of their previous experience. This is because teachers may not be familiar with the system and MoE procedures, students, culture, religion and country.

All interviewees mentioned the importance of their principals' ability to evaluate teachers and identify their strengths. This process of discovering strengths was not

according to what others say, but according to teachers' performance. One interviewee said this was done by:

'dealing with us as humans and listening to us. Knowing our abilities and capabilities'.

Twenty-five teachers said they accepted leadership roles just because of the way the principal talked to them; they said they would do whatever was requested due to the way the principals presented the task to them.

'I knew that I would regret it as it was a huge task, but the way she talked to me, I would never say no!'

'My husband told me, 'You are crazy'. I told him no one can refuse a request from her'.

'When our principal requests something, you know that he trusts you to do this task. You will not let him down'.

The previous comments showed that teachers saw leadership roles as an extra load; even spouses and family members could affect acceptance of leadership positions. This verbal discussion might have included negotiating responsibilities and how the teacher would be compensated, or simply just convincing them that the school needed their efforts and the principal trusted them.

As part of the response to this question, interviewees mentioned that teachers might have accepted new roles due to desire, asking Allah for rewards, a love of change and developing others, desire for a prestigious position, showing off, passion, ambition, looking for better opportunities or as part of learning and developing their skills. Many male teachers focused on the benefits and financial rewards of this extra role, while female teachers highlighted that these new roles would lessen the burden and the number of tasks they have, such as by lightening the teaching workload.

Most interviewees mentioned the Islamic perspectives and seeking God's acceptance, which was an important aspect of their motivation. As one clearly said,

'I pray to God in order to have an impact and help others. I love teaching and do not see my role as a profession only'.

Some of the opportunities were provided accidentally, and then school leaders noticed the performance of a particular teacher and started assigning them leadership roles. For example, the coordinator was sick, so leaders had to select someone else for the task, and when they did, they were surprised with the results. These examples happened during and after the reform. One teacher mentioned the importance of his parents in developing responsibility and being proactive. Several teachers mentioned that by knowing which university a teacher graduated from, they could judge the person's abilities and character.

It might seem daunting to understand how the principal can affect the whole school and change the team's perspectives and dispositions. Ninety interviewees mentioned that

being acknowledged as leaders was vital to being assigned leadership roles. Teacher leaders referred to particular personal traits of teacher leaders that might help them execute their new leadership role. These included a willingness and ability to accept an increased workload, dedication and competence in teaching students as well as communication skills.

‘Our line managers will see that strength in you, and then they’ll place you in a role with more responsibilities’.

This comment was said negatively. When I asked the teacher to elaborate, he said,

‘They will not give you time to excel at your new task. They just want things to be done, assuming that you will remain capable’.

Similarly, another teacher commented,

‘I prefer to work away from their eyes; I do the things I believe in without pressure from my coordinator’.

Teacher leaders’ relationships with principals are not one-sided; some teachers influence principals directly and principals often consult them to make decisions. One female teacher who was nominated by her principal said,

‘I usually advise the principal and support her in a few decisions when she asks me or when I feel it is needed. No one knows about this relationship as she trusts me’.

When I asked for examples, she said,

‘The principal faced an issue with a few parents and asked me for help without anyone’s knowledge. For this reason, I get involved more in the students and their personal issues, so I have first-hand knowledge and can help the principal at any time. And my feedback was essential to solve the problem’.

Principals might also develop support groups from teacher leaders’ reciprocity.

### ***Family support***

Fifteen female teachers mentioned family support, especially from their spouses and parents. Some mentioned that the conflict between their roles as mothers and teachers sometimes precluded them from accepting new roles or even trying new things.

‘I am not allowed to open my laptop at home or even mention my work in front of my husband’.

‘My father did not allow me to study the subject I wanted and only allowed me to participate in female-only activities’.

In contrast, another one said,

‘When I was selected for this role, I kept crying each day. I was afraid, but my husband asked his friends and taught me what was required and shared resources’.

Although I did not ask directly about their families or gender-based decisions, female teachers shared examples of how their families had not allowed them to study the subject of their choice as it was forbidden for them to work in that sector. When I questioned whether they still faced the same prejudices at the time of the interviews, Qatari and non-Qatari teachers alike said that it depended on the family more than their nationality.

In general, interviewees said that supporting teacher leadership could be achieved by 1) working closely with teachers according to their own experiences and skills; 2) making sure that training programmes were ready prior to implementation and tailored according to teachers’ needs; 3) understanding the current situation of the teacher; and 4) sharing success stories.

## **9. Challenges/barriers to teacher leadership**

Although the majority of interviewees said that their school leaders supported them, they also said teachers faced many challenges, especially those who liked to try new ideas and influence others. Fourteen female teachers mentioned being homesick as they were non-Qataris and lived away from their countries and families. They described how these feelings affected their performance, and even after accepting new roles, some of them mentioned that they did not feel stable in this country.

‘I could not focus on anything I was doing. Everything was new, and it was the first time I had lived away from my family’.

Likewise, non-Qatari male teachers did not feel secure as school leaders may dismiss them if they were not happy with the teachers’ performance or if they had personal issues with them. Although these comments occurred during the reform, teachers still felt insecure at the time of the interviews. This issue was seen more often with male teachers than with female teachers, as the male teachers were financially responsible for their whole families, both nuclear and extended, while most female teachers worked to support their immediate families. As I explained in chapter 3, all male teachers worked under MoE sponsorship, while female teachers might have their spouses or fathers as sponsors.

Teachers emphasised the importance of accepting mistakes and building trust in the whole environment. In addition, it was essential to prepare them mentally for their new

tasks and roles. All interviewees mentioned that they learned things by doing them (i.e. “jump into the sea and learn how to swim”). Other challenges were also described:

‘I was about to die. Everyone told me, ‘You look sick’. I lost weight and did not want to work when they asked me to lead the department. It’s one year later, and now I will never accept any formal leadership role’.

‘I used to cry every day at home. Each day I wanted to resign, but my husband convinced me to stay on and learn new things’.

‘The previous teacher did not know how to do this task, and I was afraid of what my colleagues would say about me if I didn’t perform either’.

‘I will never accept a leadership role in this country. Too many nationalities and too many changes in MoE decisions’.

Interviewees identified the following constraints on teacher leadership: dealing with difficult people, lack of team support, language and cultural differences and sudden assignments and continuous changes from the MoE. In line with the quantitative data, not many interviewees mentioned a lack of time, even though, in the literature, it is one of the most common complaints. Each of these constraints will be discussed in turn.

### *Dealing with difficult people*

All interviewees mentioned the importance of communication and how teacher leadership mainly relied on how teachers communicate with each other. This required many interpersonal skills such as being friendly, understanding and caring. Nevertheless, those nominated teachers mentioned that they faced many challenges in dealing with their colleagues, especially if teachers in leadership roles were younger than they were.

‘The only barrier I faced was having the previous coordinator as one of my team when I became the coordinator’.

‘You cannot satisfy everyone; some people will dislike you regardless of what you do’.

‘Dealing with difficult people. It may be teachers in your department or another department. It may be a parent or even someone from the MoE’.

‘We need to understand and accept different personalities, e.g. introverts and extroverts’.

This need for communication operates at different levels. Between dealing with the same people on a daily basis or occasionally, it might be harder with people one has to meet daily, like a previous coordinator. This is especially true when the team starts to implement the changes and others see the improved performance, which can be difficult for both leaders, new and old. Personality types come into play, and many interviewees

mentioned needing the ability to manage other people while being magnanimous and noble-minded.

### ***Lack of team support***

Interviewees noted that, just as team support can help teacher leadership, a lack of team support can hinder it:

‘It is normal to feel jealous, and sometimes this may encourage others to improve their performance. It depends on the awareness and communication between teachers and management. We cannot delete this feeling from humans, and you cannot satisfy everyone’.

‘We are not going to be humans if we do not have these feelings, but principals should be smart enough to avoid increasing these feelings by being transparent in the selection process’.

‘Yes, sometimes we feel jealous, but we admit that this person is the best person to do this’.

‘Some teachers are afraid of how their colleague will treat them when he/she is assigned a leadership role’.

‘I may feel jealous or even afraid to lose my job if this teacher works in my department. You know I need this job and cannot go back to my country. Some men will ask their friends not to compete with others as they are working away from their countries’.

‘Before I was a coordinator, teachers used to work with me and accept my ideas and suggestions, but when I was selected to be the coordinator, no one listened, and they did not follow my instructions’.

Interviewees gave many examples and stories showing how they wished that their colleagues had supported them. The support of their colleagues would have made tasks easier to carry out. The majority mentioned that this support would have allowed them to complete many necessary tasks. According to interviewees’ comments, researchers needed to differentiate between the teachers’ inner feelings and the behaviours that were based on these feelings.

### ***Language and cultural differences***

Although most of the interviewees were Arabs, 70 of them mentioned Qatar’s diversity and how dialects and cultures affected communication and relationships.

‘I used to refer to my colleagues as I did to my friends back home until a teacher in my department asked me why I disrespected him. He then clarified what he meant, which changed my way of communication’.

‘I could not understand the students when I started, but now I can!’

‘Everything was new – the system, the people, the culture and even the language’.

Likewise, a teacher who did not speak Arabic said,

(If I knew Arabic, I would do so many things I liked and I would be able to do like in my country.)

Interestingly, all interviewees mentioned the language barrier; even Qataris highlighted that they did not understand the accents of some students and the culture differed from what they were used to in their previous schools; even the same words could be misunderstood in the same country. This is another challenge that might affect teachers’ ability to build good relationships. Remarkably, people often take it for granted if they speak the same language and neglect cultural issues and diversity.

### *Sudden assignments and continuous changes from the MoE*

Most of the barriers mentioned above are related to teachers’ personalities and the school environment. The barriers highlighted in this section are more about MoE decisions and how they are implemented.

‘It is like the domino effect, or like a chain. Each one affects and stresses on the other to complete tasks’.

‘Multiple abrupt new decisions are implemented as if we have nothing to do except wait for those changes’.

‘It is not these decisions, but the timeline given to complete these tasks’.

‘Everyone will be stressed when they see these new memos. Everything is changed and we need to start from the beginning’.

Many examples supporting the existence of this barrier were related in the background chapter and the section detailing the context of the educational reform in Qatar. Too many changes had been implemented in a relatively short time in Qatar and this practice continues at the time of writing.

### *Time*

In their comments about having time to complete their tasks and practise leadership roles, the majority mentioned that the time they were given was adequate (Table 48).

Table 48: *Frequency of Interviewees' Responses by School to 'Is the time you are given enough?'*

School	Time Isn't Enough	Time Is Enough	Sometimes	Total
A	4	7	4	15
B	3	7		10
C	2	6		8
D	2	6	1	9
E	1	1		2
F	8	5		13
G	2	11		13
H	2	6		8
Total	24	49	5	78
Missing data				18

Five interviewees said it was 'sometimes' enough, depending on the tasks and time of year. Interviewees shared their opinions as follows:

'The obstacle for us in managing our time is due to lack of experience and knowledge; the importance of knowing how to work smarter, not harder; and avoiding sudden changes and decisions coming from higher positions'.

'The time was not enough when I gave birth to my twins, moved to a new home and started this new role as a coordinator. It was difficult, but I managed with my husband's support'.

'The time is enough. Everyone has 24 hours, but teachers still feel the pressure even if the time is adequate'.

'The time would be adequate if we did not have sudden changes and new things and initiatives to implement in a very short space of time'.

'The time will be adequate if you have your family's support in all the other roles you carry out at home'.

Interviewees' comments regarding time were not consistent with previous studies, and this requires further clarification of the quantity of time spent and the quality of work gained. The examples they gave did not clarify the differences or explain the results.



## SUMMARY

This chapter presented the results of each data collection phase. This mixed methods explanatory sequential study started by sending an online questionnaire, incorporating the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) to 14,000 teachers in Qatari schools (the total population). 21% (i.e. 2,969) responded. In the first, quantitative phase, eight variables (school level, degree level, leadership position, gender, years of experience, school size, nationality and age) were tested to determine their effect, if any, on the TLI's four factors (Sharing Expertise, Sharing Leadership, Supra-Practitioner and Principal Selection). This was done using a one-way ANOVA analysis. Three variables (school level, school size and age) had no effect on any of the four factors, even though school level and school size had been significant variables in the original research by Angelle and DeHart (2011). Nationality had a significant effect on all four factors (as shown in Table 38). The remaining variables (Degree level, leadership position, gender and years of experience) had a significant effect on some but not all the factors, as detailed below.

- Sharing Expertise (SE): Degree level, nationality
- Sharing Leadership (SL): Leadership position, nationality
- Supra-Practitioner (SP): Years of experience, gender, degree level, nationality
- Principal Selection (PS): Leadership position, nationality, years of experience

Specifically, teachers with a bachelor's degree (or equivalent) reported significantly higher scores for Sharing Expertise than teachers with a postgraduate degree (or equivalent). Teachers holding a formal leadership position reported significantly higher scores for Sharing Leadership than teachers not holding a formal leadership position. Male teachers reported significantly higher scores for Supra-Practitioner than female teachers. Teachers not holding a leadership position reported significantly higher scores for Principal Selection than teachers holding a formal leadership position. Questionnaire respondents also indicated that they believed teacher leaders had a very positive effect on schools and that their most important responsibility was knowledge of curriculum and assessment.

Because the results differed from previous studies, 96 semi-structured interviews were conducted with people whose colleagues had nominated them as teacher leaders in their schools. The interviewees were asked what *teacher leadership* and *teacher leaders* meant to them and about the impact of the selected variables. This allowed me to compare the results of the qualitative phase with those from the quantitative phase.

Both phases showed that there is no agreement about the definition of teacher leadership. Interviewees gave many examples of their leadership practices in various aspects inside and outside schools. All agreed that teacher leadership was important and affected student achievement. Two thirds of the interviewees saw themselves as teacher leaders. Those who rejected this label did so because of modesty or humility. The

teachers who nominated the 96 teacher leaders for interview provided around 200 characteristics of teacher leaders. The teacher leaders, themselves, also provided around 150 characteristics. Both lists were divided into eight categories relating to beliefs, teaching expertise, coaching skills, relationship skills, content expertise, leadership skills, personality and general knowledge. For both the teacher leaders, themselves, and the colleagues who nominated them, the most frequently cited characteristics belonged to the “personality” category.

Interviewees were asked about what kind of support they had received and would like, as well as what challenges they faced. Support came from other staff at the school, including the principal and from family members, particularly their spouse. Challenges included dealing with difficult people, a lack of team support and differences in language and culture (because of the high number of expatriates working in Qatar). It was also difficult to cope with the continuous changes coming from the MoE. Lack of time which is a major barrier in many previous studies was not such a problem in this study. Nearly two thirds of interviewees said they had sufficient time to complete their tasks and exercise teacher leadership. The next chapter will compare and contrast these findings from Qatar with previous studies.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The idea for this study arose from my own experience in Qatari schools. As I stated in my introduction, during the educational reform, teachers and school leaders were asked to achieve the reform's plan. Extensive professional development programs were implemented and various roles and responsibilities were offered within the new schools' structures. However, shortcomings were observed and led to a halt in the reform plan.

During the reform, teachers and school leaders encountered new systems, new requirements and new school structures. Teachers and educators were expected to perform and participate in these new roles and tasks. These systems were borrowed from the West, as RAND's report mentioned (Brewer *et al.*, 2007), and SSO teams tried to help school leaders and teachers in Qatari schools follow the new system. Teachers were expected to participate in completely new roles and positions as a result of the reform. To enable them to fulfil these roles, they received training and were provided with many opportunities to explore leadership in schools. However, two years ago, these roles and opportunities changed when Qatar disbanded SEC authority and the MoE became the only authorised entity to supervise and manage schools and education centres in Qatar, as outlined in chapter 2. Hence, this mixed methods study investigated teachers' perceptions of their leadership practices in Qatari schools and the factors that supported or discouraged teacher leadership during this tumultuous time, in accordance with the following research questions:

- What do teachers and school leaders in Qatari government schools understand by the term *teacher leadership*?
- What is the nature of teacher leadership in Qatari schools?
- To what extent, if at all, are any differences in their perspectives related to their position (age, gender, qualifications, school level, years of experience, school size and leadership position)?
- What conditions support or inhibit teacher leadership in Qatari schools?

Each of the research questions will be directly addressed in the Conclusion. In this chapter (Discussion), the results will be discussed thematically, in light of the conceptual frameworks identified in the literature review. Comparisons will be made with previous studies, bearing in mind the context of Qatar. It is important to reiterate that these findings are self-reported and reflect respondents' perspectives.

## 1. Teachers' awareness of teacher leadership in Qatar

All the interviewees clearly stated that they had never heard the terms *teacher leader* or *teacher leadership* before. This did not mean, however, there were no teacher leadership practices. It was clear from the interviewees' comments that there had been a shift in teachers' practices and involvement in managing day-to-day events and in decision-making, since 2004. These new practices had opened the door for new roles and new expectations of teachers in Qatar. After the educational reform was launched, many positions were introduced, e.g. professional development coordinator, public relations coordinator and career advisor, in addition to the new positions created for school leaders, e.g., school operator and school vice principal for academic affairs, as mentioned in chapter 2. The MoE unified all school structures, retaining some of these positions (see Figure 2). The MoE also provided clear job descriptions for school administrative staff, separating them from teaching staff to avoid any confusion or conflict. It was clear in all the responses that the interviewees were not referring to administrative teams.

The results highlighted that, despite all these changes in teachers' roles and responsibilities, interviewees saw teacher leaders mainly as teachers in formal leadership positions, such as subject coordinator, or those selected by principals to do managerial tasks. In other words, as soon as interviewees heard the term *teacher leader*, they linked it to teachers who were out of the classroom, did not teach or had a very light teaching load accompanied by a formal position. These roles were mainly managerial and involved minimal contact with students. This was one of the main reasons some interviewees had turned down formal teacher leader roles in the past; the managerial roles took them away from their passion for educating and nurturing children.

The questionnaire included a question asking respondents to select the roles they considered teacher leadership. The answers showed that the main roles related to teacher leadership were subject coordinators, chosen by 26.5%, followed by Teacher Trainers, chosen by 21% (Table 40). The qualitative phase results were consistent with the quantitative phase results as the interviewees kept asking about the meaning of teacher leadership and teacher leaders.

As already noted, there is no consensus in the literature on the definition of *teacher leadership*. However, the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data in this study were consistent with previous research (Whitsett and Riley, 2003; York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Muijs and Harris, 2006; Nolan and Palazzolo, 2011; Struyve, Meredith and Gielen, 2014; Timor, 2017; Wenner and Campbell, 2017). In this study, teacher leadership is different from teacher leaders as discussed in the literature review chapter. York-Barr and Duke's (2004) *teacher leadership* definition was selected in this study: 'Teacher leadership is the process by which teachers, individually or collectively,

influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement’ (pp. 287–288). Teacher leadership is a dynamic process, not a one-off event. In addition, the selected *teacher leader* definition in this study is derived from Wenner and Campbell’s (2017) definition: ‘Teachers who maintain K–12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities, while also taking on formal and informal leadership responsibilities and influence others directly and indirectly’ (p. 7).

Many scholars define *teacher leadership* by defining *teacher leaders*; many participants of this study did the same. Finding equivalent Arabic terms for *teacher leadership* and *teacher leader* was problematic. The term *leader* is sometimes linked to a heroic age in Arab history. Interviewees mentioned that some concepts might be understood differently according to the ‘Arab mind’, although some scholars have rejected this approach as racist (Hagopian, 1977; De Atkine, 2004). However, the heroic concept of a leader is consistent with what is called social myth (Bolden, 2004). Educational reform in Arab countries is described as top-down reform, where government is the only authority leading the change to improve the society’s conditions (Rugh, 2002; El-Baz, 2009; Akkary and Rizk, 2012).

Interviewees mentioned that language was a barrier to contributing in leadership roles although most of them spoke Arabic. Therefore, selecting terms requires careful choice and clear definitions. Scholars have noted the importance of linguistic, functional and cultural equivalence, not only when borrowing policies but also methodologically (Peña, 2007; Burdett and O’Donnell, 2016). These results indicate the importance of helping educators redefine leadership according to their particular context and using the right terminology.

## **2. The nature of teacher leadership in Qatari schools**

Many scholars (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Bangs and Frost, 2015; Smylie and Eckert, 2018; Wenner and Campbell, 2017) agree that teacher leadership is not limited to formal leadership roles. Moreover, teacher leaders and teacher leadership might be introduced under different terms, e.g. first teacher, subject coordinator, professional development specialist and many others (Stone *et al.*, 1997; Schmerler *et al.*, 2009; Boyce and Bowers, 2018). These arguments are consistent with the results of the current study. Interviewees referred to both positional teacher leadership and non-positional teacher leadership in their examples and comments. In fact, 59 of the 96 teacher leaders nominated for interview did not have any formal position although they participated in supervisory pastoral duties and on school committees.

When asked if they saw themselves as teacher leaders, the interviewees gave a variety of responses (see Table 45). 60 said “yes” and 11 said “no”, with the rest saying “maybe” or “I don’t know”. When questioned further, some interviewees gave contradictory

responses, claiming, on the one hand, that they were no different from other teachers even though they had been nominated by their colleagues, and, on the other hand, that teacher leaders were distinctive. This suggests that their interpretation of a teacher leader is consistent with McGhan (2002, cited in Jumani and Malike, 2017). McGhan (2002) argues that the term *teacher leader* is collegial and a less hierarchical version of school leadership.

Previous studies have recognised that teacher leadership (whether managerial, instructional or informal) can be exercised both inside and outside schools and that sometimes this happens without the knowledge of the principal (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Henning, 2006; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014; Jita and Mokhele, 2013; Bangs and Frost, 2015). The results of this study agree with this literature. Participants suggested that the educational system in Qatar provided a variety of opportunities for teachers to practise leadership roles. Commonly cited examples included leading research-based activities, leading teams in national and international competitions, and leading Qatari national holiday activities. In addition, teachers volunteered in social activities to support each other and take the lead in these activities, e.g. financial support groups. These activities might not be known or recognised by school leaders even though they meant a great deal to the teachers involved. This links to the work of Levin and Schrum (2016) who mention social activities as one of the informal roles of teacher leadership (see Table 5).

Teacher leadership might be considered simultaneously flexible and rigid. It is flexible because each teacher can apply things differently and creatively, formally and informally. It is also rigid because it should sustain a safe environment for staff, students and the community, and abide by the rules and regulations of education policies, nationally and internationally.

All interviewees mentioned that teacher leadership has a positive impact. This is similar to many previous studies (e.g., Pounder, 2006; Sublette, 2013; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014; Struyve, Meredith and Gielen, 2014; Granville-Chapman, 2012) which show the positive impact of teacher leadership on student achievement, through enhancing teaching strategies and supporting school leaders. However, all of the interviewees' comments were based on their perspectives and did not mention any actual student data. I acknowledge that accepting the teacher's perspective as a measure of a teacher leadership's impact is questionable. As many previous studies have highlighted (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2005), student data adds weight to these kinds of claims, especially if student achievement can be compared in schools with and without high levels of teacher leadership.

As well as student outcomes, interviewees also mentioned their positive impact on other staff. Although some interviewees mentioned janitors and administrative staff, most often they were talking about their teaching colleagues. They discussed having a direct

impact on teaching as well as an indirect impact on teachers' working conditions and job satisfaction. They shared real-life stories that illustrated the pedagogical aspects of teacher leadership identified in the literature cited above (e.g. helping to decide how teaching and learning resources are allocated). They also provided examples that went beyond the school walls (e.g. preparing students for international competitions or the school for accreditation). As already noted, many teachers in Qatar are expatriates who have connections with their home countries. This allows them to become teacher leaders by linking their practices and networks with related international educators or organisations in order to enhance their practices and student learning. This is a distinctive feature of teacher leadership in Qatar and is rarely mentioned in literature from the West. Expatriate teachers were also able to exercise leadership by indirectly improving the working conditions of their colleagues. Often, they offered emotional support to homesick colleagues by organising social events, but, in at least one case, they managed a financial support programme (see p. 126).

### **3. Importance of teacher leadership**

Results from the open-ended question on the questionnaire and the interviews were consistent with previous studies. Interviewees mentioned that teacher leadership was very important to improving school performance in many different aspects. According to the interviewees, teacher leaders not only suggested new ideas, but also provided clear proposals and implemented them smoothly. They supported their colleagues indirectly by being role models and sharing new teaching practices. This is in line with previous studies (Abidin *et al.*, 2016; York-Barr and Duke, 2004) highlighting how teacher leaders share their expertise, especially regarding the latest instructional and pedagogical developments. Teacher leaders in the current study were also said to provide practical and customised professional development for other staff via one-to-one meetings, a buddy system and/or a reflective process. Most importantly, the PD opportunities that teacher leaders provided were described as relevant both to the needs of their colleagues and the needs of their schools. The importance of balancing these two needs is emphasized in the literature (Frost and Durrant, 2003; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2012).

As already noted, interviewees talked about the impact of teacher leadership on students, which is a common theme in previous studies (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Wenner and Campbell, 2017). Note that Wenner and Campbell (2017) highlight the lack of empirical studies of teacher leadership's impact on student learning, although York-Barr and Duke (2004) recommend that future studies focus on these aspects. All interviewees mentioned that teacher leadership enhances student learning and many also noted its tendency to increase parental involvement. Their comments echo previous studies, particularly (Killion and Harrison, 2006; Mylles, 2006; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2012; Kılınc, Cemaloğlu and Savaş, 2015).

Teacher leadership is not only about doing what has been requested. It is also about being a change agent and being proactive. Education is changing rapidly, and educators are required to articulate these new systems or plans, and transfer these newly acquired skills to the classroom. Teachers who practise teacher leadership not only provide practical solutions, but also enhance the implementation and add their own touch. Angelle and Teague (2014) stated that teacher leaders can lead and organise change. This is evident in the interviewees' responses and the real-life stories they shared.

As well as having an impact on students and their colleagues, teachers who practise leadership develop themselves in a number of ways. Interviewees in the current study felt they had gained more knowledge and improved their communication and problem-solving skills. Teachers in Qatar come from many different countries and a few expatriates talked about trying out new things they would never have thought to do in their home country. Few studies have explored the impact of teacher leadership on teachers who practise leadership of themselves. Hardly any have analysed how a diverse workforce (in terms of language and nationality) can encourage or discourage teacher leadership. This is a gap that future research could fill.

Notwithstanding the positive impact outlined above, participants also mentioned some negative effects of teacher leadership. These were more likely to occur if the teacher did not have a clear vision of what is to be accomplished; if the teacher was not qualified enough to complete the required tasks, or if the teacher had been selected without clear criteria. With regard to teachers not being qualified for the tasks required of them, most participants said they had learnt on-the-job, implying that colleagues should not be too quick to judge their performance. This links to Sidani and Al Ariss's (2014) argument about the importance of talent management (a term from Business Studies) as well as finding strengths in each teacher and testing his/her capabilities. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

Teacher leadership might also have a negative impact if the teacher is distracted from completing his/her main tasks as a teacher. Finally, it might cause jealousy and competition between other teachers and team members. These results are consistent with those of previous studies (DeHart, 2011; Rosen, 2014). Most of these negative effects arise because of poor communication between school leaders, teacher leaders and the team, and a lack of understanding about the best ways to help teacher leaders develop their skills and apply leadership practices effectively.

#### **4. Teacher leaders' characteristics**

Respondents in both phases mentioned characteristics and traits that were consistent with previous studies. To determine the characteristics, questionnaire respondents were asked to select from 23 characteristics (or responsibilities); 21 items were taken from research by Marzano *et al.* (2005), and two other items, 'being a role model' and 'having a clear vision' were added based on the pilot study results. As was shown in Figure 7, the most important characteristic was said to be '**knowledge** of curriculum and



assessment'. This was ticked by every questionnaire respondent. In contrast, only about 10% of respondents ticked '**involvement** in curriculum and assessment'. This finding is consistent with McKnight, Graybeal, Yarbrow and Graybeal's (2016) study of effective teachers in Qatar. A possible explanation for this result is that the MoE has imposed centralised assessment systems. These are tightly controlled by the relevant MoE departments. Teachers do not design these assessment systems; they only administer them. Bear in mind that Qatar seeks to improve students' results on international assessments, e.g. PISA and TIMSS.

The nomination survey and the interviews used another tool to elicit further data. Interviewees were asked to identify the most important characteristics of teacher leadership, without being given a pre-determined list. Interviewees' responses were consistent with previous studies and categorised according to Killian and Harrison's (2006) research, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Killian and Harrison's typology includes six elements, namely: beliefs, teaching expertise, coaching skills, relationship skills, content expertise and leadership skills. It covers what other studies have categorised as teacher leadership characteristics (Leithwood, 2003; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005; see chapter 3). Two additional categories were added (personality and general knowledge). In this context, general knowledge is the same as Leithwood's (2003) 'declarative knowledge' i.e. 'knowledge about specific aspects of the profession, e.g., knowledge about government education policy; knowledge about education in general; knowledge about the school, students and the community; knowledge about specific subjects; and knowledge about union issues' (Leithwood, 2003, p. 106). These eight categories were linked to the 21 responsibilities used in identifying teacher leader characteristics in this study (see Table 10).

Interestingly, the majority of interviewees focused, firstly, on personality and, secondly, on relationship skills. The emphasis on personality traits is consistent with Leithwood (2003). Interviewees mentioned, for example, that teachers who have a formal leadership role (e.g. leading a department or team) are expected to be visionary and communicate decisions from school leaders to other teachers. This is in line with research by Muijs and Harris (2003). It also mirrors Angelle and Teague's (2014) advice that principals should 'emphasize the traits of trust, determination, innovation, perseverance, and calm, in teacher leaders who serve as a bridge between administrators and teachers and using knowledge to assist others in changing their practice' (p. 741). The interviewees also noted that some characteristics might be required for some tasks and not others. Finally, they mentioned some characteristics that are not common in the literature. These included being a *Murabbi* / instilling values in students. The emphasis on relationship skills is consistent with previous research by Stone et al. (1997) and McKnight, Graybeal, Yarbrow and Graybeal (2016). Interviewees talked about the importance of building relationships and good communication skills, being open-minded, being well-educated and being patient. McKnight et al. (2016) explored what

makes effective teachers in 23 countries. They found that respondents in Qatar thought the ability to maintain good relationships was one of the most important characteristics.

Although the majority of these characteristics were expected and most of them had been mentioned in previous studies, I faced a challenge in translating a few of them from English into Arabic. One of the most surprising responses was from an interviewee who mentioned the importance of having the right facial expressions. Although this could be listed under relationship skills, such a detail is worth highlighting. Scholars have explored the impact of facial expressions on leadership and what followers expect from leaders based on their faces (Van Vugt and Grabo, 2015; see Table 49). The results show the importance of psychological factors in relationships as they affect leadership and differ from one person to another. This example is similar to a story mentioned in the Quran, *the Occasion of Revelation*, when the prophet Mohammed (PBH) did not smile when a blind man came asking him about Islam as he was busy with other people. Allah blamed the prophet for not treating the blind man well, even though, being blind, the man would not have noticed the difference. ‘He frowned and turned away / Because the blind man came unto him. / What could inform thee but that he might grow (in grace) / Or take heed and so the reminder might avail him?’ (Al-Islam.org, 2018).

Table 49: *Facial Appearance and Leadership: An Evolutionary Framework*

Leader Attributes	Facial Cues	Adaptive Domains	Follower Heuristic	Examples
Dominance	Masculinity, height-to-width ratio	Conflict, war	Fellow dominant individual	Military leader, CEO of major company
Trustworthiness	Femininity, ethnicity	Cooperation, peace	Fellow prosocial individual	Politician, NGO leader, hospital director
Competence	Age, baby-facedness	Knowledge (social, physical)	Fellow informed individual	Scientist, statesperson, entrepreneur
Attractiveness, health	Facial symmetry/asymmetry, skin colouration	Physical change	Fellow healthy individual	Sports captain, explorer

*Note:* Taken from Van Vugt and Grabo (2015, p. 486)

In the current study, some interviewees linked teacher leadership characteristics to religious practices. I listed those characteristics under ‘belief’, e.g., fidelity and pursuit of a reward from Allah. Even the three interviewees who stated they were non-Muslim explicitly mentioned these characteristics as intrinsically motivating. Some studies have explored teacher leadership and its practices from a religious perspective. Boyaci and Oz claimed that teacher leadership varies across societies according to ‘components of culture such as religion, tradition, values, norms, and the emergence of the ethos of

leadership throughout the history of societies' (Boyaci and Oz, 2017, p. 11). In light of this, future studies might investigate, in more detail, the impact of religious orientation.

As mentioned earlier in this section, all interviewees agreed that leadership means influence, not simply power or authority. This view is also consistent with previous studies, e.g. Fairman and Mackenzie (2014) and Katyal and Evers (2004, p. 368) who see 'leadership as an influence process that occurs naturally within a social system'. As we have seen, interviewees defined leadership in different ways, according to their own experiences and perspectives, and this led them to highlight different characteristics. Some researchers defined teacher leadership based on teacher leaders' characteristics and others defined it based on teacher leaders' roles (see Table 43). The amount of authority the person has and their level of power can affect their level of influence.

Being a leader comes with certain expectations, some of which might be distinctive in the Arab world. Five interviewees mentioned how the 'Arab mind' expects leaders to be heroic individuals. As previously mentioned, some researchers oppose the Arab mind concept as they consider it racist (Hagopian, 1977; De Atkine, 2004). This difference of opinion highlights the importance of understanding each term in the light of history, language and religion in the Arab world. This applies to both the term and its selected translation. Sometimes, people assume that terms are clear to others when they are not. It is also worth noting that Arab countries include a variety of dialects (Rauch and Kostyshak, 2009) and use systems borrowed from elsewhere (Romanowski, Alkhateeb and Nasser, 2018).

### **5. Teacher leadership's aspects/domains**

As we have seen, teacher leadership is as an umbrella term that covers many other terms, formal or informal positions or even voluntary initiatives. In Western countries, these might include professional development coordinator and year leader (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Struyve, Meredith and Gielen, 2014). In Qatar, the most common term is *subject leader*. However, interviewees were keen to point out that teacher leaders could exercise leadership in many different ways, both inside and outside the school, depending on their abilities and expertise. They also noted that what colleagues assumed teacher leaders did, and what they actually did might differ. It was agreed, however, that teacher leaders should continue to teach and that, if they did not, a different label was needed.

Most interviewees wanted teacher leaders to lead change, present ideas and improve school performance, and not just manage day-to-day tasks. This is in line with previous research (Blegen and Kennedy, 2000; Bush, 2008; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014). They said teachers influence students, colleagues, parents, school leaders, the MoE and the community, as well as the wider world through involvement in international initiatives. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2012).

Some scholars suggest that leaders have followers and that this is also true of teacher leaders (Van Vugt and Grabo, 2015; Smylie and Eckert, 2018; Lovett, 2018). In contrast, Fairman and Mackenzie, (2012) argue that trying to identify followers might limit teacher leadership practices to a specific audience when, in fact, they affect many stakeholders. Similarly, Weller and Weller (2002) view teacher leadership as a specific type of collaboration with no followers. One participant in the current study said teacher leaders should have followers, but clarified that students were mainly their followers. However, the majority of interviewees said that teacher leadership is less about having followers and more about helping others to improve and providing the best ways to apply what is required. It is even possible for teachers to exercise leadership unintentionally. For example, when a teacher uses the best teaching practices, students learn these strategies. Then, colleagues and, sometimes, parents might start applying some of these strategies, even if the teacher is not expecting parents to learn from their example.

Participants made a related point. Colleagues who are influenced by a teacher leader are not required to follow that person to achieve a specific goal (which is how leadership is often defined). Interviewees reported that teacher leadership was more like opening the path to improvement and unleashing interviewees' potential, attempting to see things differently regardless of the leadership structure in schools. This means seeing teacher leadership in a separate light from authority or power. In addition, some interviewees believed that teacher leadership starts with leading oneself, which is consistent with Bembenuddy (2006), Klassen, Tze, Betts and Gordon. (2011), Foti *et al.* (2012) and Mojavezi and Tamiz (2012).

The majority mentioned that those characteristics were built in when a teacher was a *Murabbi*. *Murabbi* is an Arabic word which has been explained as 'not simply a teacher, as we understand this word today, but rather an exemplary human being' (Kazmi, 1999, p. 222). Teachers who believe in their profession, regardless of their position, practise leadership in any educational aspect or field. This kind of teacher is needed to cultivate students who excel in academic and moral values (Abidin, Norwani and Musa, 2016). The literature on teacher leadership includes the concept of moral purpose (Bezzina, 2007; Boylan, 2016). However, teachers in the current study saw a *Murabbi* as more than a teacher who has a moral purpose. He or she is a role model and cares about others, especially students. In addition, such teachers do their best to unleash students' potential and to change students' behaviours and attitudes. Although some studies described teacher leadership as doing pastoral roles (Muijs, Chapman and Armstrong, 2013), a *Murabbi* is a teacher who is expected to do more than just provide information.

Kazmi's definition relies on defining *Murabbi* from an Islamic perspective, which might be problematic considering that there are non-Muslim Arabs and that expatriates work in Arab countries. Kazmi identifies a *Murabbi* and his/her main characteristics, in the following way:

The one who is not only knowledgeable and wise but also pious, kind and considerate. In other words, a *Murabbi* is a person who combines a life of learning with a life of virtue, and hence a perfect and an ideal person to learn from. (Kazmi, 1999, p. 209).

Building on this definition and previous teacher leadership characteristics, a *Murabbi* in education might be defined as the teacher leader who influences and educates others' intellect, soul, body and heart, and develops an effective personality. I chose to use the word *others*, not *students*, because teacher leaders influence all stakeholders each day on different levels, directly and indirectly. All interviewees gave examples of dealing with different stakeholders inside and outside schools.

Selecting this term, *Murabbi*, builds on the results mentioned earlier about the impact of the term *leader* and is relevant to the context and history of the region. This term is commonly used informally in a few Arab countries such as Qatar when educators want to compliment a teacher. Selecting this term does not mean adding it to the schools' structures or educators' ranking. I see it as a better Arabic word to describe the practices of teacher leaders, instead of translating it literally.

Ysidro and Salazar (2010, p. 2) state that 'Traditionally, teaching roles have been defined by a factory model that views the teacher as a semi-skilled worker with virtually no autonomy'. Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (1999, p. 7) make the same point: 'Based on a 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial model, this hierarchical nature of public schools continues to promote an adversarial relationship between administrators as managers and teachers as labourers.' The teacher leadership movement is trying to give more freedom to teachers to encourage them to demonstrate new ideas and not to see themselves as labourers (Nolan and Palazzolo, 2011).

As explained in Chapter 2, teachers in Qatar experienced autonomy during the educational reform when schools were still under the governance of the SEC. They were able to design the curriculum, select resources, apply different assessment methods for students, train others and visit other countries to apply new programmes and plans. At the time of writing, however, the MoE was applying a very centralised system in which school leaders and teachers had to just "*deliver*" the required tasks. The interviewees who had witnessed and experienced both phases were frustrated and tried to continue using some of the programmes they had applied during the reform. One of the teachers complained, 'We want to be free again'.

A few interviewees claimed that teacher leadership should be focused on one goal: improving student achievement. Most interviewees, however, said that teacher leadership could be applied to any aspect that the teacher was interested in. In fact, interviewees practised formal and informal leadership roles in every aspect of school

life; both internally and externally, e.g. research coordinator or international competitions leader. These findings were consistent with previous studies, which listed many areas in which teacher leadership could be exercised, e.g. instructional practices and extracurricular activities (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Cooper *et al.*, 2016; Hamzah *et al.*, 2016). Yet, in this study, there was a strong emphasis on instilling values in students and on teacher leaders being *Murabbi*. Interviewees thought this would improve student achievement, even though that was not the main aim.

Interviewees talked about two forms of teacher leadership. One was about contributing to the day-to-day work of colleagues on a daily basis; the other was about being explicitly recognised as a leader. Many scholars argue that being a leader means achieving one's vision intentionally while influencing others (Bush, 2008; Lovett, 2018). Others say it is possible to practise leadership indirectly and/or unintentionally (Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014). Interviewees gave many examples of how they were surprised by the comments their colleagues made regarding their practices. They were unaware of the impact their actions were having on others until colleagues pointed it out to them.

Figure 9 (below) is my attempt to summarise what the interviewees said about the nature of their leadership practices and my interpretation of the effects these practices had on their communities and beyond. To me, the solar system is a helpful metaphor. Teachers exercising leadership might be thought of as the sun; their practices and performances warm and help (i.e. influence) all the other stakeholders/planets. The solar system is very dynamic, and this reflects an important aspect of teacher leadership, namely, that it supports stakeholders in different ways according to the situation. As the conditions vary, some planets might be more exposed to the sun (i.e. teachers exercising leadership) than others, with the result that they are more strongly influenced.

The closest orbit in this figure is that of the students; all teachers communicate with students, including those they meet outside the classroom, in competitions and extra-curricular activities or even in pastoral duties. Interviewees highlighted the importance of instilling values when caring for all students, even if they did not teach them (see Table 43 and p, 118-119, for example). They shared many examples of how they supported students academically and personally.

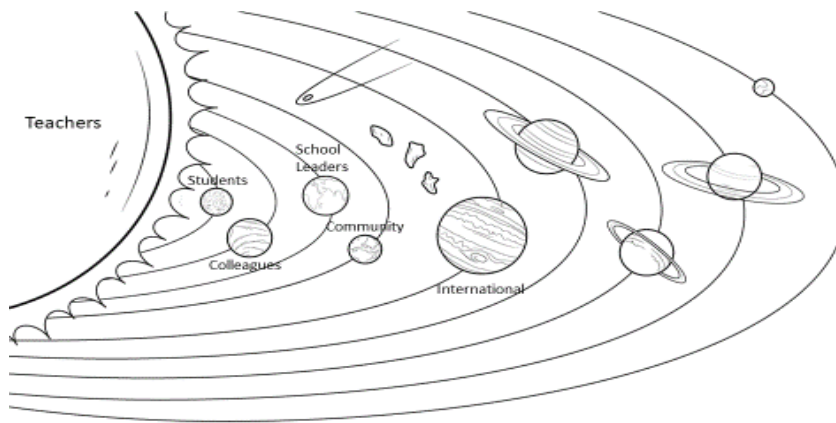


Figure 9: Teachers practising teacher leadership (Orbit model)

The second orbit is their colleagues. During their daily tasks, teachers can influence their colleagues directly or indirectly, through formal and informal professional development, as well as by networking with teachers in the same department or school, or in other schools and communities (see p. 125, for example). Some teachers learn by listening to their colleagues' conversations, even if they are not being addressed directly. This explains how teacher leaders can be unaware of their impact until others point it out. In addition, interviewees told stories about how they influenced parents (see p. 137 and 139, for example) and the wider community (see p. 125, for example). Some also participated in MoE committees. These relationships with external stakeholders are represented by orbits further away from the sun because its influence on them tends to be weaker and/or less frequent. As already mentioned, the most important point is that the process is dynamic.

Teachers learn, intentionally or accidentally, when they have a variety of opportunities to deal with all these stakeholders. Teachers' reflections on their learning, as I see them, are linked to the sun's source of energy (nuclear fusion), which gives us light and heat. However, the teachers (sun) are not the same all the way through. It is hard to predict to what extent each teacher will learn from the same situation, but, with time, stakeholders tend to see the light of their practices and feel the heat. Figure 9 is deliberately more dynamic than the teacher leadership four-tier model developed by Grant (2006). Significantly, the sun (teachers) does not remain in its position; it rotates around its axis and around the centre of the Milky Way (educational systems and strategies). Within the real solar system, the planets are never aware of how much the sun is influencing them. This aspect of the metaphor does not work so well. It is generally better for stakeholders to notice when teachers are exercising leadership and provide them with whatever support they need.

## **6. Variables affecting teacher leadership**

This study used the TLI to assess teacher-driven leadership and principal-driven leadership through the four factors (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; see Table 13) and see if there were any significant results according to different variables. The four factors of teacher leadership are Sharing Expertise, Sharing Leadership, Supra-Practitioner and Principal Selection. The eight variables are school level, degree level, leadership position, gender, years of experience, school size, nationality and age. Sharing Expertise focuses on sharing pedagogical and classroom management knowledge. Sharing Leadership covers leadership mutuality in schools and is related to principals' disposition of sharing leadership and teachers' willingness to accept these opportunities. Supra-Practitioner measures teachers' perceptions of teacher behaviour beyond prescribed roles and their willingness to engage with staff. Principal Selection indicates a principal who provides leadership opportunities and distributes tasks between many staff members.

Although many studies have shown that different variables have a significant effect on teacher leadership practices (Xie and Shen, 2013; Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014; Al-Zboon, 2016; Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017), the quantitative phase results from the current study were quite mixed. There were no significant differences related to age, school size and school level. Nationality had a significant effect on all four factors (as shown in Table 38). The remaining variables (Degree level, leadership position, gender and years of experience) had a significant effect on some but not all the factors. In summary, Sharing Expertise was significantly affected by degree level and nationality; Sharing Leadership was significantly affected by leadership position and nationality. Supra-Practitioner was significantly affected by gender, qualification, years of experience and nationality. Principal Selection was significantly affected by leadership position, years of experience and nationality. Interviewees mentioned many examples of how they had been selected to do tasks either due to their nationality and years of experience.

### ***School level***

Surprisingly, school level (categorised into preschool, primary, preparatory, secondary and complex) did not show any significant results in the quantitative phase. Several possible explanations exist as to why the data show little or no significance in terms of school level and teacher leadership. Respondents might have referred to middle school leaders as teacher leaders and to their main role as subject coordinators. This role is the same across all five school levels. All coordinators are expected to perform the same tasks and functions, and this is what they have been trained to do over the years. Moreover, the MoE applies a school structure, job description and teacher evaluation system which is unified at all levels.



At the time of writing, the College of Education offers two preparation programmes for primary and secondary teachers. Yet, in the schools, teachers can transfer between school levels according to the needs of the schools. In addition, the college signed an agreement to train teachers, and those training sessions mix teachers from different levels and teach the same strategies to groups of teachers of different school levels and subjects.

The results of the quantitative survey are only partly supported by the qualitative interviews. Some interviewees who had no prior experience of working at different levels assumed there was no significant difference. However, those interviewees who had worked across different levels in schools said there were enormous differences due to students' age, types of activities, teaching strategies and leadership practices. This latter perspective is similar to what previous studies found (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Ali, 2014; Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014).

This leads me to an important point: the way the MoE has unified the sector (with regard to school structure, teacher training, job descriptions and teacher evaluations) may be deterring teachers from trying out new practices and activities that could be more appropriate to their particular school environment and/or students' needs. In addition, it shows the importance of using dialogue to share practices, instead of just relying on written documents, assuming that these are adequate and clear to teachers and school leaders. The inconsistency between the quantitative and qualitative data in this study points to the need for more research in this regard.

### *Qualifications*

Regarding qualifications, teachers with a bachelor's degree (or equivalent) reported significantly higher scores for Sharing Expertise while teachers with a postgraduate degree (or equivalent) showed slightly higher scores for Supra-Practitioner. This is consistent with previous studies (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014). There were no significant differences with respect to Sharing Leadership or Principal Selection. 80% of the sample in the current study had a bachelor's degree. As I noted in Chapter 2, teachers in Qatar are generally required to have a bachelor's degree but this does not need to be in education. In 2013, around 6,000 teachers had studied other subjects at university and had learnt to teach on-the-job (Romanowski *et al.*, 2013). At the time of writing, Qatar is implementing a licencing system that requires a teaching degree for those teachers. Interviewees mentioned that it was important to have an educational background because those who had educational degrees helped other teachers with planning and dealing with students. Teachers in Qatar are required to use educational technologies in their teaching practice and that might explain the results for the Sharing Expertise factor. Teachers with bachelor's degrees are likely to be younger

and have qualified more recently than those with postgraduate degrees. As a result, they might have better knowledge of how to use these new strategies. Moreover, new teachers value sharing knowledge, as mentioned in previous studies (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Nolan and Palazzolo, 2011; Meristo and Eisenschmidt, 2014). Notably, teachers with postgraduate degrees might not have majored in education. The results might also be due to MoE policies requiring the use of ready-made lesson plans sent from MoE curriculum units.

### *Age*

With regard to age, the majority of respondents in the quantitative phase were 30–50 years old and no significant results were shown. This is consistent with previous studies (Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014). Qatari nationals are expected to take leadership roles due to their nationality and qualifications, irrespective of their age. Qatari law states that teachers must retire at 60. However, three male teachers had been allowed to continue teaching beyond this age. This could indicate that the MoE values long experience, but it may also reflect the fact that there are not enough teachers, especially for boys' schools.

### *Years of experience*

For years of experience, there were significant results for Supra-Practitioner and Principal Selection. These results were also supported by interviewees' comments and were consistent with previous studies (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014; Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017). It is common that teachers with more years of experience have more knowledge of the curriculum, school policies and other aspects compared to novice teachers. However, licencing procedures in Qatar consider any teacher who comes to Qatar from another country a new teacher regardless of years of experience. This might affect the willingness of such teachers to practise leadership, and whether or not the Principal selects them for leadership roles.

### *Gender*

Gender showed significant results for Supra-Practitioner, indicating that male teachers showed higher scores than female teachers in their perspectives towards this factor. Western studies usually do not refer to this variable, possibly because they have mixed-gender schools. In Qatar, government schools segregate genders. These results were supported by interviewees' comments and the stories they shared of their own experiences. One of the complex schools used in the current study had female and male teachers under one leadership for more than 14 years. This fact allowed for authentic experiences and interesting perspectives from both male and female teachers. Note that these differences do not indicate that female practices are better than male practices.

However, this variable is worth exploring in depth as it is consistent with previous studies related to differences between gender leadership practices (Grant, 2005; Collins, Burrus and Meyer, 2014; Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014; Al Suwaidi and Schoepp, 2015; Al-Ghanim and Badahdah, 2016; Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017).

It is noteworthy that some female teachers talked about how their family members, e.g. fathers and spouses, did not allow them to accept leadership positions. They also mentioned that this restriction affected many leadership opportunities. For example, it kept them from being able to work on committees with male members or travel to participate in leadership training. This is also discussed later in this chapter, under Conditions that Support or Inhibit Teacher Leadership and Challenges Facing Teacher Leadership.

### *Leadership position*

Regarding leadership positions, there were significant results for Sharing Leadership and Principal Selection. This is consistent with previous studies (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014; Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017). In Sharing Leadership, teachers with leadership positions showed higher scores than teachers without. This factor is linked to teachers' willingness to accept leadership opportunities with their principals' support. These results represent teachers' perspectives and suggest teachers in leadership positions acknowledge that their principals are supportive and provide leadership opportunities. In the Principal Selection factor, teachers with no leadership positions showed higher scores than teachers with leadership positions. Angelle and DeHart (2011, p.155) reported the same results in their study. They write:

These results highlight the schism between perceived in-groups and out-groups within a school faculty. Awareness of these findings informs principals of the dangers of fragmented cultures, encouraging school leaders to provide opportunities for all to lead, thus increasing the capacity of the school.

### *School size*

School size did not present as a significant variable in any of the results. This might be surprising, as previous studies show that small schools share all their practices and leadership (Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014; Catterson, 2017). However, the MoE has unified procedures regardless of the school size, which may have mitigated results seen in studies in other contexts.

## *Nationality*

Remarkably, nationality showed significant results all factors. In Qatar, Qataris are given priority when selecting staff for leadership positions even if they have less experience than others. In 2015, the MoE declared that principalships and senior school leadership positions must be Qatarised. Many expatriates work in Qatar, and, during the interviews, many mentioned that they did not feel secure as they might have to leave the country for a variety of reasons, ranging from political issues to their performance. Several stated clearly that they avoided any leadership roles in order to avoid conflict or anything that could lead to dismissal because they needed the job. Others, in contrast, were willing to work in any role for the sake of being gainfully employed. In other words, the nationality of the teacher leader played a big role and political considerations sometimes affected the decisions made by school leaders. This concurs with what Romanowski and Nasser (2015) found when conducting research amongst expatriate professors working in Qatar. Romanowski and Nasser (2015, p. 662) conclude that 'Faculty perceive injustices inside and outside the workplace and experience the privileges of the few and massive inequalities'.

All these variables are connected with the types of support a teacher needs to practise leadership. This is discussed further in the next question.

### **7. Conditions that support or inhibit teacher leadership in Qatari schools according to teachers' perspectives**

Teachers' perspectives towards challenges or opportunities differ according to each teacher's personality. The following section discusses the conditions mentioned by the interviewees.

- ***Supporting teacher leadership***

Types of support varied. Some teachers requested financial support, and others mentioned verbal support as an incentive. Financial support includes being compensated for their efforts or provided with resources to help them implement their plans. Verbal support depends on verbal encouragement or praise and how their work is recognised. Other types of support ranged from the whole team's support to professional development and to the procedures put in place to enhance their leadership practices. These types of support are discussed in this section.

All interviewees who had formal leadership roles stated that they had been cajoled to take these roles and that they learned how to do the required task simply by doing it (i.e. sink or swim). Some of them had been selected accidentally to complete the task, e.g. when a team leader was absent, the principal selected another teacher for the duration and the results exceeded expectations. Interviewees mentioned that they needed clear

instructions and access to resources, which is related to financial support (Wells *et al.*, 2010; Struyve, Meredith and Gielen, 2014). Financial support, as discussed by many researchers, includes educating teachers, providing materials and offering many programmes to enhance their roles.

Another type of resource is providing the teacher with the time to facilitate leadership practices, e.g. reducing teachers' workload, providing time for teachers to work together and share resources and good practices (Lewthwaite, 2006; Granville-Chapman, 2012). In Qatar, the MoE expects school leaders to set time aside on a weekly basis for teachers to meet in each department. However, during the interviews, teachers suggested changing the mechanism of those meetings to make them more effective. Providing resources also includes providing professional development programmes and opportunities to practise and learn more. The opportunities mentioned by the interviewees were not limited to sending teachers to conferences with the expectation that they would share what they learned when they came back. They included leading staff in developing the curriculum, assessment or instructional improvement.

The visible support of the principal is critical to the success of any teacher leadership initiative. Interestingly, interviewees referred to principals as providing support for teachers to practise leadership and did not refer to their direct managers, e.g. subject coordinators. This was consistent with the quantitative results, which showed significant results for Principal Selection and leadership positions. This is also consistent with previous studies (Huff, 2003; Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Donaldson, 2013; Cooper *et al.*, 2016; Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017). Researchers link the relationship between teachers and principals with collective efficacy (Angelle and Teague, 2014; Hallinger, Hosseingholizadeh, Hashemi and Kouhsari, 2018).

It is important to note that the kind of support that teacher leaders value may be different depending on whether or not they have a formal leadership position. In other words, teacher leaders who accept formal positions of leadership through Principal Selection and become empowered to enhance their decision-making, their commitment to the organisation and their pedagogical practice may have a different perspective to those teacher leaders who practise informal leadership roles by selection or voluntarily. Interviewees shared examples related to both categories in all schools.

The organisational context and the nature of the professional culture are pivotal in enabling teachers to develop positive self-efficacy beliefs (Bangs and Frost, 2012; Bangs and MacBeath, 2012). The kind of working environment associated with teacher self-efficacy beliefs includes 'participation by teachers in decisions affecting their work' and 'collaboration among teachers' (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy and Hoy, 1998). These are most likely to flourish within environments characterised by distributed leadership and operationalised through teacher leadership. The Qatari system requires teachers to support each other and plan collaboratively. However, the MoE follows a top-down

approach with highly centralised assessment and detailed lesson plans. Teachers are required to deliver a curriculum developed by the MoE so, in reality, there is little scope for innovation.

A culture that values shared decision-making with the principal leads to shared responsibility for school reform (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009). Empowering teachers to share in school-wide decision-making enhances teacher leadership throughout the school. The more teachers are part of decision-making, the greater the participation and commitment to carrying out the goals of the organisation. Teacher leadership in an atmosphere of collaboration has been linked throughout the literature to teacher collective efficacy (Angelle and DeHart, 2011). Interviewees mentioned that all the principals had an open-door policy and encouraged new ideas. However, it was also widely acknowledged that putting these ideas into practice was hard because the MoE made most of the decisions and principals had limited autonomy.

Although most interviewees mentioned the support of the principal, many teachers also referred to their religious beliefs, and what drove them to be responsible or proactive was requesting rewards and good deeds from God. Once again, this was related to the concept of a *Murabbi*. Paramboor and Ibrahim claim that ‘it is the time to think of the relevantization of *Murabbi*’ (2013, p. 154). Those findings show the importance of cross-cultural studies to explore the religious and cultural impact on teacher leadership (Boyaci and Oz, 2017).

As noted in Chapter 3, a teacher leader’s relationship with his/her principal is dynamic. Anderson (2004) describes three types of principal-teacher leader relationship (*Buffered*, *Contested* and *Interactive*) and their impact on school improvement and culture. These types vary in nature, from the principal being isolated by teacher leaders, the principal being opposed to teacher leaders, or the principal distributing tasks and sharing decision-making (interactive). All these models were mentioned by interviewees and it occurred in one school according to interviewees perspectives and examples.

York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) teacher leadership theory of action lists five types of support, namely, supportive culture, supportive principal and colleagues, time, resources and development opportunities (see Figure 3). Teachers in the current study mentioned all five. Similarly, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) propose seven dimensions of teacher leadership, as follows:

1. **Developmental focus:** Providing activities to enhance continuous learning and professional development.
2. **Recognition:** Teachers are respected and recognised for the contributions they make. School leaders have the responsibility to create an environment of mutual respect and caring among teachers and celebrate the successes of their colleagues.
3. **Autonomy:** Teachers take the initiative in making educational improvements for their students and practice innovation.

4. **Collegiality:** Collegial relationships lead to loyalty, trust and a sense of community.
5. **Participation:** Teachers act as leaders when they have the opportunity to be steeped in school decision-making.
6. **Open communication:** Open communication allows teachers to send and receive information relevant to the effective operation of the school in open, honest ways and they feel informed about what is going on in the school.
7. **Positive environment:** A positive environment is reflected by the belief that teachers are viewed and treated as professionals.

All seven areas were mentioned by participants when discussing the ways their schools supported teacher leadership. It bears repeating that teacher leaders have individual background, personalities and experiences. Therefore, teacher leadership should not follow a one-size-fits-all approach (Bush, 2018). Educators should not generalise or compare teacher leaders to one another as everyone is an individual and learns differently. In addition, it is important that various opportunities are provided on a continuous basis. The results show that teachers' practices evolve every day and they may not notice these changes themselves.

- *Challenges facing teacher leadership*

This question was asked directly during interviews and the results were consistent with previous studies. Teachers face internal and external factors that affect their teacher leadership practices. Instinctively, teachers fear taking leadership roles for many reasons. They mentioned lack of self-confidence, lack of experience and fear of colleagues' criticism and conflict. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) state that the 'essence of leadership lies in the capacity to deliver disturbing news and raise difficult questions in a way that moves people to take up the message without killing the messenger' (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002, p. 74).

Bembenuity, White and Vélez (2015, p. 6) write about 'Tall Poppy Syndrome' meaning "those who stick their heads up risk being cut down to size". Similarly, Huff (2003) suggests some teachers are reluctant to support or recognise other teachers who are selected as teacher leaders or recognised for their contributions. Some teachers in the current study expressed similar opinions. They were not willing to perform leadership roles in case they faced criticism from their colleagues. Interviewees suggested ways to prevent this from happening. These included establishing clear criteria for selecting teacher leaders and maintaining effective communication between principals and teachers in their schools. In other words, promoting a positive culture based on trust and justice. All these suggestions are supported by the results of previous research (Andrews and Crowther, 2002; Muijs and Harris, 2006; Nolan and Palazzolo, 2011; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014; Wenner and Campbell, 2017).

It is apparent from the interviewees' comments that it is almost impossible to avoid conflicts or disagreement, as we are all human. One interviewee found it hard to lead a team that also included the previous leader (see p. 139) and others talked about having to deal with difficult colleagues or parents. Conflict occurs not only between colleagues, but also between school principals (Emira, 2010) and between other stakeholders. Disagreement between stakeholders can also be labelled a lack of team support, which can be seen as conflict or silent resistance and disregard (Benoliel and Schechter, 2017).

Interviewees identified language as an additional barrier for both Arabic and non-Arabic speakers. Arabic countries are diverse. Even though they seem to speak the same language, they have different dialects and backgrounds (Hadidi and Al Khateeb, 2015). Sometimes school leaders and staff may not pay attention to this factor because they assume they speak the same language (Mulford, 2008). There may also be miscommunication when teacher leaders speak an advanced professional language with which other teachers are not familiar (Margolis and Doring, 2013).

All interviewees emphasised the importance of communication with others to enable teachers to practice leadership. They were also aware of the potential for misunderstanding. For example, one male teacher mentioned many instances when other teachers on his team did not understand what he was talking about and were insulted by the words he used in his daily conversations (see p. 140). This is an area worthy of further study.

Being a new teacher in a school is another barrier, even if one is not a novice teacher. Studies have shown that novice teachers face challenges in transitions between work and learning time. Among the challenges are lack of skills and knowledge, self-effacement and depression, and the position and role of new immigrants in community work (Tynjälä and Heikkinen, 2011). Therefore, it is important to prepare teachers, and for teachers to prepare themselves, with the knowledge and leadership skills to face the many challenges in the workplace (Abidin, Norwani and Musa, 2016). New teachers need time and effort to show their capabilities and gain acceptance and trust. York-Barr and Duke (2004) concluded that 'Professional norms of isolation, individualism, and egalitarianism challenge the emergence of teacher leadership' (p. 288). New teachers joining a school may face the same feelings, as was the case with the teacher quoted on p. 134. I could not find studies that explored these points and they might need more investigation.

New teachers joining schools might need more time to differentiate between old systems and the new ones they face. It requires flexibility, awareness and reflection to adapt or adopt (Meristo and Eisenschmidt, 2014). Interviewees also mentioned facing new situations, new organisational cultures and new laws as a new teacher. Some teachers were afraid to try new ideas in case their school leaders or colleague did not accept their contributions and they lost their job. For expatriate teachers, this would mean having to



leave the country. A male teacher mentioned that he came to this country to work hard. He did not want to lose the opportunity for a decent job and would avoid anything that could lead to trouble, including any teacher leader tasks. He commented, 'I know my abilities, and in my country, on a regular basis, I implemented a lot of initiatives to change inefficient practices'.

This is clearly an issue in the GCC countries, where sponsorship is applied to all male employees. Female employees might work under the sponsorship of their families or, in rare cases, their employers. Feeling insecure and homesick is not dependent only on how secure one's sponsorship is; it might be due to working in an organisation or country that makes one insecure about his/her livelihood.

Throughout the interviews, I discovered that many teacher leaders were reluctant to take on formal or informal leadership roles for fear of failure or of being criticised. They feared making a mistake, getting an initiative wrong or even leading teams that might involve their superiors. As these teachers were all expatriates, they relied heavily on their jobs to sustain their existence in Qatar. Losing one's job means losing the ability to stay in the country. The current sponsorship (*Kafala*) system enforces this. For those who are the main sponsors, they and their entire family would have to move countries again. Many of the interviewed teachers shied away from responsibility or anything that highlighted their existence outside of the classroom. Another factor was that, although the majority of teachers were Arabic, the cultural differences were substantial, and they quickly learnt not to voice contradictory opinions.

Another barrier mentioned was related to families, parents and spousal support. Some interviewees mentioned that their families would not allow female teachers to accept leadership roles or participate in specific activities. Some husbands would not allow their wives to work at home or even switch on their laptops in the evenings, during family time. In contrast, other teachers gave examples of how they succeeded in their roles when their families supported them and were very understanding. This might highlight the importance of investigating the impact of family issues on school leadership practices.

Regarding time to complete tasks, respondents in both data collection phases stated that they had sufficient time to plan together and share experiences. This finding contradicts previous research. One interviewee said, 'Everyone has 24 hours, and can manage his/her own time and try to work smarter, not harder'. Another male teacher used the expression 'timeless time'. I was unfamiliar with this expression but subsequently found the following explanation by Ylijoki and Mäntylä (2003):

In sharp contrast to scheduled time, timeless time is not subjected to any kinds of external pressures and demands. In our terminology, it refers to internally motivated use of time in which clock time loses its significance. In this sense, timeless time involves transcending time and one's self and becoming entirely immersed in the task at hand.

Whereas in scheduled time long working hours are a result of externally imposed necessities, in timeless time they stem from academics' own enthusiasm, fascination and immersion in their work. (Ylijoki and Mäntylä, 2003, p. 60)

I found their description so true: when we do something we love or enjoy, we lose track of time. Time is not a barrier. On the contrary, it becomes a challenge to face and solve, like any other challenge the teachers face. Attitudes to time are also cultural. Kemp and Williams (2013) studied how meetings were conducted in three big organisations in a GCC country. They found that meetings did not have strict timings and that people tended to be flexible about the time spent.

With each of the barriers mentioned above, some interviewees chose to see them as opportunities. So, for example, they viewed language as a way to learn more about other cultures and designed programmes to learn more about these cultures. They considered pressure a path to creativity.

## **SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the findings of both phases were discussed and compared to previous studies according to the main themes identified: teachers' awareness of teacher leadership, the nature of teacher leadership, the importance of teacher leadership, teacher leaders' characteristics, teacher leadership's domains, variables affecting teacher leadership and the conditions that support or inhibit teacher leadership.

Results related to defining teacher leadership were consistent with previous studies. There was no agreement on the meaning of *teacher leadership*; it is an umbrella term that can be used to describe both formal and informal teacher leadership roles (Wenner and Campbell, 2017). However, respondents in both phases mainly mentioned subject coordinators as teacher leaders.

Regarding the nature of teacher leadership in Qatar, teachers witnessed many changes in the opportunities available and their level of autonomy. During the educational reform, they had many opportunities and a high level of autonomy to implement new ideas and take on new roles. At the time of writing, the system had become much more centralised. However, teachers were still required to share experiences, train their colleagues, conduct action research and participate in committees. These teacher leadership practices have been mentioned in previous studies (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014). In addition, this study showed other practices related to social and financial activities, which were mentioned by a few researchers (Levin and Schrum, 2016).

All interviewees mentioned the importance of teacher leadership although they could not cite any empirical evidence. This is consistent with previous studies (Wenner and Campbell, 2017). They were also aware of the possibility of a negative impact for reasons relating to teachers' personalities and qualifications or else to school leaders and

school culture. This is also consistent with previous studies (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009). Moreover, teacher leadership characteristics were consistent with previous studies (Leithwood, 2003; Killion and Harrison, 2006).

Five of the selected variables, i.e., qualifications, years of experience, nationality, gender and leadership position, showed significant results in relation to the Teacher Leadership Inventory's four factors (Sharing Expertise, Sharing Leadership, Supra-Practitioner, Principal Selection):

- Sharing Expertise (SE): Degree level, nationality
- Sharing Leadership (SL): Leadership position, nationality
- Supra-Practitioner (SP): Years of experience, gender, degree level, nationality
- Principal Selection (PS): Leadership position, nationality, years of experience

There were no significant results for age, school size or school level. The finding with respect to school level is inconsistent with previous studies (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014).. However, in the qualitative phase, many interviewees gave examples of how they believed teacher leadership differed according to school level.

Interestingly, many interviewees highlighted the influence of religious beliefs on teacher leadership. The majority used the term *Murabbi*, rather than teacher leader, because it indicates taking care of students and instilling values. Religion was one factor that enhanced teacher leadership and motivated teachers to practise leadership. All the conditions that supported or inhibited teacher leadership were consistent with previous studies. Notably, teachers' needs varied according to their particular personality and qualifications. What some teachers interpreted as a challenge, others saw as an opportunity.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Teachers are one of the most important ways to impart knowledge, to articulate the vision of educational systems, improve services and lead better practices. These teaching and learning processes enable teachers to understand, reflect on and develop their own practices and influence others, directly and indirectly. Many studies, mainly in Western countries, have explored and described teacher leadership. However, not many have been conducted in Arab nations even though many educational reforms have been launched in these countries.

This section provides a general overview of the preceding chapters, draws conclusions from the main findings, suggests recommendations for various stakeholders, and discusses implications for further research. The first two chapters described what attracted me to explore teacher leadership, including observations of other teachers who were keen to help and volunteer in informal roles that may or may not have been recognised or rewarded, and a memory of my experience as a classroom teacher and my work as a school leader. These experiences were formed mainly in Qatar whilst working within the educational reform for nearly two decades before writing this thesis. The educational system in Qatar witnessed many changes when the new reform was launched early this century. A decade later, the reform was curtailed, despite the plans that had been made, and the resources and finances invested in the initiative. Many other educators, besides myself, were exposed to advanced professional development run by Western educational organisations. In addition, this new reform required teachers to work in new roles in formal and informal capacities, as mentioned in Chapter 2.

Teacher leadership is not a new concept in many Western countries. However, teacher leadership studies related to Arab countries are scarce. There is no agreement on a single definition of teacher leadership. In addition, this umbrella term might be perplexing when used in countries around the MENA region. This confusion might be due to a lack of understanding of leadership from an Arabic perspective. It might also be due to the words that are used to translate educational terms into Arabic and their connotations. The current study followed York-Barr and Duke's (2004) teacher leadership definition and framework as well as Angelle and DeHart's (2011) Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) to explore the variables that affect teacher leadership. It distinguished between definitions of *teacher leadership* and *teacher leaders*.

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- What do teachers and school leaders in Qatari government schools understand by the term *teacher leadership*?
- What is the nature of teacher leadership in Qatari schools?

- To what extent, if at all, are any differences in their perspectives related to their position (age, gender, qualifications, school level, years of experience, school size and leadership position)?
- What conditions support or inhibit teacher leadership in Qatari schools?

A mixed methods explanatory sequential design was applied, after the potential bias of my own paradigm and perspectives had been acknowledged. I chose to use pre-existing tools to build on previous results and experiences. The tools were tested on pilot samples and were modified. The first quantitative phase started by sending the TLI online questionnaire to all teachers and school leaders in Qatari schools (totalling more than 14,000). 2,969 responses were returned and analysed using descriptive and one-way ANOVA analysis. In the next phase, an online questionnaire was sent to two separate campus/complex schools' teachers asking them to nominate teacher leaders in their schools. 96 teachers were interviewed.

The next section will present the main conclusions based on the research questions.

### **1. What do teachers and school leaders in Qatari government schools understand by the term *teacher leadership*?**

As in all previous studies, there was no consensus in the way respondents understood the term *teacher leadership*. Most respondents, in all phases, initially linked their answer to subject coordinators, demonstrating a narrow interpretation of the term. However, they went on to describe other formal teacher leadership roles (such as professional development coordinator and e-learning projects coordinator) as well as informal leadership roles (such as helping other teachers socially and financially).

One of the main conclusions of this study is that there is a difference between exercising teacher leadership and being a teacher leader. In other words, teachers can exercise leadership (i.e. can influence others) without seeing themselves as teacher leaders and without their principals seeing them in this way. Approximately a third of the teachers nominated by their colleagues had some reservations about accepting the label *teacher leader* and 11 rejected it outright (see Table 45). As expected, some of the teacher leadership examples given by the interviewees were connected to teaching and learning, but others were related to social activities. The influence that the interviewees had might occur directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally. Their leadership practices might be confined to one area or cover many areas. These practices might happen regularly or just occasionally. In contrast, teacher leaders practise leadership intentionally and have a vision or goals to achieve. Teacher leaders, according to the interviewees, were recognised for their continuous contributions in many areas. Three interviewees called them 'octopuses' (see p. 127-128). These teachers were renowned for their effective characteristics.

As aforementioned, many researchers agree that teachers can practise leadership in their own way; however, awareness, desire and ability are required to develop their teacher leadership practices and be recognised as teacher leaders. Being recognised does not necessarily mean being referred to as a *teacher leader*. Here in Qatar, this term is not used although there are teacher leaders who participate in many formal and informal roles, e.g. leading research activities, organising extracurricular activities and participating in committees, and a few scholars recommend helping teachers practise leadership in those areas (Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017). These roles can be practised at the classroom, department, school and MoE levels, and internationally. Yet, it was interesting to note that the term had not been introduced to any of the respondents in this study even though the educational reform was built on Western policies and had Western advisors.

The current study used Killion and Harrison's (2006) list of effective teacher characteristics, which contains six categories: beliefs, teaching expertise, coaching skills, relationship skills, content expertise and leadership skills. Two extra categories were added based on previous studies (Leithwood, 2003; York-Barr and Duke, 2004): personality and general knowledge. The teacher leader characteristics identified by the interviewees were consistent with the literature cite above. Moreover, when interviewees talked about building positive relationships, engendering trust, sharing experiences and teaching and learning skills, they were agreeing with the work of Snell and Swanson (2000), Wayne and Youngs (2003) and Lumpkin (2016). Personality traits were mentioned and these included being patient, positive, optimistic and dedicated (see Tables 41 and 46). However, leadership skills did not figure prominently in the characteristics listed by respondents. This might be due to the importance of relationship skills in other traits or might be due to a lack of knowledge about leadership skills and traits.

Remarkably, respondents highlighted the importance of faith, asking good deeds from Allah (God) and being a *Murabbi*. Asking good deeds from Allah was an important reason for interviewees to start their teaching profession and for being responsible and proactive. Religion also motivated teachers to remain in their teaching profession and to accept new roles/tasks after asking for rewards from Allah. Participants in both phases linked teacher leadership to being a *Murabbi*. This term is used by Muslim scholars to show the teacher's role in enhancing students' positive behaviours, taking care of them and developing their knowledge and skills. In this study, participants used the term when talking about the impact a teacher leader has on other people (colleagues, principal, parents etc.) not just students. For them, a teacher leader is someone who influences and educates others' intellect, soul, body and heart and develops an effective personality. This is consistent with previous studies from an Islamic perspective (Kazmi, 1999). It also links to the work of Levin and Schrum (2016) who include leading in a religious organisation as one example of teacher leadership (see Table 5).

Teacher leadership is an umbrella term that can include many concepts (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). At the most basic level, it means influencing, developing or changing practices. These practices can be related to teaching and learning, student achievement and professional development (as noted by York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Berry, Daughtrey and Wieder, 2010; Jita and Mokhele, 2013). In line with this literature, participants in the current study gave examples of how teacher leaders tried to improve instructional practices. These included coaching other co-ordinators and team leaders, and participating in MoE level consultancy committees. Participants also gave many examples that were not directly related to academic achievement. These included informal leadership (e.g. being head of the school decorating committee) and enhancing social relations (e.g. supporting homesick expatriate teachers and setting up a financial fund). In addition, being a *Murabbi* was reflected in taking care of students' behaviours, characteristics, academic achievement and parental relationship, solving problems with students of divorced families and engaging in many other social and academic aspects.

Interviewees mentioned examples of leadership practices that could not be acknowledged easily and varied among the teachers themselves. These practices depended on each teacher's ability. According to interviewees, teacher leaders were primarily recognised by their colleagues, by parents and then by school leaders. Only recently have teacher leaders begun to be recognised by national leaders of education or the Ministry of Education for their roles in their classrooms, e.g. an interviewee mentioned being selected to represent other teachers on a committee at the MoE level. In order for teacher leaders' contributions to be recognised nationally, these contributions need to be systemised and communicated to all teachers to give them equal opportunities. An illustration of this need is that the 96 teachers who had been nominated as teacher leaders did not know anything about the contributions their fellow nominees were making. The interviewees also downplayed their own contribution to teacher leadership. They gave amazing examples of the projects they launched but thought that these projects/activities were simply part of their normal tasks.

Fairman and Mackenzie (2012) identified nine spheres of teacher leadership influence and how teachers can develop their skills accordingly. Their study is based on York-Barr and Duke's (2004) teacher leadership theory of action, but their model is not as linear, reflecting the fact that teachers can practise leadership and influence many stakeholders simultaneously. Teachers might contribute differently in each situation or level at various times and cannot be restricted to one layer. In other words, teachers not only deal with students, they also build professional relationships with their colleagues in their department, in the school, or even in other schools nationally and internationally. The current study builds on Fairman and Mackenzie's (2012) work by presenting an orbit model (see Figure 9 in Chapter 6). The orbit model illustrates what participants said about teacher leadership and the many ways teachers influence their colleagues, school leaders, other schools and stakeholders, formally and informally.

In a related question, the current study also investigated how teachers understood the importance of teacher leadership and whether they saw a need for it. It is clear that leading a school is becoming more and more complex each day, especially amid the social, economic and political conditions facing Arab countries (El-Baz, 2009; Rauch and Kostyshak, 2009; Akkary, 2014; Wiseman, Alromi and Alshumrani, 2014; Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015; Mohamed, Gerber, and Aboukacem, 2016). Although this study was conducted in Qatar, many of the interviewed teachers were selected and hired from various countries in the Middle East. Previous studies have agreed on the impact of teachers' practices on school improvement and student achievement. The results showed examples of teacher leaders and teacher leadership practices in developing schools, such as educating other teachers and increasing student achievement. The results of this study are consistent with those of previous studies (Killion and Harrison, 2006; Taylor *et al.*, 2011; Ali, 2014; Wenner and Campbell, 2017). Although it needs to be remembered that these results rely on self-report and interviewees may feel embarrassed to share their experiences or exaggerate, interviewees shared many personal experiences and details that were supported by other interviewees' comments from the same school.

## **2. What is the nature of teacher leadership in Qatari schools?**

Qatar has witnessed many phases in its education system. These changes have affected teachers' roles and responsibilities. Teachers were given greater autonomy to design their curricula and lead student assessment at the beginning of the reform, while, at the time of writing, the MoE controls all educational policies. School principals and MoE employees monitor teachers' performance according to MoE regulations. Interviewees who experienced teaching during the early years of the reform asked for more freedom and autonomy.

The educational reform in Qatar created teaching and leadership roles that had never been mentioned or practised in any other Arab country (Ellili-Cherif, Romanowski and Nasser, 2012; Romanowski *et al.*, 2013; Nasser, 2017). SSO teams were hired to support teachers and school leaders to articulate these new roles and responsibilities. Each school had a different structure according to the school operator's visions and educational plans. As I write, the MoE has applied a unified structure for all government schools while keeping some of the positions that evolved from the reform, e.g. career advisor and subject coordinator. The titles are the same, while the practices have changed and differ from what teachers were used to doing during the reform. Interviewees' comments showed that the level of the practices varied according to each teacher's skills and experiences.

Interviewees were involved in many areas related to teaching and learning, social activities and managerial roles. Their participation was based mainly on principal selection and what leadership roles had been distributed between teachers in each school. However, in some cases, teachers volunteered to perform leadership roles or even started initiatives without school leaders' permission or knowledge. For example,



one interviewee started a programme to teach school students Quran early in the morning without the principal's permission.

The results showed that teachers could practise leadership inside and outside schools. These contributions could be related to teaching and learning but they could also consist of supporting other teachers or stakeholders, emotionally and socially. These results are consistent with previous studies (Fairman and Mackenzie, 2012;2014; Jo, 2014). However, not many Arab countries provide the same opportunities for their teachers (Al-Zboon, 2016; Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017).

A key finding in this study is the importance of the terminology used in Arab countries. This includes two components: understanding the term, in English, as it is used in Western countries, and understanding the Arabic word used in translation. As the interviewees noted, *Leadership* and *leaders* might indicate different ideas when used in Arab countries. In such countries, teachers are expected to promote values and build positive character, not merely to develop their teaching and pedagogical qualifications, but to also be role models. This is called being a *Murabbi* in Arab nations and many scholars have begun to study it (Paramboor and Ibrahim 2013). Being a *Murabbi* means instilling values and taking care of others academically, emotionally, behaviourally and pastorally. This practice might help develop other ways of practising leadership, such as through character-building programmes.

**3. To what extent, if at all, are any differences in their perspectives related to their position (age, gender, qualifications, school level, years of experience, school size and leadership position)?**

***School level***

Although most of the survey results were consistent with previous research, for this variable, the quantitative data was not consistent but the qualitative data was. All previous studies show significant differences between leadership practices at various school levels, e.g., teachers in elementary show more leadership practices than secondary teachers (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014). In contrast, the quantitative results from the current study did not show any significant differences. This might be because the MoE applied the same policies to all students and teachers regardless of the school level. Professional development programmes are implemented for all teachers, irrespective of their level of teaching, at all school levels, at the same time. It was also common practice for teachers to teach different phases at different schools, at any given time. However, interviewees reported many differences in leadership practices, according to school levels based on students' ages and needs. For example, primary teachers were said to collaborate more than secondary teachers

(see p. 130). Interviewees linked this to the fact that collaboration would be difficult among secondary teachers because they taught specialised subjects.

### *Gender*

Both phases showed that gender affects the factor, Supra-Practitioner. Angelle and DeHart (2011) define Supra-Practitioner as ‘perceptions of teachers’ willingness to go above and beyond prescribed roles’ (p. 66). Male teachers gave significantly higher scores than female teachers. When interviewed, female teachers talked about how their family circumstances might prevent them from making a bigger contribution to their school. This is in line with the work of Bahry and Marr (2005) on Qatari female leaders. Interviewees also suggested that female teachers followed instructions literally, while male teachers understood concepts and then found alternative ways of doing the same task (see p.132).

### *Leadership positions*

Whether or not the respondents held a leadership position affected two teacher leadership factors, namely Sharing Leadership and Principal Selection. Sharing Leadership is the perception of principals’ willingness to offer leadership opportunities to teachers, and Principal Selection is the perception of how principals control which leaders may participate in leadership activities. For Sharing Leadership, teachers with a leadership position gave significantly higher scores than teachers without. Conversely, non-leadership teachers reported significantly higher scores on Principal Selection than the formal teacher leaders. This result is in line with Angelle and DeHart (2011).

### *Qualifications*

There were significant results in qualifications related to Sharing Expertise and Supra-Practitioner. For Sharing Expertise, teachers in the bachelor’s degree group reported significantly higher scores than teachers in the postgraduate degree group. For Supra-Practitioner, the postgraduate degree group reported slightly higher scores than the bachelor’s degree group. These results are consistent with previous studies (Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014; Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017). Interviews recognised the importance of teacher preparation programmes and noted the various opportunities that the MoE provided for teachers to gain an educational degree, e.g. an educational diploma from the College of Education in Qatar.

### *Years of experience and Age*

Years of experience were noted to have a significant effect on Supra-Practitioner and Principal Selection. Generally, teachers with more experience are expected to do more, use several methods and go beyond the call of duty to be better practitioners.

Respondents did not indicate any impact of age on leadership practices. This may be because nearly half of the survey sample were in the same age bracket (i.e. 30-39 years old).

### *Nationality*

Interestingly, nationality showed significant differences in all four factors. All interviewees mentioned that nationality was important since most leadership positions were given to Qataris. Some interviewees said they avoided accepting leadership positions due to political issues between Qatar and their countries and fear of losing their jobs.

#### **4. What conditions support or inhibit teacher leadership in Qatari schools?**

The interviewees highlighted support from colleagues (including administrators and those in their teaching teams), the principal, the school culture and their families. The principal was said to play a pivotal role in encouraging teacher leadership even though it sometimes happened without their knowledge. Interviewees valued principals who accepted that mistakes were part of the learning process, applied an open-door policy, built a culture based on trust, looked for new ideas, adopted clear procedures, provided a variety of opportunities and avoided ‘tall poppy’ syndrome between teachers, in which teachers blame each other. Teachers stated that principals needed to ensure they were not afraid to try new things, e.g., the majority mentioned that their principals created a *WhatsApp* group to allow teachers to share new ideas. All these conditions are consistent with previous studies (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2008; Jumani and Malik, 2017; Benoliel and Schechter, 2017).

Interviewees emphasised the need for clear selection criteria and effective communication between teachers and school leaders (see p. 140). They also said the way principals approached teachers to accept leadership roles or positions was very important (see p. 136). Support from the rest of team was also seen as essential.

In addition to these conditions, teacher leaders said they had a variety of intrinsic motivations for exercising leadership. These included asking God for good deeds; being a lifelong learner; having a passion for learning and helping others; being responsible and proactive, and having a desire to change and improve teaching, learning and school performance. Although these results are consistent with previous research (Gubman, 2004; York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Angelle and DeHart, 2011; Bangs and Frost, 2012;

Angelle and Teague, 2014), not many studies have explored the impact of religion on teacher leadership.

Almost all survey respondents and interviewees said there was adequate time for teachers to practise leadership. This result was surprising and it does not match previous studies (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Granville-Chapman, 2012; Levin and Schrum, 2016). One possible explanation is that the MoE ensures that planning and preparation time and meetings are built into the system. On the one hand, professional development sessions for female teachers are planned during school days and teachers should not have a heavy teaching workload on those days. On the other hand, male teachers have their training in the afternoons with reduced teaching time on those days. However, this might lead to a different question about the quality of the time spent on each task.

Bearing in mind that everything teachers face may have two sides, positive and negative, what some interviewees labelled a barrier/constraint, others labelled an opportunity/support. Some welcomed the opportunity to try new things but others worried about losing their jobs if it went wrong. In general, teacher leaders found solutions to overcome obstacles, and shone in difficult situations and with difficult people. They gave detailed proposals, demonstrated to colleagues how to solve problems, and simplified them for others.

Interviewees who were considered teacher leaders in their schools did not think what they were doing was extraordinary. Some even thought it was less than expected, and that they should get better at it in the future. Some considered this humility, or they were afraid to go to hell; in Islam, arrogance is an offence that leads to punishment in hell. Most importantly, the majority did not seek to practise formal leadership roles. They were selected by their principals and were surprised at their performance and what they had achieved.

This section showed how the results aligned with York-Barr and Duke's (2004) teacher leadership theory of action. The same conditions were mentioned in their framework and teachers' interactions with all stakeholders were clearly reflected in Fairman and Mackenzie's (2014) study, which was based on York-Barr and Duke's theory. Interviewees added flesh to this theory with their practical examples. Angelle and DeHart's (2011) four-factor model helped map teachers' perspectives in the quantitative phase and confirmed the importance of understanding the context and having real-life stories to explain the findings.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The present study has implications for how to enhance teacher leadership in Qatar. The Qatar's educational system already provides a variety of opportunities for teachers to practise leadership. However, there is always room for improvement when ensuring the quality of these opportunities.

The implications are relevant to different education stakeholders, including myself as a field training specialist working on a teacher preparation programme at the College of Education in Qatar. These implications are discussed in detail in the next section.

### **Teacher preparation programmes**

As mentioned in this study, leadership means influence, and all teachers are influencing others in one way or another. Candidates who are undertaking an educational certificate might encounter the basics of teacher leadership and what it entails, especially with the educational changes Qatar is facing. The College of Education in Qatar was accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 2015. The NCATE<sup>14</sup> standards included leadership as an outcome of the college's programme; however, there are still no courses related to these standards and no clear activities related to teacher leadership, as the interviewees pointed out.

The results showed that all interviewees practised leadership formally and/or informally. Teachers were required to be agents of change and assist with reform by implementing incentives they had never heard of before launching the reform, e.g. curriculum standards. To be able to support school leaders or to be proactive by themselves, teachers needed to know the basics and link them to everything they had learnt. In light of this, student teacher preparation programmes might include foundations of educational leadership and management.

Such programmes might also promote awareness that teacher leadership is an umbrella term that is not used the same way in every country. However, teacher leadership needs to be recognised. Teachers develop their leadership skills gradually with experience and reflection, and the interviewees requested to have expert training and to test their skills in authentic situations, not only in theoretical recitation of leadership theories. This is consistent with Wenner and Campbell's (2017) recommendations.

### **Development of each teacher's skills, knowledge and dispositions**

The previous suggestion is relevant to undergraduate teacher training programmes, while this suggestion is relevant to teachers already in schools. Teacher leadership opportunities should not happen accidentally, although in some ways this will remain unchanged because we continually discover new things in life. We think this is accidental, but it is part of our destiny.

It would be a good idea for educational leaders in Qatar to compile a register for all teachers to catalogue their contributions. Doing so will enable school leaders and policy makers to ensure that all teachers are exposed to teacher leadership opportunities and build a capacity database of their initiatives and experiences. It will also be an

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<sup>14</sup> At the time of writing, it is called the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

opportunity to provide a directory of all possible areas of improvement and how potential teacher leaders can volunteer or even add influence and help each other.

Another way of doing this is to offer a coaching programme for teachers who are interested in practising leadership, something similar to the Leadership Coaching Pledge, which the Teaching Schools Council in UK offered to female teachers. It is a voluntary pledge to support female teachers through coaching sessions. I volunteered to coach three candidates and have seen the great impact this programme has had on their dispositions, knowledge and skills. Interviewees mentioned that, although there are many professional development opportunities in Qatar, they need a more tailored training programme.

### **Teacher communication and networking with other educators to expand their knowledge and skills**

In reference to the two previous suggestions, there is a need to expand teachers' horizons and not limit their contributions to inside the classroom. Some educators think this might distract teachers from their main work, and others, whom I agree with, see this as a part of the learning process that will enhance teachers' personal skills and promote the profession.

In Qatar, some teachers participate in International Education and Resource Network (iEARN) projects and other competitions. Many interviewees participated in national and international competitions such as Famelab. These initiatives aim to highlight opportunities and to inform all teachers about their colleagues' contributions. At the time of writing, few are selected for these opportunities and, according to the interviewees, other teachers might not be aware of them.

These implications include teachers coming from other countries to work in Qatari schools who can introduce programmes or initiatives in which they have participated previously and that they are keen to customise to the needs of Qatar. This enhances the idea of utilising teachers' knowledge and experiences.

### **Development of principals' skills and knowledge to manage teacher talents and improve school performance**

As the results showed, teachers rely on principals' selection and support, especially their communication skills and verbal support. Educators in Qatar might use these results to understand how teachers, mainly expatriate teachers, might be afraid to try new things or contribute to the school unless principals approve their suggestions. At the same time, principals need to be equipped with the tools to identify talent, manage teachers' skills and empower them. In addition, they need to provide a safe and positive environment to encourage creativity, especially when dealing with diversity (Romanowski *et al.*, 2018).

### **Psychological counsellors/mentors in each school to support teachers**

Even if principals provide opportunities and the necessary support to teachers, each teacher will face different restrictions and, potentially, what is known as 'imposter

syndrome'. This refers to a fear of being identified as lacking adequate qualifications or skills to carry out necessary tasks.

Teachers face role conflicts; they may not know how to deal with pressure or may be reluctant to make important decisions. The transition phase is when teachers start their new roles or positions and might be the most difficult phase; however, it will guide the rest of their careers.

Several interviewees mentioned becoming sick when they started their new roles. Some of them declined many leadership roles after that experience, while the rest faced many challenges and hardships, e.g., homesickness, dealing with difficult people and dealing with different generations which requires support and understanding.

### **Programmes that include students' voices and enhance democratic practices**

Some interviewees mentioned that students might participate in selecting teachers for student-focused activities. In addition, all interviewees mentioned that the main purpose of teacher leadership is to enhance values and support students by being a *Murabbi*.

The ultimate goal of the educational system in Qatar is to increase student achievement and build positive citizens. It is also to empower students and listen to their opinions in order to inform decisions about the selection and implementation of educational programmes. Students learn democratic practice not only by reading about it in books, but also by constantly using it and seeing it put in place around them in a positive and healthy environment. Some interviewees mentioned that students might help develop projects or hire teachers for specific teams and activities.

These goals might improve relations between teachers and students if managed effectively and could bridge the gaps between teachers and students' expectations and responsibilities. The key word is *effectively*; schools tend to introduce many initiatives, but some fail or are abandoned right after implementation, despite being fantastic, due to poor execution.

### **Personal implications**

My current role is as a field-training specialist, supervising a number of teacher interns in Qatari schools before they gain a teaching degree, inspiring and transforming them. I previously worked as a research assistant at the same university, and my focus was to learn more about research methods and data analysis. This study turned me back to the spirit of teaching and the importance of innovation in teaching learners.

I learnt not to underestimate any effort contributed by a teacher, as I would like to believe that each individual is doing their utmost to be an effective teacher practitioner and a mentor. It is my duty to build on these endeavours and develop them, starting with each teacher. I work with them based on their current abilities and teach them to lead from where they stand, regardless of their title or position. The interviewees' stories, comments and recollections made me laugh and cry sometimes. When I remember their

stories, I shiver. Teachers need to be listened to, to be understood and to be able to express their points of view.

This study helped me reconceptualise myself as a researcher. This mixed methods study has helped clarify my epistemological and ontological assumptions. Some surprising findings made me cautious about my assumptions.

I am working on developing a plan for my students to raise their awareness of leadership and to ensure there is customised training for them on a regular basis, including updated practical training. I am positive that these efforts will improve the current programmes based on the knowledge gained through this learning journey.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The implications mentioned earlier lead to several recommendations for various stakeholders (policy makers, researchers and school leaders) in education systems. Although I have tried to direct each recommendation to a specific group, I encourage every educator to reflect on these recommendations and see how he/she might contribute and implement these suggestions:

### **Researchers**

- Studies of the educational reform in Qatar would be enhanced if they included a focus on the variables and factors that affect teacher leadership, in order to build on the best practices and avoid previous obstacles. This would ensure optimum usage of opportunities, especially with keen and willing teachers, considering all the professional development opportunities provided during and after the reform.
- Studies are needed to explore the impact of terminology, especially when borrowing systems from different cultures, and how to translate the words to ensure that they reflect, for example, history and language. An example of one such term is the use of *Murabbi* in contemporary education.
- Cross-cultural studies are needed to explore new areas mentioned in this study, i.e. the Islamic perspective of teacher leadership and the role of faith in enhancing teacher leadership.
- Studies are needed on how to support teachers in their areas of expertise, e.g. teachers who participate in international competitions might need different types of support from a social activities teacher leader.
- Researchers and practitioners need to identify the main terms to capture the studies related to teacher leadership and develop a theory of teacher leadership as a unique form of influencing others.

### **Policy makers**

- Policy makers should explore the impact of the variables on teacher leadership practices. For example, the MoE labels all teachers as new teachers if they are



new to the country or have no teaching experience in Qatar, irrespective of the number of years they have practised in their home countries and abroad.

- Explore the role of teacher leaders in shaping issues of equity and diversity in classrooms, schools and communities.
- Study the impact of current professional development programmes in terms of developing leadership skills, knowledge and beliefs.

### **School leaders**

- Raise teachers' awareness of the leadership opportunities in which they can exercise leadership formally and informally. Ensure that they feel empowered in their practices.
- Develop principals' skills to share leadership with teachers and stakeholders. This will help principals reflect on their practices and responsibilities, ensure unbiased opinions and promote equity.
- Train teachers to write a reflective log about their leadership practices. This is an important tool to develop self-awareness and build on their skills. However, effective training needs to be implemented and sharing success stories will help encourage others along their journey.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

As with any research, there are various limitations.

- This study relies on self-report with no triangulation from respondents although it used different methods. In addition, this study used semi-structured interviews to ensure having focused questions, and avoided leading questions, e.g., this study did not add the definition in the questionnaire's introduction.
- A major limitation was the continuous change in SEC and MoE instructions and programmes. For example, in 2016, the MoE discontinued the SEC. There were several changes – most importantly, the schools' names and type of management and leadership changed from Independent schools to government schools, which affected principals' and school leaders' level of autonomy.
- The study was limited only to the selected schools and the specific group of teacher leaders. The study was conducted in Qatar and may be difficult to replicate in another context (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).
- As purposive sampling was used in the qualitative phase of the study, it does not represent all teacher leaders in Qatar (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).
- Confidentiality was a major issue, especially since Qatar is a small country; most of the teams work together and share information and discussions. All necessary steps were taken to protect individuals' identities and to limit the likelihood of identification in any written reports of the research and other forms of dissemination (Thomas, 2008).

- The questionnaire was translated into Arabic; the interpretations of the interviewees and respondents' comments were mainly in Arabic, while the study is in English, which might affect interpretation (Harkness and Schoua-Glusberg, 1998).
- Willis claimed that, 'Qualitative research rejects the very idea that you can be objective and neutral in research. You pick certain things to study because you have an interest' (2007, p. 210). Thus, one of the main ways to prevent researcher bias is to recognise its potential. Researcher bias was recognised as potentially affecting the credibility and truthfulness of this study. This bias might have affected the interview process and reporting of the derived understanding; therefore, I began each interview with an open mind and wrote journal notes. In addition, I shared the pilot study's data with my supervisor so we could review the process and discuss our interpretations.

### **FUTURE RESEARCH**

This mixed methods study aimed to explore teachers' perspectives towards teacher leadership, their understanding of the role and the conditions affecting it. More than 20% of teachers in Qatari government schools responded in the quantitative phase, and 96 teachers were interviewed in the qualitative phase.

One of the main findings that needs to be examined further is the relationship between school level and teacher leadership. Another area for potential exploration is principals' and policy makers' perspectives towards teacher leadership and its importance.

Case studies of teacher leaders who won an excellence award in Qatar, or who were recognised by the Emir of Qatar, might give in-depth and rich data about how to empower teacher leaders and build on their experiences. More empirical studies are needed to explore teacher leadership's impact on student learning.

Comparing current teacher professional standards with teacher leadership standards might be useful in developing professional development programmes. In addition, it would be helpful to investigate how teacher leaders approach developing skills and knowledge. Teachers', principals' and policy makers' dispositions are crucial in building a positive culture and policies which support teacher leadership.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

There is no consensus on the definition of teacher leadership. The concept of teacher leadership and its practices vary across different societies and cultures. 'Different perspectives are not only based on theoretical background, but also from the different articulated components of culture such as religion, tradition, values, norms, and the history of societies' (Boyaci and Oz, 2017, p. 12). Chafi and Elkhousai (2017) showed that culture is like an invisible road map which affects personal and professional life.

This study was conducted in Qatar for several reasons:

1) There are limited studies exploring teacher leadership in Arab countries, including Qatar (Ramahi and Eltemamy, 2014; Al-Zboon, 2016; Al-Taneiji and Ibrahim, 2017), especially studies of the variables affecting teacher leadership practices and linking the history of the society and other components, for example, religion.

2) A curriculum-standards-based reform and a very interesting and unique modified version of charter schools were launched in Qatar (called Independent schools). Educators in Arab countries had not been exposed to charter schools or Independent schools before Qatar launched them. These schools were based on a totally new concept of roles and responsibilities for teachers and school leaders in new structures, including new formal leadership roles for teachers and new ways of participating in school leadership.

3) Many countries are following in Qatar's footsteps in implementing its policies after the reform, which might affect teachers' practices in other Arab countries. For instance, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) launched curriculum standards similar to Qatar (Al-Fadala, 2015). Qatari schools have many expatriates from different nationalities, comprising about 70% of the teaching workforce. Therefore, I find it important to investigate teacher leadership in the Qatari context.

I chose to conduct this study in Qatar due to the massive changes in the educational system that started early in this century. My purpose was to explore the opportunities for teacher leadership provided by this reform and after the reform had been implemented. Qatar was selected as my country of choice due to my extensive working experience and familiarity with the context, and feasibility of data collection.

While it is known that Qatar has borrowed its policies from Western countries, e.g. the United States and Australia (Zellman *et al.*, 2009; Ellili-Cherif, Romanowski and Nasser, 2012; Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015; Fadlemula and Koc, 2016; Romanowski, Alkhateeb and Nasser, 2018), the term *teacher leadership* was not used during or after the reform. However, other terms were used, such as *emergent leaders*, *aspiring leaders* and *subject coordinators*. Formal roles such as coordinator were recognised widely, while informal roles supporting social and professional needs were not recognised. This could be due to the fact that many initiatives that enhance teaching and learning, launched by 'teachers', seemed to be overlooked rather than celebrated or were simply downgraded as insignificant. In Western countries, with the presence of teacher unions, many informal teacher leader roles, such as union representative or timetable specialist, give a certain degree of recognition to formal and informal teacher leadership. These roles have been recognised as essential to the holistic approach to a successful educational establishment and encouraged with great enthusiasm, support and training even if there are no financial incentives.

Teacher leadership needs to be explored in different contexts. Li (2015) mentioned in his study conducted in Hong Kong ‘that the results also suggest that the teacher leadership did not match the results from Western practices found in literature’ (p.442). Consequently, exploring teacher leadership in Qatar through the lens of the previous studies in this mixed methods study may be an important contribution to educational research.

## **SUMMARY**

This mixed methods study revealed what teachers in Qatar think about teacher leadership. It found that the respondents exercised leadership at many different levels, from their classrooms to their international contributions. These practices were not limited to instructional practices; on the contrary, some of these contributions showed the importance of providing social and emotional support through leading different types of activities. They also represented incredible opportunities to influence others.

Many factors and variables were investigated to see what supported or inhibited teacher leadership from the respondents’ perspectives. From these findings, many implications were drawn and some recommendations offered. Finally, one of the most important outcomes of the present study is the impact it had on me. I had to embrace the importance of continuous learning and inquiry with a systematic practical approach. I now have greater awareness of how I gain knowledge (epistemological point of view) and understand realities (ontological) and values (axiology).

In general, although some might differentiate between the practical and the theoretical, I believe good theory and clear understanding improve practice. Teacher leadership is worthy of in-depth conceptualisation in order to help researchers, practitioners and policy makers more effectively utilise the teacher’s role in education.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### 1. The permission letter



Rania Sawalhi  
Doctoral Student, Educational Leadership  
Warwick University

May 27, 2015

Dear Rania Sawalhi,

With this letter, I grant permission to use the quantitative instrument, the Teacher Leader Inventory, for your dissertation study. You have my permission to disseminate the instrument either through an online or hard copy format. You do not have permission to modify the instrument without additional permission.

This permission is granted with the following terms:

- The instrument will be used for research purposes only, barring any monetary profiting from the instrument.
- Author citation is included on all copies.
- Links to subsequent manuscripts generated from the study will be forwarded to me.
- A summary of research results is forwarded to me upon completion of the study.

Best wishes for your research and I look forward to seeing the results.

Pamela S. Angelle, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor and Graduate Program Coordinator  
The University of Tennessee  
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies  
323 Bailey Education Complex  
Knoxville, TN 37996

## 2. Teacher Leadership inventory

### Teacher Leadership Inventory

For each statement below, indicate how often this occurs in your school. Mark only one response per item.

	Routinely	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1. Teachers ask one another for assistance when we have a problem with student behavior in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Other teachers willingly offer me assistance if I have questions about how to teach a new topic or skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Teachers here share new ideas for teaching with other teachers such as through grade/department meetings, school wide meetings, professional development, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Teachers discuss ways to improve student learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Teachers are involved in making decisions about activities such as professional development, cross-curricular projects, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Teachers are actively involved in improving the school as a whole.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Teachers stay current on education research in our grade level/subject area/department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Teachers willingly stay after school to work on school improvement activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Teachers willingly stay after school to help other teachers who need assistance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Teachers willingly stay after school to work with administrators, if administrators need assistance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Administrators object when teachers take on leadership responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. The principal responds to the concerns and ideas of teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Teachers plan the content of professional learning activities at my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Teachers have opportunities to influence important decisions even if they do not hold an official leadership position.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. The principal consults the same small group of teachers for input on decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Time is provided for teachers to collaborate about matters relevant to teaching and learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Most teachers in leadership positions only serve because they have been principal appointed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Angelle & DeHart, 2010

## APPENDIX B QUESTIONNAIRES

### 1. Teacher Leadership Questionnaire used in this study (Online)

Thank you for participating in this study. This data is being collected for a research project as part of the requirements for a doctorate degree. This research project is focused on exploring the opportunities and challenges that teacher face within practicing leadership roles in their schools. Sometimes teachers are appointed to fulfil these leadership responsibilities by the principal. Other times, teachers volunteer to do these leadership responsibilities motivated by their personal interest or expertise. Understanding teacher leadership, whether appointed or not, is important to understanding how schools function effectively. Your responses will be completely anonymous. No one who completes this survey will be identified. Appreciate your cooperation. For any information kindly contact [r.sawalhi@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:r.sawalhi@warwick.ac.uk)

Please answer the following questions about yourself and your teaching experience:

- 1) Male or female?
- 2) What is your nationality? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What is your age?
  - Below 30
  - 30-39
  - 40-49
  - 50-59
  - 60 and above
- 4) What is your last completed degree?
  - Bachelor degree
  - Masters
  - Doctorate
  - Other (.....)
- 5) What grade levels are in your school?
  - KG
  - 1-3
  - 4-6
  - 5-9
  - 7-9
  - 10-12
- 6) Please check the size of your school
  - Fewer than 250 students)
  - (250–500students)
  - (More than 500 students)
- 7) What grade level do you teach?.  
KG 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th NA
- 8) What subject do/did you teach? .....
- 9) For how many years have you been teaching?
  - 0-2
  - 3-5
  - 6-10
  - 11-19
  - 20 and more



10) For how many years have you been teaching in Qatar? .....

11) Do you have leadership position?  
 Yes, what?..... No.

12) Which position/s of the following is part of teacher leadership?

- Developing curriculum
- Doing administrative tasks
- Proactive and support other teachers
- Subject Coordinator
- Supervise and mentor other teachers
- Teacher trainer

13) Please select all the characteristics you think teacher leader should have

1. Affirmation      2. Change Agent      3. Contingent Rewards      4. Communication      5. Culture  
 6. Discipline      7. Flexibility      8. Focus      9. Ideals/Beliefs  
 10. Input      11. Intellectual Stimulation      12. Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment  
 13. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment      14. Monitoring/ Evaluating      15. Optimizer  
 16. Order      17. Outreach      18. Relationships      19. Resources      20. Situational Awareness  
 21. Visibility      22. Role model

14)<sup>15</sup>For each statement below, indicate how often this occurs in your school. Mark only one response per item

Teacher Leadership Inventory	<b>Rout inely</b>	<b>Som etim es</b>	<b>Seld om</b>	<b>neve r</b>
1. Teachers ask one another for assistance when we have a problem with student behavior in the classroom				
2. Other teachers willingly offer me assistance if I have questions about how to teach a new topic or skills.				
3. Teachers here share new ideas for teaching with other teachers such as through grade/department meetings, school wide meetings, professional development, etc.				
4. Teachers discuss ways to improve student learning				
5. Teachers are involved in making decisions about activities such as professional development, cross-curricular projects, etc.				
6. Teachers are actively involved in improving the school as a whole.				

<sup>15</sup>Angelle and DeHart, 2011

7. Teachers stay current on education research in our grade level/subject area/department				
8. Teachers willingly stay after school to work on school improvement activities.				
9. Teachers willingly stay after school to help other teachers who need assistance				
10. Teachers willingly stay after school to work with administrators, if administrators need assistance				
11. Administrators object when teachers take on leadership responsibilities				
12. The principal responds to the concerns and ideas of teachers.				
13. Teachers plan the content of professional learning activities at my school.				
14. Teachers have opportunities to influence important decisions even if they do not hold an official leadership position.				
15. The principal consults the same small group of teachers for input on decisions.				
16. Time is provided for teachers to collaborate about matters relevant to teaching and learning.				
17. Most teachers in leadership positions only serve because they have been principal appointed.				

## 2. Nomination questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this study. This data is being collected for a research project as part of the requirements for a doctorate degree. This research project is focused on exploring the opportunities and challenges that teacher face within practicing leadership roles in their schools. Your responses will be completely anonymous. No one who completes this survey will be identified. Appreciate your cooperation. For any information kindly contact [r.sawalhi@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:r.sawalhi@warwick.ac.uk)

kindly nominate a colleague that you think have leadership skills, knowledge

I nominate my colleague: (his/her name).....

I think he/she is a teacher leader because they do the following responsibilities:

Please select one or more

- Affirmation
- Change Agent
- Contingent Rewards
- Communication
- Culture
- Discipline
- Flexibility
- Focus
- Ideals/Beliefs
- Input
- Intellectual Stimulation
- Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Monitoring/ Evaluating
- Optimizer
- Order
- Outreach
- Relationships
- Resources
- Role model
- Situational Awareness
- Visibility

## APPENDIX C

### 1. Consent Form

Dear Participant

This interview is an attempt to investigate teacher leadership in Qatari independent schools. Your input is an essential element in this study and will be kept strictly confidential. This information will be used for research purposes only. Of course, your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed individually and/or in focus groups and you will be informed if recorded. You can skip any question or withdraw at any time. The interviews will take approximately 30- 45 minutes.

I appreciate your time and effort. If you have any question about this study please feel free to contact the researcher [r.sawalhi@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:r.sawalhi@warwick.ac.uk) or the supervisor [Justine.Mercer@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:Justine.Mercer@warwick.ac.uk)

Sincerely,

Rania Sawalhi

PhD student – Warwick Univ.

---

I have read the above statement and have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this study. I have been given sufficient opportunity to ask any question I had regarding the procedures and possible risks involved. I likewise understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time.

Signature of participant

Date

## 2. Interview Form

Date	التاريخ
Start time:	وقت البدء
End Time:	وقت الانتهاء
Place	المكان

Thank you for offering your time to meet, your participation is highly appreciated and important.

Item	
What is your full name and Job title?	يرجى التعريف بالاسم والمسمى الوظيفي
Tell me about your qualifications, age, ...	خبرني عن عمرك ومؤهلاتك..
What is your primary responsibility?	ما مسؤولياتك الرئيسية؟
For how long have you been in this position? In this country?	منذ متى وأنت في هذه الوظيفة؟ في هذا البلد؟
<b>What are the main responsibilities for teachers in your school?</b>	ما دور المعلم هذه الأيام في مدرستك؟
<b>How do you define or perceive leadership?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can all teachers be leaders?</li> <li>• Is there a difference between male leaders and female leaders?</li> <li>• To what extent if at all age affect leadership?</li> </ul>	ما معنى القيادة في نظرك؟ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• هل كل المعلمين قادة ؟</li> <li>• هل هناك فرق بين المعلم القائد في المراحل الدراسية</li> <li>• هل هناك فرق بين المعلم القائد الأنتى أو الذكر</li> <li>• هل هناك فرق بناء على العمر؟</li> </ul>
<b>What is teacher leadership from your perspective?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are teacher leaders?</li> </ul>	من هو المعلم القائد في نظرك؟
<b>What are the characteristics of a teacher leader?</b>	ما صفات المعلم القائد؟
<b>Do you consider yourself a teacher leaders?</b> <b>Why? Give reasons please</b>	هل تعتبر نفسك معلما قائدا؟ دليل أو أمثلة عملية لو كانت الإجابة نعم
<b>Describe which characteristics you possessed as a teacher leader?</b>	ما هي الموصفات التي تنطبق عليك أنت؟

<b>In what leadership activities do teacher leaders engage?</b>	ما الأنشطة والمهام التي قد يساهم بها المعلم القائد
<b>How are teacher leadership positions designed, and who selects the leaders?</b> <b>What are the variables that may affect this selection?</b>	كيف يتم اختيار المعلم القائد؟ - ما العوامل التي تؤثر على اختيار المعلم القائد؟ - هل الزملاء أم المدير؟ - ما رد فعل الزملاء وباقي الموظفين على اختيار المعلم القائد؟
<b>Why do teachers assume a leadership role?</b>	لماذا يقبل المعلم مهاما قيادية؟
<b>What are the desired outcomes of teacher leadership?</b>	ما النتائج المتوقعة؟ من حيث الطلاب والمعلمين والمدرسة ككل؟
<b>In what ways, if at all, does teacher leadership improve professional practice?</b>	هل يعزز المعلم القائد التطوير المهني؟
<b>In what ways, if at all, does teacher leadership assist in school improvement?</b>	هل يعزز المعلم القائد في تطوير المدرسة؟
<b>What factors/structures support teacher leadership?</b>	ما نوع الدعم الذي يحتاجه المعلم القائد؟  هل هناك تدريب معين أو تأهيل أو برامج محددة؟
<b>What leadership opportunities are available in your schools with regard to the growth of leaders?</b>	ما الفرص القيادية التي توفرت في مدرستك وساعدت في تطوير القيادي؟
What barriers did you experience as a teacher leader in your school?	ما هي العوائق التي مررت بها خلال مهامك القيادية
Share with us a story if you like	شاركنا قصة نجاح مميزة مررت بها شخصيا أو سمعت بها عن تأثير المعلم القائد؟

Do you have other comments?

هل هناك ملاحظات أخرى؟.....

## APPENDIX D IRB FORMS

### 1. University of Warwick IRB approval form

<b>Application for Ethical Approval for Research Degrees (MPHIL/PhD by research)</b>	 <b>THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK</b> CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STUDIES
Student number: <b>u1453351</b> Student name: <b>Rania Sawalhi</b>	
<b>PhD</b> <input type="checkbox"/> EdD <input type="checkbox"/> MA by research <input type="checkbox"/>	
Project title: Teacher Leadership in Qatari Independent Schools; Opportunities and Challenges	
Supervisor: <b>Dr. Justine Mercer</b> Funding body (if relevant): NA	
Please ensure you have read the Guidance for the Ethical Conduct of Research available in the handbook.	
<b><u>Methodology</u></b> Please outline the methodology, e.g. observation, individual interviews, focus groups, group testing etc.  This is a mixed methods study: in the quantitative phase an online survey in Arabic will be sent to the emails of all independent school teachers and leaders in Qatar via the Ministry of Education. Then, in the qualitative phase, a sample of teacher leaders will be interviewed in focus groups. The selection in the second phase will be based on the quantitative phase results and analysis.	
<b><u>Participants</u></b> Please specify all participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. children; because of learning disability.  Participants in the quantitative phase are teachers and school leaders in Qatari independent schools; in the qualitative phase, teacher leaders in selected Qatari independent schools will be interviewed.	

**Respect for participants' rights and dignity**

How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?

The survey will include an introduction which clarifies the purpose and procedures of the study (appendix A); the amount of time needed to complete it and my contact details. Moreover, participants will be made aware that they may freely withdraw from the project at any time without risk or prejudice. Because the survey will be conducted online, it will be carried out when convenient for the participants.

The dignity and interests of research participants will be respected at all times, and procedures will be taken to ensure that no harm will result from participating in the research i.e. the participants' details will be reported in anonymized form. In addition, the views of all participants in the research will be respected. I am aware of the Qatari cultural context, I will be sensitive to differences relating to age, culture, sex, religion and sexual orientation, amongst research participants, when planning, conducting and reporting the research.

**Privacy and confidentiality**

How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.

The online survey is anonymous, and the prospective participants for the interviews will be informed that data collected will be treated in the strictest confidence, and will only be reported in anonymized form (appendix B)

**Consent**

How will prior informed consent be obtained from the following?

Data gathering activities involving schools and other organizations will be carried out only with the agreement of the head of school/organization, or an authorised representative from Supreme Education Council in Qatar, and after adequate notice has been given.

All potential participants in the qualitative phase will be asked to give their written consent to participating in the research, and, where consent is given, separate copies of this will be retained for the interviewees. For the online survey, it will be part of the introduction.

- If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reason: NA
- Will participants be explicitly informed of the student's status? Yes



### **Competence**

How will you ensure that all methods used are undertaken with the necessary competence?

As I have passed an Advanced Research Methods course, I should be able to demonstrate awareness of differing techniques and instruments to observe and record behaviours in an objective manner. In addition, I will liaise with my supervisor and continue to improve my research skills during the study and as the project progresses.

### **Protection of participants**

How will participants' safety and well-being be safeguarded?

Data generated by the research (e.g. transcripts of research interviews) will be saved electronically, in my password-protected computer, and will be used purely for the purposes of the research project (including dissemination of findings). No one other than supervisors will have access to any of the data collected. Research participants will have the right of access to any data kept on them.

All necessary steps will be taken to protect the privacy and ensure the anonymity for individuals, in any written reports of the research and other forms of dissemination.

### **Child protection**

Will a CRB check be needed? Yes  No  (If yes, please attach a copy.)

### **Addressing dilemmas**

Even well planned research can produce ethical dilemmas. How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research?

I may face different issues during the study, such as destroying or losing data and that will be prevented by having different copies and backup. Another one is on-going consent, and this could be reminded in every interview to make sure the participants understand their rights and the process.

### **Misuse of research**

How will you seek to ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?

I am aware of common ways in which research findings are misrepresented i.e. using findings out of context, stretching findings, distorting findings, and rejecting or ignoring findings, and that will be reviewed and prevented. Also I will ensure privacy and confidentiality.

**Support for research participants**

What action is proposed if sensitive issues are raised or a participant becomes upset?

I will apologize if I do not protect the rights of the participants, will correct the situation if possible and the participants have the right to withdraw at any time.

**Integrity**

How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?

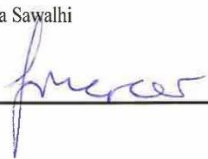
To eliminate bias in professional activities, I will protect the rights, dignity, and worth of the participants, will not tolerate any forms of discrimination based on age; gender; race; ethnicity; national origin; religion; disability; health conditions, especially when school and teacher leaders will select teacher leaders in when interviewing teacher leaders. Also being sensitive to cultural, individual, and role differences in serving, teaching, and studying groups of people with distinctive characteristics.

What agreement has been made for the attribution of authorship by yourself and your supervisor(s) of any reports or publications?

We have agreed that the first one or two papers arising out of the thesis may be jointly authored with myself as the first-named author. If the level of input from the supervisor is more minimal, the "with" convention may be used.

**Other issues**

Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them. NA

Signed: Rania Sawalhi	Date: 14th Jan
Student: Rania Sawalhi 2016	
Supervisor: 	Date: 4/Feb/2016

Please submit this form to the Research Office (Andy Brierley, room WE133)

Office use only

Action taken:

Approved

Approved with modification or conditions – see below

Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below

Name: MICHAEL HAMMOND

Signature: *M. Hammond*

Date: 22 Feb. 2016

Stamped:

Notes of Action:

\* be sure to raise any unexpected issues  
with your supervisor.

## 2. Facilitate letter from Ministry of Education and Higher Education

Ministry of Education & Higher Education

وزارة التعليم والتعليم العالي

المجلس الأعلى للتعليم  
EDC  
تمميم  
19/05/2016 08:27

المحترمون

السادة أصحاب تراخيص المدارس المستقلة  
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

**الموضوع : تسجيل مهمة القائم بالبحث**

تهديكم أطيب التحيات . إشارة إلى الموضوع أعلاه . نرجو من حضراتكم التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحث / رانيا الصوالحي في القيام بمهمة البحث في الموضوع بعنوان ( المعلم القائد في قطر: فرص وتحديات ) من خلال مشاركة السادة مديرو المدارس والسادة المعلمين في الاستبانة من خلال الدخول على رابط الاستبانة التالي :  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/tfq>

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام والتقدير،،،

  
**خليفة سعد الدرهم**  
مدير إدارة شؤون المدارس

نسخة :  
- الأستاذة / مديرة جهة التعليم  
- السادة مديرو التعليم  
- المدارس المستقلة  
- مدير الجهة التعليمية لإعداد أو توجيه الرسالة البحثية فقط ، ولا يجوز نشر أو ذات الإطلاع عليها أو نشر أو استنادها ما ورد فيها من معلومات أو بيانات ... قبل أن يجري ...  
التصديق أو التوقيع ... أيها المسؤولون بغير إذن أو تفويض من مدير هذه الجهة . ومن بعد ذلك يمكن عرضها للاستبانة إلكترونياً

### 3. Qatar University IRB approval



Qatar University Institutional Review Board  
QU-IRB

May 15, 2016

Ms. Rania Sawalhi  
PhD Student Project  
College of Education  
Qatar University  
Tel.: 55259754  
Email: [rania.sawalhi@qu.edu.qa](mailto:rania.sawalhi@qu.edu.qa)

Dear Ms. Rania Sawalhi,

**Sub: Research Ethics Review Exemption / PhD Student Project**

**Ref: Project titled, "Teacher Leadership in Qatari Independent Schools: Challenges and Opportunities"**

We would like to inform you that your application along with the supporting documents provided for the above proposal, is reviewed and having met all the requirements, has been exempted from the full ethics review.

Please note that any changes/modification or additions to the original submitted protocol should be reported to the committee to seek approval prior to continuation.

Your Research Ethics Approval No. is: **QU-IRB 589-E/16**

Kindly refer to this number in all your future correspondence pertaining to this project.

Best wishes,

*K. Alali*

Dr. Khalid Al-Ali  
Chairperson, QU-IRB

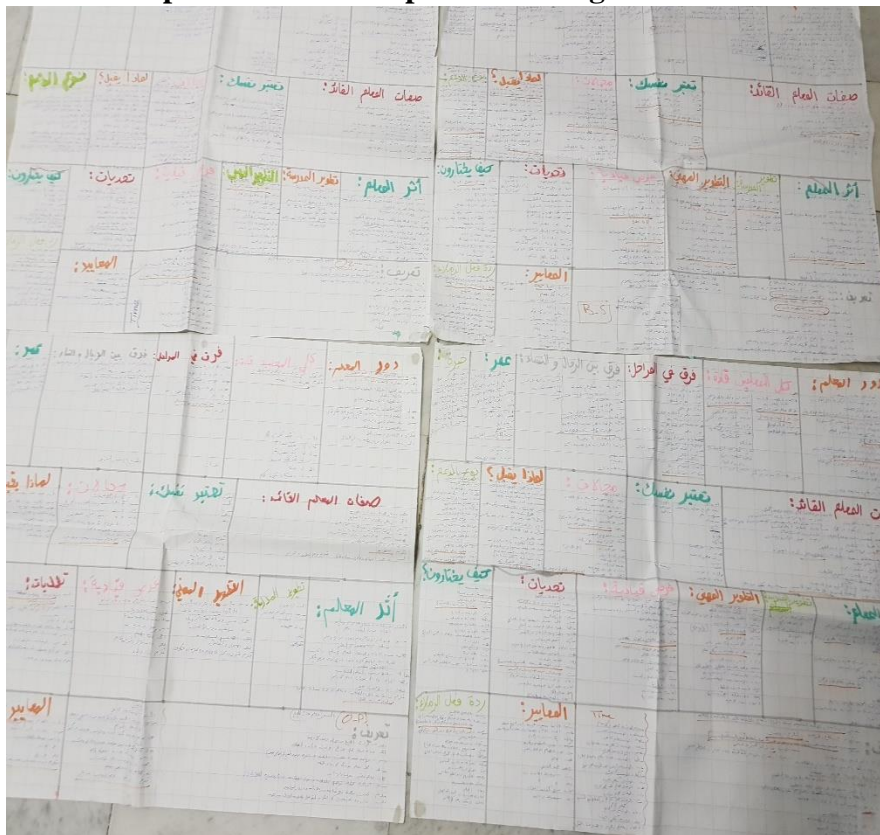


## APPENDIX E CODING

### 1. List of main codes

- Defining teacher leadership
- Importance of teacher leadership
- Teacher leaders' characteristics
- Teacher leadership practices
- Variables may affect teacher leadership (age, gender, qualifications, school level, nationalities, school size, years of experience)
- Challenges and ways of supporting teacher leaders
- Principal selection and support

### 2. Sample of the transcripts and coding



### 3. Example of a transcript:

#### Examples of transcripts 1

R: Thank you for your valuable time and accepting participating in this study about teacher leadership as in the form you signed<sup>1</sup>.

R: how do you see the role or the main responsibilities for teachers in your school?

B: main responsibilities for a teacher as a teacher? Basically it's the first role which is teaching the students then preparation of materials making sure that the content is appropriate sometimes we do have errors in the content and all that so as a teacher I feel like it's our responsibility and of course inside the classroom how we manage the students. Discipline and also sometimes I feel overall the holding of the student their general attitude towards studies sometimes the attitude they don't have an attitude for studies I feel that.

Commented [RS1]: Teachers' role is not only teaching the content

R: what makes you feel that?

B: in the sense that like are we finishing the curriculum? When are we finishing the curriculum is it for the exam, is this for the exam? I feel like they are learning for the exam so sometimes like very often I have to tell them girls it's not for the exam like before we even start would they ask, is this for the exam is this important for the exam? In every lesson I have to tell them that this now is important now this is important. So the purpose is not to write the exam and pass the exam. So what happens that student's do sometimes they get very depressed when they get low marks, so I tell them this is not the end of the world that's not the purpose!

R: and how do they respond to that

B: depends on each student

R: how do you define leadership?

B: well a leader should be a role model...

Commented [RS2]: Characteristics

R: interesting, we can discuss the characteristics after defining leadership?

B: leadership... a person who would take responsibilities or who is responsible for the department are you talking about department leadership or general.

Commented [RS3]: Leadership or leaders?

Commented [RS4]: Formal leadership

R: in general, how do you perceive leadership?

B: the person I would call a leader is a character that I can look up to, a person does something different something positive who can make a difference.

Commented [RS5]: leader

Commented [RS6]: defining by characteristics

R: Do you think that all teachers are leaders?

Commented [RS7]: Are all teacher leaders?

B: No

<sup>1</sup> I removed all the general information and any information might identify the interviewee directly.

R: No? Do you think that we can develop them to be leaders?

B: Well I think it's all about attitudes we can.

R: From your experiences between all these schools are there any differences between leadership practices in primary, prep and secondary?

Commented [RS8]: School level

B: I cannot answer that because I have always been working in secondary.

Commented [RS9]: Difference between worked in different levels and in one level

R: From your perspective?

B: I do not think so.

R: Do you think that there are differences between male leaders and female leaders? From your perspective

Commented [RS10]: Gender

B: sometimes I feel ladies most of them take things personally, I feel so, whereas men can handle things the brain works in that way like a compartment for everything they deal with the issue as an issue they don't take it personally.

R: why do you think so?

B: I generally think there is a difference between men and women in the way they think and feel

R: Do you think that there are differences at that age effect leadership? Experience?

Commented [RS11]: Differences between generations, age

B: Experience counts but like I had coordinators that are much older been totally a mess, it is more about the personality and the way they communicate. I feel like communication is the most important thing, the way they communicate the way they make the other person feel I do not think experience sometimes people do not get it with experience but sometimes yes. From my experience, I do not think age matters

R: If I ask you to define teacher leaders or teacher leadership, how do you define it?

B: Can I ask you for any other clarification on that for teacher leadership please?

Commented [RS12]: Confusion

R: Now you just talked about teacher's roles and leadership, so what do you think?

B: So basically a teacher leader to be able to hold the department as a whole to make them feel as one we are all working for one common purpose to share the same goals and objectives effectively

Commented [RS13]: Defining teacher leadership by defining teacher leader

R: Do you mean that when you say teacher leaders with this type of definition do you refer to subject department coordinators or in general you say that to hold the?

B: Even if applies to department coordinator it also applies to the whole school leaders also yeah because the department will have a mission the school will have a mission. So basically how the mission is being transmitted to the teachers and how all the teachers are made part of the mission

Commented [RS14]: Teacher leadership have a mission

R: Do you consider yourself as a teacher leader?

B: Me as such if I am given the opportunity, I guess I would transmit the same amount I will be able to get the teachers to achieve what I did not.

Commented [RS15]: Importance of opportunities

R: What do you mean given the opportunity?



B: Like in the sense like now, I am working as a teacher right. So I'm contributing to the department as a teacher only so my responsibility just stops there. I may have other ways of doing a particular task but many times, it will not be needed or will not be listened for!

R: Can you be leader although you are in the same position that you are having now?

B: Umm it is difficult

R: Why is it difficult?

B: Will the current leader to ~~even~~ allow another person to take leadership would they?

Commented [RS16]: Support from school leaders

R: If you say, they are leaders.

B: Well the collaboration is there but not to the level as we expect. I do not think we are contributing enough to the leadership, because most of the time what I see here among leadership is that they are transmitters for information.

R: That is the main responsibility that you see.

B: As leaders sometimes when you say why this way why not this way we do not have an answer

R: And do you know why they nominated you?

B: I actually do not know who nominated me.

R: What do you expect that they had given you main the reasons to nominate you?

B: Let me tell you something honestly, I really do not know.

R: Yeah sure, I put some characteristics like do they have vision do they have knowledge etc. and then I left a specific space for them to comment, I am talking about these comments. What do you think that they have described you?

B: Maybe I do not know I am always speak up whether it is a meeting or anything I always say what I have in my mind and I never hold it back, so maybe that is one thing.

Commented [RS17]: Courage

R: yeah one of the things that they mentioned that you are diplomatic and you are firm.

What do you think that ~~responsibilities~~ or roles and opportunities that teacher leaders can participate in the schools? You said now if someone would give you the opportunity what can be the opportunities that will be given to him or her, so that they can participate in.

Commented [RS18]: Aspects of teacher leadership roles

B: Basically you know you can make some communities and if we are becoming a member of that community then we can put our stand a little more clear and we can have a say in that, so that is some way if the school has to take action. It is not always the same channel you know if it is the same heroic that is followed by the school then the same person is responsible. So sometimes you need to rearrange or re-shift the responsibility on the other teachers like I said when I have .....?

<sup>2</sup> The example is deleted to maintain confidentiality

B: You know the leadership quality of course the teacher has to be a leader the students are looking at you all the time, they are learning from you so the leadership quality teacher should be. You know sometimes I feel that teachers go to the class and say I do not know, or they say I was asked to do this I feel sorry for them.

Commented [RS28]: Role model

R: Are there other outcomes or impact?

B: I feel that it would have a positive impact on me as teacher leaders first of all being exceptional in their practices, their self-confidence is high and develop lower achievers very important thing I feel so that will definitely positively affect them it's not always about academic achievements.

Commented [RS29]: Role model

Commented [RS30]: Self-confidence, support lower achievers

R: How can you support teacher leaders? When you have volunteered to be parts of these committees and part of teacher leaders so what kind of support could be given to you?

B: As wherever things we want to purchase the school was ready to purchase it for us, you know when we have students to take outside the class for something the management should support the teachers and the teachers should cooperate. The teachers should proceed about that so basically the management should support the teachers.

Commented [RS31]: Provide resources

Commented [RS32]: Cooperation and team work

R: Is there any kind of specific training or kind of support to help do this for ourselves?

B: I have not seen anything like that, We just jump in the water without learning swimming! Sink or swim.

Commented [RS33]: Learning by doing, sink or swim

R: Are there barriers/ obstacles?

B: In the school I feel one of the main barrier that I have is language but we also have non-Arab teachers also here but she was there as a coordinator.

Commented [RS34]: Barriers, language

R: Other barriers?

R: is there anything else that you would like to add that we did not cover?

B: uh no

R: It is a pleasure for me to meet you

B: Thank you I don't know if I answered your questions satisfactory but I hope, you know I was thinking I have never thought of some of the things that you asked me

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