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Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

# THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATIVE LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN SAUDI ARABIA

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Thamer Alsubaie

February, 2021

June Schmieder-Ramirez, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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# DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

My father Mutlaq and my mother Munirah (may God have mercy on them). I lost my parents a long time ago, but they played a major role for me as mentors and teachers. I am grateful for their absolute support and love provided to me from my birth till their death. I always pray for them and ask God to ensure their place in Heaven. My four wonderful sisters – Wadha, Ghalia, Ruhima, and Aljazi and my two brothers, Dhedhan and Abdulaziz who granted me their unconditional love, care, and support after my parents' death; they gave me strength, hope, and wisdom, thus filling my life with stability and safety.

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# ABSTRACT

Most public organizations in Saudi Arabia currently face leadership problems such as the inability to meet organizational performance targets, low productivity, and poor motivation. This study presents a critical analysis of the extent to which a participative leadership style could help improve these leadership challenges in the Saudi Arabia public sector organizations. Its main objective was to determine the impact participative leadership has on employee performance in the Saudi Arabia public sector. It focused on analyzing the positive impact the participative leadership approach has on employee performance that contributes to enhanced employee performance and organizational performance. However, the participative leadership approach represents the independent variable for the study while employee performance is the dependent variable. In this case, performance refers to the capacity to combine the correct behavior skills in order to aid in the attainment and objectives of an organization. It entails quality and quantity of work as well as the workers' capabilities. This study used a quantitative research method. The population of interest in this study was employees from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia. The total number of the participants was 110 employees and all of them worked for more than 1 year by the time the study was conducted. This study utilized an online survey for collecting primary data. For 1 week, the study collected data from 110 respondents whose information is kept confidential through online survey questionnaires in English and Arabic. The anticipated outcome from the study and existing research was that workers who experience or perceive to experience participative leadership in the Saudi Arabia public sector perform better than other workers by completing more organizational goals through quality work and teamwork within a supportive workplace environment.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

According to McCleskey (2014), leadership is the act of leading people towards achieving certain goals. It is only through a leader's influence on the followers to which these set goals can be achieved. Good leadership should build employee morale, direct employee work processes, set clear organizational vision, and motivate the employee to work towards the organizational vision. In an organization, the role of leadership is formally assigned to the position of a leader and it is formally assumed by an individual who has a unique charisma that attracts followers. Leaders influence their subordinates or followers in some ways including rewarding, motivating, training, communicating, and coordinating. The relationship between leadership and employee performance has been assessed in different organizational settings including schools, private sector, and the public sector. These assessments have indicated that effective leadership has positive influence on employee productivity (Barbuto, 2005). This study examined the influence of participative leadership style on the performance of employees in the Saudi Arabian public sector.

The Saudi Arabia public sector has been reformed in recent years to increase efficiency and performance (Rahman et al., 2014). One of the reforms in the public sector is the change from an authoritarian to a collaborative, participative leadership approach (Rahman et al., 2014). The importance of leadership has for a long time gone unnoticed. However, the importance of organizational leadership is currently an important issue that must be addressed if an organization is to thrive. It has been noticed that effective leadership enhances performance and productivity of employees in all forms of organization. In the Saudi Arabian public sector, public organizations have been associated with poor performance and management. For instance, Lewis and Gilman (2013) argue that little is understood about the reasons for poor performances and

management. Trained and skilled leaders are expected to sustain the performance of these public institutions, thus, the reason why the Saudi Arabian public sector has undergone numerous reforms in recent years. The primary focus has been the need to increase effectiveness and efficiency while looking for excellence in performance and leadership in these organizations (Rahman et al., 2014). There are leadership skills that influence employee productivity, such as, social intelligence, emotional intelligence, conceptual skills, technical skills, and interpersonal skills (Lewis & Gilman, 2013). Additionally, the influence of a leader on the productivity of employees also depends on the leader's communication skills. This is attributed to the effect communication skills have on the level of employee motivation, which in turn affects their performance (De Vries et al., 2010). Graen (2013) asserts that leadership influences productivity and employee performance in the following ways: leadership is a source of motivation, leadership improves employee morale, leadership creates effective communication and gives guidance, leadership helps in dividing work according to capability, and leadership creates basis for cooperation within the organization. Additionally, the style of leadership utilized has an impact on the work environment, therefore, affecting the productvity of employees.

Among the reforms that have taken place in the leadership of Saudi Arabia is the increased inclusion of women in leadership. In 2013, women for the first time joined the consultative assembly and three women were appointed as the deputy chairpersons of three boards. The reforms in the public sector of Saudi Arabia have also entailed giving a greater degree of freedom to women, such as the right to become an ambassador or minister. These changes have signified that women in Saudi Arabia can be leaders in several organizations (Al-Kayed, 2015). However, women in leadership positions are likely to face various problems when dealing with

their subordinates. These challenges are linked to the work environment in public entities in Saudi Arabia.

Another challenge relating to leadership in Saudi Arabia is the power dyanmic between employees and leaders in public sector organizations. There is a power distance reflected from society where people are unequal. The difference is expressed in terms of the contrasting positions between the executives and employees both in the organization and in society. Power distance is thus defined as the level to which individuals in institutions, who are less powerful, in a nation, recognize and anticipate that power is unequally distributed. Saudi Arabia has a power distance score of 95, which means that individuals accept the hierarchy in an organization and this results in a distant relationship between employees and leaders (Hofstede Insights, 2019). High power distance affects organizations by enabling a formal communication chain, which makes leaders difficult to access. Additionally, employees are not encouraged to participate, but rather accept the status quo in the organization, which may affect their performance. Decision-making in organizations in countries with high power distance also tend to have centralized decision making which does not include employees. It can therefore be argued that the culture in Saudi Arabia has affected the manner in which leaders and employees in an organization interact and thus result in performance issues in the public sector. In addition, the high-power distance in Saudi Arabia can also explain why the authoritarian style of leadership has long dominated the public sector. The supremacy of authoritarian leadership approach in Saudi Arabia can be explained by the fact that the country scores highly in uncertainty avoidance score, which means that there is a tendency to avoid change.

In an attempt to move from the authoritarian style of leadership towards a collaborative leadership style of leadership, organizations in the public sector in Saudi Arabia have attempted

to train leaders in the organizations. This is important in allowing leaders to acquire the necessary skills for use in a participative leadership approach and therefore allow for transformation of the work environment. In addition, the training allows for a change in the power distance within the organization, which allows for a better relationship between the leaders and employees. Training also permits for the development of communication skills among the leaders in an organization, which affects the motivation and the productivity of employees. This is in turn is likely to influence the performance of the employees. Additionally, the performance of employees should be aligned with the policies of an organization in order for an organization to be people-centered. This will allow for leadership and employees to be fixated toward common organizational goals. Motivated and satisfied employees have a high probability of major contributions to an organization. Employees who are productive tend to have the ability to meet deadlines and therefore project a positive image of the organization. Productivity of employees has, over the years, become a topic of keen interest since organizations rely heavily on employees for their success. Highly talented employees are highly sought after in both the public and private sector. This is evidence of the importance of human resource as an asset to organizations. Utilization of a democratic approach of leadership has the ability to attract employees who are highly productive and result in attainment of organizational goals. The importance of employee performance in an organization is also evident in the increasing significance of performance appraisals in organizations across the globe.

Despite spending billions of dollars and following through in plans to ensure the success of the projects undertaken by these public sector organizations targeted at improving the provision of public services to the Saudis (Rahman et al., 2014), numerous questions have been raised over whether such reforms have boosted the performance of the public service. Some

reports have indicated that the level of performance is still below par, and essentially ineffective. For instance, Azmi (2009) noted that despite the milestones and achievements realized by the Saudi public sector represented by various ministries in the country, in recent decades, their performance remains lagging with low expectations. Low performance is of negative consequence to the economy of Saudi Arabia especially as the country attempts to diversify its economy. Low performance is also likely to result in the failure of projects and activities undertaken by the public sector. Its poor performance will likely project a poor image as other organizations are unlikely and unwilling to engage in activities with them. In this case, a specific leadership approach is thought to influence the public sector's organizational performance, especially in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, leadership is key to the survival of an organization and very important to the effectiveness of employee and organizational performance. According to Loke (2011), as organizations grow and increase performance expectation, the need for good leadership increases. Good leadership allows for an organization to thrive and therefore be competitive, resulting in the success of an organization. This is an indication that there is a strong link between the leadership style adopted by an organization and employee performance (Loke, 2011).

**Statement of the Problem**

Most public organizations in Saudi Arabia face leadership problems such as the inability to meet performance targets, low productivity, and poor motivation. At the same time, the public sector in Saudi Arabia is facing high competition as far as the workforce is concerned because the private sector is determined to attract and retain competent employees (Altrasi, 2014). The problems can be blamed on the lack of strategic styles of leadership, so there is a need for the

Saudi public sector to adopt a leadership style that will attract and maintain a competent workforce (Mellahi, 2007).

A specific leadership style is considered a critical factor in an organization and is understood to influence the organizational performance of the public sector. Radwan (2018) argues that leaders must have the ability to influence and transform organizations by empowering the employees to assume responsibilities, make decisions, and share their vision.

Iqbal et al. (2015) observe that a participative style of leadership offers a healthy work environment promoting high performance and productivity. A lack of an approach to specific leadership is a problem that has affected employee performance, thus, this study sought to investigate a participative style of ledership and how this leadership approach would influence and stimulate employee performance in the Saudi public sector organizations. The study should shed more light on the relationship between participative style of leadership and employee performance in Saudi Arabian public sector.

**Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the impact of participative leadership on employee performance in the Saudi Arabian public sector. The Saudi Arabian public sector is currently experiencing some leadership challenges such as lack of adopting an effective leadership style, poor communication skills, poor motivation, and inability to meet performance targets, among others (Hatcher, 2005). Additionally, the public sector in Saudi Arabia has been experiencing fierce competition from the private sector. This makes it necessary for public sector entities to come up with new ways of improving leadership and productivity in Saudi Arabia. This study should help in educating organizational leaders on the significance of their leadership and their affect on employee performance. The research examined and discovered how

participative leadership patterns attribute to an employee's motivation, satisfaction, performance, and productivity, while drawing reference from the Saudi public sector.

**Research Questions**

Research Question 1: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, do managers practice participative leadership style in meeting organizational goals?

In this question, the researcher asked the participants if the managers in Saudi Arabia public sector where they work practice a participative leadership style or not. Many scholars promote participative and collaborative styles of leadership due to the benefits that they tend to have on the performance of their respective employees and followers. This kind of practice will eventually result in the attainment of organizational goals and benefits for the targeted organizations. The question sought to determine whether leaders practice a participative leadership style in an attempt to impact on the performance of employees in the Saudi Arabia public sector.

Research Question 2: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, is there a significant relationship between a participative leadership style and the employee feeling of support?

The respondents were expected to offer their views regarding the effectiveness of participative leadership in increasing or reducing employees' feelings of support. In the past, the public sector in Saudi Arabia has utilized authoritarian styles of leadership, thereby affecting the performance and productivity of different organizations. The consideration of this question should present additional insights and concepts for understanding how a participative leadership can make more employees happier and willing to deliver positive organizational goals through continuous support. This means that a shift towards a participative style of leadership by public

entities in Saudi Arabia is a move that offers the possibility of better employee performance, attitude and feelings of empowerment, which improves an organization's productivity, and attainment of their goals.

Research Question 3: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, does the participative leadership style influence the performance of the employees? How?

This question is important since it would guide the scholar to understand whether participative leadership influences employees' behaviors and performance in Saudi Arabia public sector. The respondents were expected to explain how the participative style has the potential to improve employee productivity in the public sector in Saudi Arabia. The targeted population provided honest answers regarding the manner in which a participative leadership influence their behaviors and performance. A good leader has the ability to positively influence the subordinates and therefore create the most appropriate work environment that will ensure that the followers are empowered, motivated, and willing to deliver positive organizational goals.

Research Question 4: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, what is the impact of the participative leadership style upon employee motivation?

This question was important as motivation of employees is impacted by the relationship between leaders and employees. The participants responded to this question and described how participative leadership makes it easier or harder for them to become more motivated in the workplace. Some scholars in the past have presented evidence-based concepts to explain how leadership can be a determinant of the level of employee motivation. For instance, a good relationship between employees and leaders results in high level of motivation among employees, thereby maximizing the level of performance.

The four research questions were used in the formulation of the best tools to collect high-quality data for this study. Online surveys were utilized in collecting data due to geographical differences between the researcher and the respondents. The targeted population was from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Close-ended questions were used to minimize discomfort and ensure that more respondents are involved. This allowed for quick data collection from the respondents. The data collection process took place for the duration of a month and the identities of the respondents were concealed. The respondents were identified through some friends who work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia. The end result is that quality information was gathered that could inform the nature of leadership and management that different public sector organizations should adopt to increase employee performance. After the collection of the intended information, it was possible to summarize it and come up with comprehensive report that answers each of the outlined questions. This approach resulted in a high-quality report that presented honest views and observations from different employees. The completion of this step made it possible for the researcher to present timely ideas that identified and supported this form of leadership as appropriate and capable of improving the overall performance of the Saudi Arabia public sector.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework seeks to show the association between the dependent and independent variable. This research has two variables, which are participative leadership and employee performance. In this study, the participative leadership style is the independent variable, whereas the performance of employees is the dependent variable. The independent variable results in an alteration of the dependent variable, which means that performance of employees is affected by changes in leaders. The study developed a conceptual framework that is

based on the association between leadership that is participative and the performance of the employees. This was done with the aim of assessing how participative leadership has the capacity to improve productivity in the public sector in Saudi Arabia, with the focus being of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia (Mosadegh Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). The participative style of leadership looked specifically into the decision collaboration and management practices. Collaboration was determined through looking at the degree of teamwork and the delegation of duties, whereas management practices will assess decision making in the organization.

Employee performance as a variable in the conceptual framework entailed the quality and quantity of work, as well as the ability to work in a team. The quality of work was used to determine whether the work aided in the attainment of organizational goals since it assisted in day-to-day operations and the attainment of organizational goals. The quantity of work looked into the ability of an employee to meet deadlines and work under pressure. The engagement of teamwork by an employee was used in measuring the degree of collaboration within an organization.

**Definition of Terms**

The terms of leadership must be proven through the participative style of leadership and the approaches utilized in the management of activities within the organization. Evidence was derived from efficiency, which stems from the leadership style that is a variable in the study.

*Employee Performance***.** This term refers to the capacity of employees to contribute to their work. The level of employee performance differs depending on different factors. Positive employee performance means the ability of an employee to work productively and contribute to the accomplishment of company goals (Muda et al., 2014). Performance refers to the capacity to

combine the correct behavior skill sets in order to attain the objectives of an organization (Olaniyan, 1999). Performance in most instances takes into consideration the level of involvement of employees in the daily operations of an organization. Employee performance in this research refers to the execution effectively of goals through work and actions by the workers within an organization. Additionally, employee performance is an indication of the achievements of an individual who exerts job effort. Employee performance is associated with getting meaningful work done, engagement with employees and compassion around colleagues. Performance in reference to this study is perceived to be the meeting of deadlines, completion of duties that are defined, the attainment of functional and organizational goals and the output of the team within an organization. The results expected should be of good relations in the organization between the employees and the leaders, effective feedback, efficiency and specialization.

*Leadership***.** This term refers to the action of driving people towards the attainment of certain objectives through the exertion of a leader's influence (McCleskey, 2014). In the case of this research, leadership will specifically look into the manner of decision-making by the administration of the organization and collaboration within the organization towards the attainment of organizational objectives. According to Yukl (2006), leadership is the process of influencing others to enhance their understanding and acceptance regarding what requires to be done and the manner in which it should be done, and the process of fostering collective and individual efforts to attain shared objectives. Leadership in this study therefore looks into management practices such as decision making and influencing employees to engage in collaboration.

*Participative Leadership***.** This term refers to a type of leadership whereby the process of making decisions is decentralized as leaders share this authority with the employees or

subordinates (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Notably, participative leadership is commonly referred to as democratic leadership. This definition of participative leadership is used in the study. In this research, the term collaborative and shared leadership are also used to refer to participative leadership.

*Productivity***.** This term refers to the assessment of how efficient an employee (s) is (Hanaysha, 2016). Productivity is a significant factor in determining a firm's competitive advantage and eventual profits.

**Significance of the Topic**

This research is crucial because the contributions of participative leadership to employees' performance is important to both the public and the private sector around the world. This study is of high significance to policymakers, facilitators, learners, and organizations, especially in the Saudi public sector, as they will be able to understand whether there is a significant relationship between participative leadership and employees' performance. In the rapidly changing Saudi work environment, leaders are faced with a growing complex challenge of understanding what motivates employees in their duties (Morhart et al., 2011). At the same time, by exploring the tenets of this study using the Saudi public sector institutions as a reference, it will be important to learn that leaders in Saudi Arabia must be equipped with the ability to transform organizations via their vision for the future. In addition, to provide clarifications of their vision on how they will empower the Saudi employees to take up the responsibility of realizing that vision. The rise of the virtual workplace, transformational communication technologies, developing business models, narrowing leadership pipelines, economic instability, and globalization are all issues facing leaders and complicating their roles in addressing employees' performance (McCleskey, 2014). Participative leadership is usually considered an important factor that effects

organizational performance. The essence of this study, therefore, attempted to explore and examine the specific style of leadership and how it relates and influences the organizational performance of employees, especially considering the high power distance between employees and leaders characterizing the public sector organizations in Saudi Arabia. Again, this study's aim was to establish ways in which leaders in the Saudi Arabian public sector could use the aspects of participative leadership to influence employee performance in their respective departments. The findings of the study will enhance the understanding of participative leadership and its effects on employees' performance and motivate leaders in both public and private sector to employ accessible leadership that will have a positive impact on employees' performance. In addition, the research will also offer some comparison on the impact of different leadership styles on the performance of employees. The comparison of the leadership styles will be between the authoritarian approach, which has been used for a long time in public sector in Saudi Arabia, and the democratic aproach to leadership, which is new in the Saudi Arabian public entities sector. This will allow for comprehension of the benefits and disadvantages of the participative style of leadership. In addition, an understanding of how participative style of leadership can be effectively implemented to result in the best performance of employees in organizations. The research was important in gaining awareness of the challenges the public sector in Saudi Arabia experiences in the adoption of participative leadership approach and the degree of success it has in improving the performance of employees.

The research should be a learning point for organizations on the role that leadership plays in the performance of employees and in turn, the performance of the organization. Human resource is one of the main assets of the organization and the research will seek to look into how leadership can empower the workforce and aid in the realization of organizational goals. The

research will therefore allow organizations, both in the private and public sector to understand how important leadership and human resource is for the success of organizations.

Success of an organization depends, to a large extent, on the employees. This is because of their day-to-day operations. The employees perform tasks that are critical for the attainment of organizational goals. When the performance of the employees is poor, the organization is likely to suffer financially, experience inefficiencies and have a poor image in the eyes of consumers.

**Summary**

Chapter 1 highlights the challenges that the public sector in Saudi Arabia faces and the importance of leadership role to increase the employee performance. The role of leadership is important in any organization as it serves to motivate employees, direct the duties of the employees, as well as set goals and visions that are clear. Leaders tend to be charismatic which allows them to attract followers. Over the years, Saudi Arabia has attempted to make reforms in its public sector so as to increase performance and efficiency. The significance of this reform lies in the fact that the public sector in Saudi Arabia has for a long time experienced poor management and performance. The public sector has therefore invested in the training of skilled leaders as part of the reforms. There are however, concerns that despite various reforms being undertaken in the public sector, performance remains ineffective. The study thus sought to offer a clear picture on the actual role of participative leadership approach on employee performance and therefore the influence on organizational productivity.

The participative leadership approach is important in helping the public sector keep up with competition it faces from the private sector with regards to attracting and retaining the workforce. The participative style of leadership, therefore, has the ability to aid the public sector in bringing and maintaining employees so that they are not lost to the private sector. The

participative leadership approach has been argued to offer a healthy work environment, which allows for a high level of productivity and performance in an organization.

Also, the research sought to understand whether the problems currently experienced by the public sector in Saudi Arabia such as poor motivation, low productivity, poor communication skills and the failure to meet performance target can be addressed through a participative leadership approach. The use of a conceptual framework applies whereby the participative style of leadership is the independent variable, whereas employee performance is the dependent variable. The participative style of leadership will incorporate management practices and collaboration; whereas the performance of employees will assess the quality and quantity of work done by employees and the ability to engage in teamwork towards the attainment of organizational goals.

The questions that were answered in the research examined whether there was a significant association between the participative approach to leadership and the performance of the employee in the public sector in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the research attempted to answer the question of how the democratic approach to leadership affects the productivity of employees in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the questions assess the effect of participative leadership on the performance of the employees and their motivation. The research is important not only to the public sector but also to the private sector in Saudi Arabia, the region and the world. Organizations, policymakers and facilitators will benefit from the research. This is due to the understanding of the association between participative approach to leadership and employee performance. Additionally, leaders in Saudi Arabia will be empowered with knowledge on how to better motivate their employees and transform their organizations in line with their visions. With the emergence of dynamic business models, the rise of the virtual work place,

globalization, communication technologies and economic instability, the research will be important in allowing organizations to understand which leadership style they can best use to boost the performance of employees in the face of these changes. Therefore, the research sought to understand how the democratic leadership approach influences performance of employees in an organization, while taking into consideration the high-power distance between the leaders and employees in the public sector in Saudi Arabia.

The introduction serves to offer insight on the topic of study and the various research questions that will be answered by the end of the research. Chapter 2 is the literature review and examines various works that have been written on the topic of participative style of leadership and its impacts on the performance of employees. It also looks into the theoretical framework on the topics being investigated, specifically motivation of employees, employee performance and leadership. The literature review will give additional information on the topic of the study.

# Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This chapter gives a historical overview of leadership theories. The chapter focuses on the various literature that have been written on the topic of participative style of leadership and its impacts on the performance of employees. It explores the theoretical framework on the topics of motivation of employees, employee performance and leadership. The literature review gives additional information on the topic of the study. The chapter examines, in detail, the characteristics and traits of participative leadership, its pros and cons. Finally, the chapter covers some motivation's theories and the determinants of employee performance in the workplace in Saudi Arabia.

## Historical Overview

The earliest leadership theories were established in the 1930s after Hawthorne conducted a trial (Sinani, 2016). Hawthorne's trial was aimed at improving employee productivity. Notably, the Hawthorne-Effect requires that employees work more productively when closely monitored. Such studies paved the way for the discovery of the participative leadership theory.

In 1924, the American National Research Council sought to investigate the role of participation as a style of management. The findings of this study proved that participation in leadership and management was effective as workers' job satisfaction increased substantially if they were provided with a supportive environment (Sinani, 2016). Participative leadership is a style encompassing participative-decision making, which empowers employees to be strong organizational managers (DuBrin, 2015). However, participative style of leadership gained popularity in the late 20th century when several group experiments were conducted by Kurt Lewin to determine the significance of participatory leadership. An article in 1974 highlights the process that led to the discovery of the participative leadership theory. "The pioneering study of

the relationship between the amount of participation in decision-making and the democratic-authoritarian dimension of leadership was carried out by Lewin, Lippitt, and White in 1939" (Gress, 1974, p. 36). Lewin et al. (1939) examined the implications of various leadership styles on the behavior of several groups of minors. "The participative style of leadership produced greater group unity than any other style" (Gress, 1974, p. 37). Notably, the studies by Lewin et al. (1939) were the major breakthrough in the integration of participative leadership theory into mainstream leadership styles.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Kurt Lewin was at the forefront of research that was necessary in identifying the value and effectiveness of the participative style of leadership in organizations. His publication is titled *Leadership and Group Life*. Lewin, a behavioral researcher, and his colleagues Ralph K. White and Ronald Lippitt, cite the three main styles of leadership to be participative, autocratic, and laissez-faire. After several interviews with employees and business leaders, Lippitt et al. (1939) concluded that the most recognized style of leadership among employees is participative style of leadership (Starratt, 2003). From the experiments, certain characteristics were noticed such as a team led by an autocratic leader performed very well its tasks when their leader was present and exercised control. However, the team members developed hatred and dislike for the leader. On the other hand, the group led by a participative leader also did well its tasks, but the team members had positive emotions towards their boss. Even when the leader was absent, the team members maintained efficiency (Lewin et al., 1939).

There are two important ways by which leaders who have practiced participative leadership successfully differ from the leaders practicing autocratic and laissez-faire style of leadership. Unlike the laissez-faire style of leadership, where authority is delegated to experts by the top managers, participative leaders guide the entire process of decision making. Similarly,

unlike autocratic style of leadership, participative leaders expect their employees to be self-confident and have in-depth experience in their field of specialization (DuBrin, 2015).

After Lewin's experiments, the number of studies on participative leadership significantly increased. One such researcher was Fleishman, who conducted an investigation into how leadership or managerial conduct affects employees in the 1940s (Sinani, 2016). His findings on the role of participation were inconclusive and hence, in the 1950s, Likert expanded on the study by Fleishman by conducting a study on leadership behaviors. The main aim of the study was to discover the most effective leadership styles that organizational leaders could use in handling their employees (Likert, 1967). The study reflected Lewin's findings by concluding that leaders who focus on employee orientation are more likely to impact higher job satisfaction and productivity among employees. By definition, employee orientation means an increased focus on forming interpersonal relationships with workers. To interpret, it was discovered that the participative leadership style was effective at the workplace.

Later, Davis conducted another study in 1968, which found that employees are more productive when they develop a sense of task involvement and participation (Sinani, 2016). This motivates them to feel more responsible for the accomplishment of a company's goals. Notably, this is yet another study that proved the effectiveness of participative leadership theory about thirty years since its initial discovery.

All information shows that participative leadership was developed through the contribution of several research studies conducted by different researchers. Following the 1960s, different studies proposed the use of participative leadership to enhance employee productivity. Eventually, participative leadership became a leadership style or theory in organizations. According to Clark (2013), the degree of democracy and autocracy depends on several

circumstances. Democracy may be applied where employees are able to learn their skills quickly, but in cases where employees take too long to learn, leaders tend to use an autocratic leadership style. A respective attitude towards employees based on the fact that individual interests are valued no less than the interests of the company. The reason behind this is on the basis that co-workers are an important part, without them an organization cannot function successfully (Starratt, 2003).

Participative leadership uses effective tools in managing both the organization and its employees. The traditional concept of personnel administration has been replaced by human resource management leading to the strategic integration of new styles of leadership styles into improved employee performance and effective management of employees. According to (Mohiuddin, 2017), a leader is considered to be effective if he/she is a good problem solver. Such a leader is capable of improving employee performance and driving change in an organization. A good leader is capable of adopting the best style of management to meet the demands of the environment in which an organization operates. Participative style of leadership has been used to meet employee demands based on empowerment, amount of directions, and decision-making power (Mohiuddin, 2017).

Different studies have been done on the performance phenomenon and how it is affected by different styles of leadership. These studies have concluded that there is a limited concept of participative leadership in the data that have been collected in the past. Participative leadership is critical to the success and sustainability of different organizations, especially within a large work environment. All in all, the history of leadership and how it influences employee and organizational performance date back to the 17th century (Carter & Greer, 2008). Towards the end of the 17th century, many organizations started treating employees as human capital,

necessary for achieving the goals and mission of an organization rather than treating them like machines.

The influence of participative leadership on employee performance is shown by a significant number of studies which have been undertaken in developed and developing nations. In Saudi Arabia particularly, similar kind of studies have been conducted and employees especially in government agencies are long criticized for poor performance, inefficiency, lack of flexibility, and poor accountability among others. Leadership has been linked with relationship and preference of hierarchy in Saudi Arabia as leaders are most known for their power and authority. Saudi employees are not allowed to disagree with their leaders and hostility and anger toward the superiors are suppressed (Rahman et al., 2014)

Saudi Arabia's government leaders, just like other public sector leaders around the world, operate in an uncertain and ambiguous environment. They constantly face challenges. To achieve their objectives and be successful, they must possess skills to survive and improve job performance. Therefore, understanding the drawbacks that they face is critical for the government ministers to develop programs that will help them cope with the dynamic needs of their citizens and ultimately create a world-class public sector of leaders.

The King, who acts as the country’s Prime Minister, rules the country and the Council of Ministers. The King’s role includes ensuring the protection of the nation and the effective application of the country’s general policy. He is responsible for appointing the Crown Prince of the nation. Also, the King is responsible for appointing all Governors of Saudi regions, Ministers, Ambassadors, and the Shura Council Members. According to the royal decree that introduced in 1992 (Nurunnabi, 2017), the King is the key agent of the State and acts to ensure that the security and the rights of the citizens are implemented. The bylaws emphasized the

importance of the family unit as the basic unit of the society since it plays a critical role in teaching its members to follow the Islamic values.

The Council of Ministers in the country was first established in 1953 and its membership includes the Crown Prince, the Kingdom's Deputy Prime Minister as well as other Cabinet Ministers under him. The Council of Ministers had been restructured in the past by the previous Kings, and King Salman later restructured it in 2015 when he became the king of Saudi Arabia. It consists of Minister of Defense, Minister of National Guard, Minister of Interior, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Islamic Affairs, Minister of Education, Minister of Justice, Minister of Energy, Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources, Minister of Transport, Minister of Commerce and Investment, Minister of Health, Minister of Media, Minister of Finance, Minister of Culture, Minister of Housing, Minister of Communication and Information Technology, and Minister of Labor and Social Development. The work of the Ministers is in drafting and implementation of different programs, including the general affairs of the country, financial, educational, internal, defense and external policies (Cordesman, 2019). They are the final authority in all dimensions and their resolutions are non-binding, unless they are debated and agreed upon by a majority vote. If a tie occurs, the Crown Prince casts a vote to break it. The Ministers meet weekly every Tuesday in the Council of Ministers and are led by the King or the Crown Prince.

The government sectors have gone through several changes over the years with the government outlining objectives it aims to achieve. Their roles have significantly grown since its inception and this is an essential to keep pace with the changing needs of its citizens and curb the challenges that threaten. Firstly, in the early 2000s, the leadership began to evaluate the privatization of its sectors with the primary objective of enhancing the effectiveness of the

economy and expanding its citizen control of the country's efficient assets (Le Ha & Barnawi, 2015). With privatization, the government aimed at encouraging both local and foreign investments into the country. Three years later, in 2003, the government had accredited a list of the intended actions and government procedures to be privatized.

Secondly, the government went ahead and developed the e-government concept that was targeted at transforming the sector into an information society by supporting new strategies and efforts to assist in the electronic distribution of development programs (Basamh et al., 2014). The Council did this intending to improve the livelihood of its people, raising their standard of living, and improving service delivery.

To reorganize the government structure in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 agenda, the King issued 50 decrees in 2016 that were meant to focus on the duties of the government and target to offer better services to the citizens. The agenda outlines several areas for improvement in efficiency and government restructuring aimed at ensuring that ministers and departments operate at maximum capacity. Some of the restructuring efforts include the appointment of new royal advisers, abolishment, merging, and changing of government ministries, which were all of focus on streamlining the bureaucracy in the government (Seib, 2016).

However, despite all of the government's efforts and billions of dollars spent from its oil sales on public sector organizations, questions arise as to whether the reforms have managed to increase public-sector performance. Reports still indicate that public organizations are ineffective and the performance of various government ministries continues to lag and perform below expectations (Biygautane et al., 2018).

The country's style of leadership has, for long, intended to improve the development of public enterprises since leadership is known to play a key role in causing changes for effective

management (Dirani et al., 2017). The government leaders must be in a position to transform the public sector through their objectives for the future of the country and by expounding them to their employees in order to empower employee performance. The employees will then be in a position to ensure that the vision of the country's leadership is maintained and followed.

While leadership is viewed as a procedure where individual impacts other to accomplish one aim, the style of leadership is the avenue of giving direction and influencing people to achieve their aims. A study on leadership and conditions of the sector in the country by Rahman, Jarrar, and Omira established that leadership styles have a key role to play in the contribution of the performance of an enterprise (Rahman et al., 2014). To ensure effective governance and continuity within each of the ministries, the government established a council of Political and Security Affairs and Economic and Development Affairs (Yamada, 2016). The bodies will examine the structures in the government, their roles, capabilities, procedures, and responsibilities.

The employees in the country's organizations face several drawbacks in their goal to enhance the achievement of the sector. One of the greatest challenges has been the inability to implement effective leadership styles. An analysis of the country's Vision 2030 agenda shows how the government is committed to improving employee performance by training at least 600,000 of its government employees by 2020 (Nurunnabi, 2017). The government aims to improve employee performance to the highest standards and the implementation of management standards.

The government also seeks to organize itself with flexibility and create a joined-up government that has clear links between both policy decisions and performance. It will develop monitoring units that will assist in organizational support and thus push for coordination between

the agencies in government and other critical bodies to improve both its long-run and short-run performance.

## Leadership Theories and Description of Participative Leadership

Leadership is a systematic process where the executives in an organization influence their subordinates' behavior and work together to achieve common goals. Martin Chemers viewed it as a systematic process that influences the society where an individual can get the support of others to accomplish a goal. An effective process is critical in an organization to ensure that human effort is utilized for the attainment of the intended organizational goals (Jyoti & Dev, 2015). Alan Kettin defined leadership as a process of creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen (Beresford & Sloper, 2008). Therefore, it should be able to motivate people to strive willingly and be similar to a particular situation at any given time and with a set of characteristics.

Leadership theories identify the reasons why certain individuals become rulers, who are focused on their identities. They try to identify their behaviors so that individuals can adopt and facilitate their leadership skills in certain circumstances (Baron & Parent, 2015). The theories include:

### *Trait Theory*

The primary approach differentiating leaders from managers is known as the *great man* or the *trait theory*. This theory states that leadership is inborn. It is an inborn desire for accepting responsibility, controlling and even seeking glory through leadership. This theory states that leaders are naturally risk takers and leaders are born but not made. The belief states that there are common personal characteristics and traits that leaders share; that leadership is an instinctive quality a person has or does not have. According to the trait theory, individuals attain leadership

traits from birth, or innately possess them, which makes them succeed in their roles as effective leaders. Certain qualities, such as creativity and responsibility, make individuals become good leaders and these are traits that are important when leading others (Thahier et al., 2014).

***Behavioral Theory***

This is a theory that has been used for identifying management with leadership. It suggests that great leaders are developed but not born. This is a kind of leadership that is based on the situation that leadership can be the nature of the task. It implies that a person is more educated than others in a particular area, or that the person who has been selected to lead is more popular. The person's directives could be followed by others (Strom et al., 2013). The theory is based on the assumption that the most effective leadership is the joint effect of the behavior of an individual, where both the leader and their followers interact together.

***Situational Theory***

The theory assumes that leadership is affected by the situation where an individual engages from, where the individual carries out his/her duties, and interaction between the leaders and the groups. This theory of leadership suggests that effective leadership requires a rational understanding of the ongoing situation in order to implement an appropriate response (McCleskey, 2014). As such, it combines directive and supportive elements of leadership in a given situation instead of the inherent behaviors that a leader possesses. Some of the leadership models associated with this particular theory include the Tannenbaum and Schmidt's leadership model, Reddin's three-theory of leadership, the path-goal theory of leadership, and Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (McCleskey, 2014).

### *Contingency Theory*

The theory assumes that there is not a single way of leading individuals. It encompasses every style of leadership based on specific situations that show that there are individuals who perform at the top level in different places but also at low levels when in different situations. The contingency theory suggests that leaders must adjust their behavior based on a rational understanding of the situation or prevailing circumstances in order to assume the most appropriate leadership style (Vidal et al., 2017). Hence, unlike the situational theory, this theory focuses on adjusting leadership behavior in order to implement the most appropriate leadership style. In every case, the circumstances determine the leadership style needed including the leadership approach managers express ranging from autocratic to democratic leadership. As such, under the contingency theory, leadership characteristics are dependent on situational factors. Leadership models based on the contingency theory include Fielder's contingency theory of leadership effectiveness, Cognitive resource theory, and Strategic contingencies theory (Vidal et al., 2017).

### *Transactional Theory*

This is an approach of management describing situations where rewards are used for motivating employees. The primary factor here is self-interest, referring to both employees and the manager receiving some compensation if the tasks within an organization ends successful or goes according to plan. Both parties obtain a positive image, too. On the other hand, the employees are subjected to some form of punishment if they do not complete the tasks as planned by the management. It is simply a bureaucratic form of management (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). The theory is also known as the management theory and is identified by a

form of transaction between the leader and their follower. Therefore, for the theory to be effective, the leader of the group must be able to pay back their followers through rewards.

### *Transformational Theory*

The theory is also called relationship theory, and it states that leadership is a system by which an individual interacts with others and creates a better relationship, resulting in motivation. This theory is considered to be the true essence of leadership, which is not based on bureaucracy but instead on a leader's personal presence. It is known to be the opposite of transactional management. Transformational leadership aims to motivate subordinates. An example is where awareness is raised about the importance of the task being undertaken and the leader takes initiative in inspiring employees to work towards completing the task successfully. The goal of this theory is to transcend self-interest and create a team that is tightly integrated to execute a task (Thahier et al., 2014).

### *Charismatic Theory*

This leadership theory portrays leaders in their most powerful sense. It is a type of leadership that is not characterized by bureaucracy. It is considered to be a radical form of transformational leadership. The leaders influence people who follow them out of respect and love. Self-interest and rewards are not applicable in this theory. Task completion is based on the presence of the charismatic leader who motivates his/her subordinates to work towards achieving the objectives and goals of the organization (Thahier et al., 2014).

Leadership styles are a result of the philosophy and experience of leaders. They include the autocratic leader who issues orders, which must be followed by his juniors, and the participative or democratic leader who gives instructions in the group and ensures policies are followed (Khan et al., 2016). A laissez-faire leader, on the other hand, does not lead, but focuses

on making the group reach the target and abdicates his position to give all the tasks required of him to the group he is required to lead.

***Description of Participative Leadership***

There are numerous definitions available for participative leadership. Kahai et al. (1997) described participative leadership as: “when team members are consulted during decision-making and problem-solving processes” (p. 1). Additionally, Bass (1990) had previously defined participative leadership as: “the equalization of power and sharing of problem-solving with followers by consulting them before making a decision” (p. 1). The participative style of leadership is where individuals take greater responsibility in the process of making decisions (Vroom, 2019). Basically, participative leadership reflects a leader’s capacity to establish a cooperative, supportive, empowering, and democratic working environment. The style can apply to any organization where all individuals are given the responsibility to participate and exchange their opinions. Participative leadership, also known as shared leadership or democratic leadership, refers to a leadership style whereby members of a group or team take more participatory roles in the process of decision making. It is a type of leadership that can be applied to any organization, from private businesses to government. Gipson et al. 2017, stated that participative leadership style is accommodative, inclusive and empowering. It is a style of leadership that requires the leader to build on a general agreement with team participation. It constantly allows for an opinion from involved group members. According to Northouse (2018), participative leadership is also emphasized when leaders remain uncertain and are in need of further ideas to perform a task. Welcoming ideas leads to free and open discussions amongst the group members. The ideas are then shared openly with a high degree of harmony, possibilities, and suggestions. Contributions from all group members make it interactive (Northouse, 2018).

At times, it can be intense and difficult to commit. In such instances, the group leader or manager will be required to come up with the best decision. The group will entirely depend on the leader to choose and do so with conviction (Gipson et al., 2017).

Belias and Koustelios (2014) assert that employees' morale is boosted when they feel that they are part of the organization's growth and development. They are consulted for their opinions in the decision-making process. Using the Saudi public sector organizations as reference, a study by Basit et al. (2017) indicates that when employees are conferred on organizational decisions, they are likely to accept changes easily within the structural setup as the participative leader helps them adapt to the changes. In this case, therefore, leaving out employees in the decision-making process may result in several unwarranted delays in implementing change, especially when there is need to respond very fast to changes and adapt to the situation at hand for an organization to continue with its normal operations (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

Daft (2008) believes that participative leaders delegate authority to their followers and encourage participation. Participative leadership are dependent on the knowledge of subordinates for the execution of tasks, which is not always the case in Saudi Arabia. Most public sector organizations are characterized by other styles of leadership like autocratic leadership, bureaucratic leadership, and transformational leadership styles (Iqbal et al., 2015). Participative leaders value respect for influence from their followers because it is what keeps them influential. According to DuBrin (2006), today's global business environment is complex and leaders are not required to generate all answers on their own without further consultation from their followers. According to recent research, it suggests that leadership can be shared among leaders and their teams. Sharing leadership functions makes a group more responsive, inclusive, and effective. It

has been noted that group members are very resourceful and attentive when it comes to decision making, policy determination, and systems and procedure implementation (Mullins, 2007). According to Jooste (2009), a participative leader is characterized by job satisfaction and increased productivity.

In summary, the participative leadership style, although not explored extensively in Saudi Arabia, allows for collaboration in the decision-making process between leaders and their followers in some of the Saudi public sector organizations (Lane et al., 2017). It allows for praises and criticism as well as the feeling of responsibility. A leader is required to discuss with his/her employees before issuing board or general orders. The employees are free to contribute to the final decision. Support will always be offered to the employees by the leaders so that they can complete tasks effectively and promptly (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

## Characteristics and Traits of Participative Leadership

### *Communication*

According to Clark (2013), for an organization to understand, own, and share its dream, clarity of purpose must be communicated. Participative leadership clearly articulates the vision and mission well enough with employees for them to get involved and engaged, using their strength and personal character as positions of influence. Participative leaders help to define a company's goal and uses a road map to reach the desired targets of achievement (Clark, 2013).

### *Cohesion*

Clark (2013) asserts that any work environment must be prepared for all types of challenges. The load of work from the challenges always fall on organizational leadership and leaders must handle and manage pressure in a manner that moves the team forward. Participative

style of leadership fosters leaders who possess the right skills and personality to stay focused and in control (Clark, 2013).

### *Responsibility*

Clark (2013) also describes how a good manager or business owner must be the first one to accept blame. A participative leader accepts blame and does not run away from the consequences of their actions. This is what defines great leadership (Clark, 2013).

### *Flexibility*

Participative leadership is flexible and can adapt first to changes. The dynamics of day-to-day operations shift, bringing changes to planned projects, outcomes, material, roles, and even staff participation. Keohane (2016) asserts that changes are always both internal and external. These changes include natural disasters, competition tactics, regulations, new launches or activations, products, and distribution among others. Therefore, leadership must be able to adapt and engage (Keohane, 2016).

### *Humility*

According to DuBrin (2015), great leaders are always firm but approachable. Great leaders possess the ability to talk and listen to their teams or followers at all levels within the organization to win their respect, trust, and support (DuBrin, 2015). Participative leadership encourages listening to the views of each and every team member and to consider them when making decision. Decisions made through participative leadership are inclusive.

### *Forward-Looking*

According to Atchley (2014), participative leadership involves forward-looking leaders with a vision for the future, setting goals that should be achieved within a certain time frame. Participative leadership guides the entire organization to own this kind of vision. A participative

leader pictures what he/she wants, what is required by the organization, and how to attain it. Such leaders have the habit of picking priorities based on their basic values (Atchley, 2014).

Participative leadership is characterized by the following additional qualities:

***Honesty***

Participative leadership is based on honesty and trust. According to Mumford et al. (2000), honesty refers to the display of fairness, sincerity, and integrity. It is worth noting that that any misleading behavior may inspire no trust in the leadership of an organization (Mumford et al., 2000).

***Broad-Minded***

Participative leaders are known to be broad-minded and cooperative. Atchley (2014) asserts that these leaders are always open to new ideas. They allow no room for politics that may interfere with the operation and success of the organization. According to Atchley (2014), participative leaders tend to seek diversity and always try embracing different ideas without considering the person who thought of it and the others who are discriminating the source. Everyone's opinion is put into consideration. Participative leadership drives ideas passionately to come up with best solutions to the problems facing an organization. Therefore, participative leaders are able to contribute to the success of the entire organization when they introduce this attribute in their groups, teams, or departments. However, all employees from different sections and departments within the organization are also required to collaborate (Atchley, 2014).

***Fair-Minded***

Participative leaders treat all employees fairly and equally. Participative leaders prefer justice to be observed in all their undertakings. Such leaders show empathy by being sensitive to

the interests, values, feelings, and well-being of every employee within the organization (Atchley, 2014).

### *Inspiring*

Participatory leadership require leaders to display confidence in all their endeavors. Barbuto (2005) asserts that participative leaders have spiritual and mental strengths and tend to survive when dealing with matters within the organization. Such leaders inspire their followers to attain their goals and reach new heights. Participatory requires that leaders take charge of where and when necessary (Barbuto, 2005).

### *Innovative*

Atchley (2014) asserts that participative leaders are innovative and encourage innovation in their respective organization. Participative leaders tend to make appropriate and timely changes in their thinking, plans, and methods of approaching issues. Participatory requires leaders to portray creativity by using better ideas, goals, and solutions to problems (Atchley, 2014). Additionally, innovation is a source of competitive advantage as it helps to have a consistent approach to change and accept new ideas from the entire team (Oreg & Berson, 2011).

### *Pros and Cons of Participative Leadership Style*

**Pros**. Participative style of leadership is trusted with the improvement and encouragement of employee job performance. The employees are given and trusted with appropriate information regarding company matters affecting the organization. A participative environment allows employees to vote and the majority obtained influences the course of action (Strom et al., 2013). Even though this type of leadership may sometimes be considered slow in decision-making, it has more advantages over other styles and is the right management method for any business. It is a style of leadership comprising of shared decision-making among leaders

and group members as well as the promotion of the interest of each member of the group through the adoption of social equity (Anderson, 2011).

The advantages of participative leadership are obvious in theory to subordinates. Many people like working in a leadership structure that promotes thoughtful discussions and collaborations. The reality is that most organizations, if not all, lend themselves to democratic leadership style. However, there are groups of people who value less participative style of leadership. For them, participative leadership is inappropriate because they are focused on productivity. This group includes investors, trustees, board members, and executives (Clark, 2013). Companies and organizations with highly focused and strictly controlled internal processes works best with other styles of leadership such as the autocratic style. Leaders are therefore tasked with determining the best style of leadership that works best with their organizations (Anderson, 2011). The following are the pros of participative style of leadership:

***Creativity*.** Morhart et al. (2011) stated that a manager can choose a variety of solutions when employees are allowed to give their opinions on issues influencing an organization. Employees are required to be involved in the company operation in order to be a part of the company's decision-making process. Participative leadership empowers workers to use their creativity for developing work that is more productive and make the firm more effective (Morhart et al., 2011).

***Morale*.** Richardson (2013) asserts that employees tend to feel responsible and personally liable for the success and operation of an organization when offered the chance to contribute to the decisions within the organization. When employees are given the opportunity to be part of the company's decision-making process, they seem to be more appreciative and highly motivated in all their undertakings. They tend to work harder to see their contributions implemented when

given the chance. According to Richardson (2013), employees who are aware of their influence on policies governing their work will play an increasing active role in the improvement of work conditions (Richardson, 2013).

***Acceptance*.** According to Mosadegh Rad and Yarmohammadian (2006), in a participative environment, the policies and decisions made through a general agreement are likely to be accepted more readily by employees. This saves the organization from resistance and conflicts that are likely to be generated by new policies. The idea implementation process will improve. In a participative environment, employees are personally trusted with new policies and are given direct responsibility through involvement in creating and approving policies. It helps in the rapid adjustment to changes from policies within the company (Mosadegh Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006).

***Retention*.** According to Zhang et al. (2015), retention is the process of offering employees the opportunity to increase their earnings through improved performance. In such cases, employees are given the chance to work towards the attainment of organizational goals. They are motivated to be active in the growth and development of the organization, be committed to the company, and work towards future improvements. When employees have the opportunity, they tend to be anxious to see the success of their plans and hard work. This is considered to be the best method of employee retention, which lowers employees' turnover costs while improving employee retention (Zhang et al., 2015).

**Cons**. Belias and Koustelios (2014) assert that participative leadership is the most effective style of leadership characterized by increased employee morale, high productivity, and better contribution from group members. It is a style of leadership that is trusted with creative solutions to problems and better ideas that contribute to organizational growth. A democratic

organization encourages the sharing of thoughts and ideas between group members and the whole organization. However, even though participative style of leadership is considered to be among the most effective style of leadership, it also has some disadvantages and downfalls, particularly when roles are not clear and there is inadequate time (Hendriks & Karsten, 2014). In such situations, participative leadership may result in communication failure and uncompleted projects. It is important to note that participative leadership style works best in a situation where group members have the required skills and are willing and eager to share their knowledge. Anderson (2011) asserts that employees should be given adequate time for contributing, planning development, and voting on their most preferred course of action. The following is a summary of the disadvantages of participative style of leadership:

***No Clear Definition***. An organization that practices the participative style is constantly faced with the struggles of offering a clear definition of leadership. Hendriks and Karsten (2014) maintains that in a democratic environment leaders tend to value equality over any other perspective. Therefore, all team members including the team leader, are equal. The only thing that differentiates members of a particular team is that each have different roles to fulfill. Equality is important in any work environment but there could be a disruption in the organization due to lack of structure when the lines of leadership become blurred. This may happen when every team member feels the need to be heard in what is going on inside the organization (Hendriks & Karsten, 2014).

***Difficult to Reach a Common Agreement.*** Keohane (2016) maintains that it may be hard to come to a true agreement with the participative process of leadership even with multiple levels of experience and feedback. Leaders are always seen as the head. Even within a participative setup, there must be someone that is trusted with the final decision. Feedback and contribution

about an issue might be received from team members, but the team will still rely on their leader to make the best choice based on the differing opinions. If it is impossible to reach a conclusion even after analyzing feedback from every team member, the leader will be asked to select a path of action. In such an instance, the time spent in discussion becomes wasted because the leader will ultimately make a decision he/she feels is the best (Keohane, 2016).

***Causes Division in Leadership***. It is nearly impossible for a participative leader to make an immediate decision even if a choice has immediate effect. According to Hendriks and Karsten (2014), in a participative environment, the process of decision-making requires leaders to defer to their team members. It is a type of leadership that is characterized by difficulty in decision making especially when the time is short because every team member must be given the opportunity of contributing in the decision-making process. Therefore, the team must sit on the fence, waiting for a decision to be taken instead of moving in a particular direction (Hendriks & Karsten, 2014).

***Misapplication Can Cause Disharmony Within the Organization***. According to Keohane (2016), participative leadership aims at giving a platform to every voice, but some leaders may consistently go with the opinion(s) of one person over the rest of the team members. Even if it is for valid reasons, other team members may develop a feeling that their opinions and experiences matter less and they may stop contributing to the decision-making process. With time, other team members may start feeling undervalued followed by reduced productivity (Anderson, 2011).

### *Level 5 Leadership Related to Participative Leadership*

Great leaders have a certain blend of skills and characteristics that are difficult to define. To analyze Good to Great, Jim Collins led a research on more than 40 companies. This analysis

aimed at finding companies that had good performances and then transformed to great companies. Collins was specifically searching for a sustained period of greatness. In all the Good to Great companies studied, he concluded that their leaders were more or less the same. He then named this type of leadership Level 5 Leadership (Collins, 2013). The following are the five levels of leadership, starting with the lowest level of leadership:

**Level 1 Leadership**. Highly capable individual –in an organizational hierarchy, the highly capable individuals are the lowest level of leadership. Highly capable individuals use their good work habits, skills, and are aware of how to contribute towards organizational success. Such people are good at their task and do good work towards accomplishments (Collins, 2013).

**Level 2 Leadership**. Contributing team members – are those who are capable of using their knowledge, skills, and capabilities to assist their teams or organizations succeed. Just like highly capable individuals, contributing team members excel at what they do, leading a team to achieve its goals and objectives (Collins, 2013).

**Level 3 Leadership**. Competent manager – is able to effectively organize his/her group to achieve certain organizational goals and objectives. These managers drive their teams to obtain the set goals. However, in such cases, managers do not determine their team's objectives (Collins, 2013).

**Level 4 Leadership.** Effective leader – most leaders fall within this category of leadership. This is the level where leaders are able to motivate a department to attain its performance objectives and contribute to the vision of the organization. The leaders are capable of commitment, which will help them pursue and compel towards organizational objectives. These leaders always motivate their teams to perform highly (Collins, 2013).

**Level 5 Leadership**. Great leader – level 5 leadership is the essence of truly great leaders. These leaders have all the abilities and capabilities required for the other four levels. They possess a special blend of humility necessary for true greatness. Level 5 leaders also maintain a unique combination of strength and humility. This blend makes these leaders great and distinguishes them from leaders belonging to the other four levels (Collins, 2013).

Level 5 Leadership is more or less similar to participative style of leadership. Leaders in the other lower levels are capable of producing success, but their contribution may not be able to sustain organizational greatness. According to Collins (2013), all companies that went from Good to Great had Level 5 leaders. Therefore, an organization cannot attain greatness without Level 5 leaders.

The following are what makes democratic leaders similar to Level 5 leaders:

**Level 5 Leaders Are Ambitious**. Their ambition is directed towards the success of the entire organization rather than themselves. This characteristic is found in participative leaders. Despite being ambitious, these leaders are modest about what their personalities contribute (Clark, 2013).

**Level 5 Leaders Are Responsible**. This is considered to be a top attribute of level 5 leaders. These leaders take responsibility for their mistakes and failings.

**Level 5 Leaders Are Disciplined**. They are disciplined in all their undertakings, similar to that of participative leaders. These leaders always stick to resolve when they commit to a course of action, despite how difficult it may seem (Collins, 2013).

**Level 5 Leaders Surround Themselves With The Right People**. They are linked with competent and innovative people. They take time to select individuals to associate with and help them reach their full potential (Clark, 2013).

**Level 5 Leaders Are Passionate**. About everything they do, just like participative leaders. Moreover, they do not fear in exercising their desire in their roles. Demonstrating their passion has helped in influencing and motivating other employees (Collins, 2013).

## Motivation Theories and Employee Performance

John (2000) define employee performance as the contribution or outcome to make them attain goals. Performance, on the other hand, defined as the achievements of an organization based on success, relevance, and results (Bautista et al., 2017). According to Sultana et al. (2012), performance is the success of specific tasks measured against identified or set standards of speed, costs, completeness, and accuracy. Therefore, employee performance is portrayed in easiness of adopting new technologies, production improvement, and a motivated workforce. According to Jankingthong and Rurkkhum (2012), employee performance refers to whether employees execute their job duties and other roles assigned to them sufficiently. It is important to note that there is no dominant theory of employee performance. The effectiveness with which an organization develops, manages, and stimulates its employees is the sources of organizational development. It is a clear indication that people management is critical to the performance of employees and further to organizational success. Therefore, Jankingthong and Rurkkhum (2012) define employee performance as the ability of employees to accomplish their mission based on organizational expectations.

According to Altrasi (2014), most organizations are facing high competition as far as the workforce is concerned. Retaining employees is therefore a hard task, as competitors are determined to attract employees from the public sector through healthy work environments and attractive compensation plans among others. Such incentives build a sense of belonging among

employees and prevent them from leaving their organizations. It is central to the smooth operation of an organization because it reflects improvement in job performance.

Altrasi (2014) believes that the productivity of each employee has an impact on organizational goals. It is therefore important to manage each employee. Employee performance plays an important role in an organization, thereby making employees the organization's key asset (Cavanagh, 2011). Today, most organizations have learned the importance of employees in that without them, the organization cannot accomplish its objectives. The following are the main determinants of employee performance in the Saudi Arabian public sector:

***Leadership***

In Saudi Arabia, leadership is considered an important part of activities associated with the management of people as well as channeling their efforts towards the organizational goals and objectives (Alharbi, 2017). A leader may be responsible for sections within an organization or even the organization as a whole. They ensure the organization realizes its goals and purposes. In short, a leader can be described as one who sets directions that are considered fit and moves the organization in that direction. Apart from leadership skills and knowledge, leaders should have the ability to adapt to different behaviors and styles of leadership. It will help the leaders achieve organizational objectives and goals. According to Mosadegh Rad and Yarmohammadian (2006), leaders are always rewarded by the performance and dedication of their followers, only if they are capable of persuading, stimulating, and directing them.

***Working Conditions***

There are several factors in the workplace environment influencing employee level of performance and enthusiasm. According to Alharbi (2017), in the Saudi Arabian public sector, the employee's work affects their commitment, output, and confidence both negatively and

positively. New incentive programs focusing on changes in lifestyles, health and fitness, and life/work imbalance were previously not considered as significant payback tactic by the Saudi Arabian public sector organizations. Currently, those organizations have adopted these practices. It is important to note that in the Saudi Arabian public sector, the status of employee workplace environment affects the level of employee motivation, thereby affecting employee performance. According to Mullins (2007), the manner in which employees engage in the organization, particularly with their work environment, greatly affects their innovativeness error, absenteeism rate, how they relate to other employees, and how long they will continue working (Altrasi, 2014).

### *Conflict*

Mosadegh Rad and Yarmohammadian (2006) asserts that conflicts greatly affect many organizations, including the Saudi Arabian public sector workforce. A conflict is a reality of life in any given business. Conflicts arise when there are limited resources and no freedom. It may happen within the whole organization or within teams and divisions. One aspect of intra-group conflicts is the task conflict that emerges when team members disagree on views and ideas of task-related issues. Conflicts strengthen a team because positive conflicts are positively related to performance. On the other hand, employee performance is greatly affected by negative conflicts. This is due to the negative relationship with employee performance.

When team ideas and organizational goals clash, organizational conflicts arise. There are two main kinds of conflicts in an organization, namely vertical and horizontal conflicts. According to Northouse (2018), vertical conflicts are conflicts that happen between teams at different levels of hierarchy in the organizational structure. Contrary, horizontal conflicts occur among team members at the same level in the structural hierarchy (Altrasi, 2014). Horizontal

conflicts are always driven by competition and are therefore considered healthy for an organization.

### *Compensation*

According to Nelson (2011), the process of compensation relies on the philosophies, which are developed and supervised approaches for giving and sustaining the appropriate levels and types of financial compensation. Armstrong (2006) supports the idea that compensation management is an important part of human resources as well as the movement towards the performance of any given organization. This calls for the formulation and implementation of compensation plans aimed at the enhancement of employee and organizational productivity. In the Saudi Arabian public sector, psychological requirements such as performance evaluation, promotion, and compensation significantly influence employee performance. Promotion practices and performance evaluation always depend on strategies, actions, and standard criteria that are undertaken by skilled and capable employees. The things that matter most are the perceptions of employees about the quality of these practices. In the Saudi Arabian public sector, the efforts of employees and their dedication to work are always acknowledged by promotions, and every employee works towards receiving a reward for their good performance. Saudi Arabia as an emerging market needs to make visible its human resource practices, particularly in the public sector, with the aim of employee and organizational performance improvement (Shahzad et al., 2008).

### *Employee Motivation*

Motivation is derived from a Latin word that implies to stimulate. Therefore, theorists viewed it as an action and not an object that could be observed. Its concept is traced from Plato and the Greeks. Plato, for instance, believed in a symmetric order being either rational or dietary.

The Greeks assumed that the motivational process had three main components, which the body required including pleasures and pains. Aristotle, on the other hand, believed that it was a spiritual process (Tracy, 2014). Descartes viewed it as a force, which was the drive of a man.

Motivation moves an individual to do something or perform a task more effectively (Steers & Sánchez-Runde, 2017). It involves getting all group members to carry out their tasks and sustain their loyalty to the organization. Employees are motivated in various ways, including rewards, merit pay, use of spot awards, skill-based pay, recognition, empowerment, and job redesign. The major feature of motivation is an oriented process that has one goal of converting the abilities of an individual's performance. As an art, it's seen as a way to encourage employees to perform their work diligently for the success of the enterprise. Louis Allen defined motivation as the work of a manager who aims to inspire and compel people to take their required course of action (Camilleri, 2006). Motivation is therefore seen as either positive or negative and as a psychological process that helps to convert the abilities of individuals to perform. Its main objective is to create different conditions where people are willing to work with diligence, interest, and enthusiasm.

### *Motivation Theories*

One main motivation theory is the Adam's Equity Theory. This theory describes how employees' motivation is dependent on their sole perception on fair work compensation policies and the treatment they receive from their work environments (Dainton & Zelley, 2017). Employees distinguish their job input and output, then, compare with others. Therefore, it helps to analyze the relationship between employee perception of how they are being treated and motivation to work.

There are two assumptions that the theory is based upon are:

i. Individuals provide inputs and contributions for which they expect results. The input they give to their organizations includes their experience, skills, personal characteristics, and knowledge in different fields. The outcomes they obtain include promotions, good pay, and other benefits.

ii. Individuals also analyze if an exchange is steady by making comparisons with others. According to the assumption, equity will exist if an individual's input and output proportions are equal to that of others.

The second motivation theory is the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LME or LMX). This theory was developed by Geroge B. Graen together with Mary Uhl-Bien in the late 70s mainly to focus on the relationship between the two main opposing levels of employees in an organization. The interest was to determine how the two sides of the employees relate to each other and how their relationship would impact the growth of the organization either positively or negatively (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). The theory assumes that leaders develop various interactions with their juniors, while one group is known as the in-group and the other is the out-group. The supervisor favors in-group members; they get more attention from him and can access more of the organizational resources. The other group where the subordinates fall under is called the out-group whose members receive less attention and fewer resources. The members of both groups are distinguished based on their similarity concerning characteristics such as age and personality (Mone & London, 2018). A member may also receive an in-group status if their leader acknowledges them as competent in their job performance. One of the theory's strength is its concentration on key relationships between the supervisor and their subordinates. The theory shifts specific focus on the importance of communication in positions of leadership. According

to the theory, a motivated work environment would be of great impact in terms of promoting the growth of the organization towards the achievement of the set goals. Considering the benefits of a good relationship, it is important for an organization to strengthen the bond between the leaders and their subordinates. An organization should therefore strive to determine what improves the relationship between leaders and their followers (Clark, 2013). However, the qualities of the relationships established under this theory are fundamentally measured by the level of trust, loyalty, support, and respect among the two opposing sides. It is these characteristic behaviors exhibited within the organization that requires how the junior employees are treated by their seniors. Relating to Saudi Arabia, a number of management aspects may be required to determine and comprehend the mechanisms and basis behind organizational motivation in the Middle Easterm country. For example, instrinsic motivation involves a behavior, which is driven by satisfying internal rewards, while extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is a result of external influences outside of an individual's control. The leadership and management in the Saudi organizations who may not fully understand the complexities of motivation may damage departmental morale and affect organizational performance (Radwan, 2018). Organizational motivation may have notable influence on the management and employee performance, thus affecting the level of performance. Rustin and Armstrong (2012) discussed the essence of motivation regarding productivity as well as its impact on the level of passion and desire to complete tasks within an organization. A qualitative study by Rahman et al. (2014) concluded that approximately 23% of employees or professionals in organizations in the Middle East are highly inspired and influenced in their jobs with another 34% claiming some motivation levels. At the same time, 40% of employees demonstrated some dissatisfaction level with their professional development and personal opportunities and 47% noted benefits and compensation

(Abualrub & Alghamdi, 2012). Regarding their level of stress, 80% of employees in the Middle East admitted they encountered some form as they attributed it to the tense environment partly due to the lack of motivation.

Employee motivation is a major factor in determining an organization's overall performance and ultimate productivity level. According to Radwan (2018), motivated employees are transformative and are team players, they are comprised of highly productive individuals. Motivated staff members form a team of achievers considering their strengths, manpower, objectives and interests, conclusively directed towards organizational success. A research carried out in Saudi Arabia in approximately 25 of the most developed and successful organizations showed that around 65% of employees in every organization have an established workforce, team cooperation, and high performance spirit. The high level of performance was attributed to manager-employee relationship, managerial strategy, motivation, and reward. For example, in the Arabian Oil Company, it was determined that the reward strategy provided benefits not only to the best performing and effective employees in all the departments (Rahman et al., 2014), but also included other motivational gifts to underperforming employees.

### *Theory X and Theory Y*

Douglas McGregor, a social psychologist, introduced two contrasting theories on what managers believe motivates their followers to perform. His theories, X and Y, are still important to date. Managers that use Theory X believe that employees are naturally unmotivated and dislike their roles within the organization. Theory X managers, therefore, think that their followers must either be punished or rewarded regularly to make them complete their tasks (McGregor, 1960). The consequences of this style of employee management are a repetitive work environment and employee motivation mirroring a carrot-stick approach. Moreover, reward

and performance appraisal in such organizations are done based on tangible results such as product output and sales figures. Employees are controlled based on their performance. Under this style, duty is rarely delegated and control is largely centralized. Additionally, managers must intervene to have things done (Clark, 2013).

On the other hand, Theory Y managers are optimistic, positive, and adopt a decentralized participative management system that encourages a trust-based and collaborative relationship with their team members. Under Theory Y, employees have greater responsibility, are always encouraged to develop skills, and can come up with ways to improve their skills. Even though Theory Y is similar to Theory X in that they are both full of appraisals, Theory Y encourages open communication instead of having the controlling staff of Theory X. Employees are given frequent opportunities for promotion and this style of employee performance management assumes that they are happy working on their own initiatives, self-motivated to complete assigned tasks, and more involved in the decision-making process. Many organizations use Theory Y because many employees prefer meaningful careers that provide more than just money (McGregor, 1960).

***Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory***

This theory, also referred to as the dual-factor theory or Herztberg's motivation-hygiene theory was intorduced in 1959 by Fredrick Herzberg, a behavioural scientist. In this theory, Herzberg believed that the efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction of workers in the work place attained in the presence of certain factors wherears another set of factors led to work disatisfaction, inefficienciies, and low productivity (Herzberg, 2003). Herzberg maintains that different jobs have different factors. There are jobs with factors that promote job satisfaction and others that discourage satisfaction (Alshmemri et al., 2017). He maintains that the opposite of

dissatisfaction is *No dissatisfaction* and the opposite of satisfaction is *No satisfaction*. In this sense therefore, Herzberg (2003) believes that if an individual focuses on eliminating the job dissatisfiers, then one may create peace in the work place but not necessarily improve the performance of the workers. This is because by addressing only those characteristics that relate to job dissatisfaction which is called the hygiene factors, the workers will neither be dissatisfied nor satisfied and therefore, there will be no motivator for them to improve their productivity (Lundberg et al., 2009). However, the theory requires that if a person is interested in improving the productivity, then the key focus should be laid on motivating the workers through addressing the motivational factors such as recognition, achievement and responsibility. According to Herzberg (2003), job factors that may lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction are classified under the following two categories:

**Hygiene Factors**. These are necessary components for promoting motivation at work. Some of these factors are: employee pay, employee status, administrative policies and company policies, and job security among others (Alshmemri et al., 2017). It is important to note that these factors do not result in satisfaction in the long-run, but their non-existence leads to dissatisfaction in the workplace. Therefore, they can be described as factors which equate to a reasonable job even if they do not make employees satisfied.

**Motivational Factors**. These yield positive satisfaction in the workplace. They motivate employees for high performance. Hygiene factors cannot be classified as motivators. Employees find motivational factors to be more rewarding than hygiene factors. In other words, these are factors that symbolize the psychological needs perceived as additional rewards. Some of these factors are: promotional opportunities and growth, recognition, sense of achievement, meaningfulness of work, and responsibility among others (Alshmemri et al., 2017).

***McClelland's Needs Theory***

This theory was developed in 1961 by David McClelland. In his book titled *The Achieving Society* McClelland identified three motivating factors, that was believed to be desired by all people irrespective of their age, gender, or culture. However, he noted that these motivators were not rapidly achieved but rather their achievement was only possible over a period of time (Royle & Hall, 2012). Based on this understanding, David McClelland was therefore convinced that the specific needs of an individual are acquired over time. Moreover, an individual's needs are shaped by his/her life experience. McClelland classified these needs as power, affiliation, or achievement. These three influence an individual's performance, effectiveness, and motivation (Pardee, 1990).

**Need for Achievement (N-Ach)**. In an organization, there are people who have an increased desire for achievement. These are people who strive to excel and avoid both high-risk and low-risk situations. McClelland asserts that high performers/achievers have the following characteristics:

- High performers prefer obtaining immediate feedback of the work they have done as this helps them be aware of their progression towards their goals.
- High performers always take moderate risks. They weigh their risks while working on activities in the management context. It is contrary to believe that high achievers are characterized by high risks.
- High performers solely focus on their roles once their goals have been set. They are unlikely to rest until they complete their tasks (Pardee, 1990).
- According to McClelland, high performers have a great desire for achievement. Therefore, they are known to accomplish tasks satisfactorily even if they are not in

any way attached to any material rewards. It is true that like other employees, high performers are motivated by money, but they find more pressure and satisfaction in accomplishing their goals than just the cash reward.

**Need for Power (N-Pow)**. Power refers to the ability of an individual to influence the behaviors of others. An organization is composed of people with different power needs. Those people with a lesser need for power concern themselves less with high positions, but people with a high need for power tend to seek high-level positions within the organization (Pardee, 1990). Such people seek bigger positions with the aim of exercising control and influence over others. People with high power needs are generally forceful, practical, demanding, outspoken, and like participating in discussions. It is important to note that the need for power can be of two types - institutional and personal. Personal power is characterized by the desire to direct others, something that is perceived as undesirable (Fong et al., 2015). On the other hand, people who have the desire for institutional power, also known as social power, are characterized by the need to organize other people's efforts with the aim of furthering the goals of the organization. People seeking institutional power tend to be effective performers than people seeking personal power (Pardee, 1990).

**Need for Affiliation (N-Affil)**. Directs people to seek harmony and peaceful interaction with others. People with a high need for affiliation value being accepted by others and tend to be in line with the norms of an organization and their work groups. Such people fear the pain of being rejected by others and obtain pleasure from being loved by fellow employees. Employees with a high need for affiliation like tasks that makes them interact with other employees and tend to perform better in certain positions such as customer service and situations involving employee-client interaction (Pardee, 1990).

According to McClelland (1961), an organization has a variety of people with different sorts of needs. Therefore, people are motivated differently. People with a high need for achievement tend to like challenging projects with attainable goals. To them, money is not an important motivator to perform as long as they have effective feedback on their performance. On the other hand, employees with a high need for power are motivated with the desire to manage others. Therefore, they should be given the opportunity to manage if they are to perform effectively (Fong et al., 2015). Lastly, employees with a high need for affiliation are likely to perform their best in a cooperative environment. Therefore, it is advisable for an organization to create an environment of pleasant social relationship and intimacy for people of this type to thrive (Pardee, 1990).

**Summary**

This chapter presented research findings on different leadership styles focusing on the extent that the participative leadership style could help improve the performance of government employees in the Saudi public sector. The purpose of this research study was to investigate the impact participative leadership could have on employee performance in the Saudi public sector. The chapter covered all the main components of the research questions in this study. The leadership theories and the description of participative leadership were outlined as essential variables. The connection between employee performance and motivation theories and the research question is evident because employee performance plays the role of a dependent variable, demonstrating the critical role of motivation in employee performance. In the light of the existing literature, there is a positive relationship between the participative leadership approach and organizational performance.

The research shows that participative leadership theory is most effective in enhancing employee performance in any organization or sector because of the empowerment accorded to workers. In accordance with McClelland's (1961) Needs Theory, the sense of empowerment the participative leadership approach provides workers fuels them with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to engage further in their respective roles within an organization. This study is vital for illustrating the positive effects participative leadership could have in the Saudi public sector towards realizing the reforms the government has been striving to make.

To illustrate the potential value of the participative leadership style, this chapter highlighted its characteristics and traits such as communication, cohesion, flexibility, responsibility, courage, humility, patience, forward-looking, broad-mindedness, honesty, competence, fair-mindedness, inspirational, intelligence, straightforwardness, innovativeness, effective interpersonal skills, collaborative, passionate, visionary, empathetic, and influential. In addition, the participative leadership style leads to several positive outcomes within an organization including enhanced creativity, workplace inclusivity, employee morale, and worker retention. Also highlighted are different theories on employee motivation, which enhance their performance such as equity, McClelland's Needs, and LME theories. The content provides a theoretical basis for investigating the impact of participative leadership on employee performance within the Saudi Arabian public sector by conveying the extent the characteristics and traits of participative leaders. The supportive qualities of the participative leadership style motivate employees to engage more in their tasks and dedicate themselves to achieve organizational goals using intrinsic and extrinsic motivation whenever their individual interests align with the organization's.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

This research used quantitative research method. The purpose of this research study was to explore the impact of participative leadership on employee performance in the Saudi public sector. Moreover, it aimed at exploring the significance of participative leadership for the improvement of employee performance. The research study employed questionnaires that were formulated with the intent of attaining the research objectives.

The study focused on the following four major research questions:

Research Question 1: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, do managers practice participative leadership style in meeting organizational goals?

Research Question 2: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, is there a significant relationship between a participative leadership style and the employee feeling of support?

Research Question 3: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, does the participative leadership style influence the performance of employees? How?

Research Question 4: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, what is the impact of the participative leadership style upon employee motivation?

Two underlying reasons for conducting the study include the current leadership challenges within the Saudi public sector such as low productivity, poor motivation, and inability to meet performance targets (Hatcher, 2005). Part of the reason such challenges continue to exist is the quality of leadership provided at the Saudi Arabia public sector. As such, determining the impact a participative leadership could have on the Saudi public sector is important for developing effective strategies for managing and eliminating some of the current leadership challenges. Moreover, determining the impact participative leadership could have on employee

motivation and performance is necessary for highlighting how this specific leadership approach could help ease the challenges outlined above. For instance, participative leadership is an effective approach to changes in management concerning situations where the change offers opportunities for employees to contribute to the direction of the organization. Doing so aligns organizational goals with an employee's career and life goals. Such alignment enhances employee motivation and performance.

The second underlying reason for the study was the existing high competition that the Saudi public sector is experiencing in terms of employee retention compared to the Saudi private sector. Indeed, despite its wealth and numerous employment opportunities, the inherent desire for recognition among modern-day workers has made private jobs more attractive to Saudi workers compared to jobs available in the Saudi public sector. As such, Saudi public sector stakeholders, particularly the government, have been forced to explore innovative ways of attracting workers to contribute to the nation as public workers. One such way is changing the leadership approaches within the sector. Therefore, this study contributed to the body of knowledge meant to inform the stakeholders in the public sector wishing to enhance organizational productivity.

**Research Design**

Research methodology can be described as a systematic method of problem solving. In other words, it refers to the science of examining how research is to be performed. In this research work, the methodology elaborates on procedures that the researcher used to describe, explain, and predict the phenomena of the study topic. Additionally, the research methodology section will discuss the methodology that will be utilized to respond to the research questions. It is important that a researcher should choose a research method depending on the study being

carried out. To choose the suitable research methodology, the researcher assessed the type of study, the subjects involved in the study, and the kind of data required against various assumptions. This research used quantitative research methods.

Research method refers to the various algorithms, schemes, and procedures used. In other words, it refers to all the methods that are applied by a researcher in a study. Research method plays a crucial role as they assist the researcher in gathering data, samples, and finding a solution to the problem being studied. These methods are scientific, planned and value-natural. Research method includes statistical approaches, numerical schemes, experimental studies, theoretical procedures among others. Other examples include case studies, action research, surveys, correlation research, experiments, single-case research, and quasi-experiments (Bell et al., 2018). However, this study used online surveys to gather data on the effects of the participative leadership on employee performance in the Saudi public sector.

By definition, the survey research design involves “the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions” (Check & Schutt, 2012, p.160). According to Creswell (2014), surveys have three distinguishing features that make them ideal for studies such as their capacity to quantitatively describe variables within a population, to collect subjective data based on the responses provided, and they require a small percentage of the population *N* to generalize findings for the entire population. As such, the online survey questionnaires used in this study to gather the data required to analyze the impact participative leadership has on the Saudi public sector, which depends on the extent the subjective data the participants provide is not biased to provide an accurate analysis (see Appendix A). Table 1 shows the research questions, the study’s sample, and how each question was evaluated.

**Table 1**

*Research Questions, Sample, and Description*

| Research Questions | Description | Sample |
|---|---|---|
| Research Question 1<br><br>According to employees in the Saudi public sector, do managers practice participative leadership style in meeting organizational goals? | Under this research question, (10) statements that collected the responses from the participants by using the 5-point Likert scale to find out if the managers in Saudi Arabia public sector practice participative leadership style. | The sample were employees who work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia. The employees were shosen from low, middle, and high levels of management who have at least one year or more experience, and above 18 years of age. The total number of participants were 110 employees. |
| Research Question 2<br><br>According to employees in the Saudi public sector, is there a significant relationship between a participative leadership style and the employee feeling of support? | Under this research question, (10) statements that collected the responses from the participants by using the 5-point Likert scale to evaluate the relationship between the participative leadership style and the employee feeling of support in Saudi Arabia public sector. | |
| Research Question 3<br><br>According to employees in the Saudi public sector, does the participative leadership style influence the performance of employees? How? | Under this research question, (10) statements helped the researcher to understand how the participative leadership style influences the performance of the employees in Saudi Arabia public sector. | |
| Research Question 4<br><br>According to employees in the Saudi public sector, what is the impact of the participative leadership style upon employee motivation? | Under this research question, (10) statements that collected the responses from the participants by using the 5-point Likert scale to know how the participative leadership style motivates the employees. | |

**Sources of Data**

The population of interest in this study were employees from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia. All participating employees have at least one year or more experience, and were above 18 years of age. The employees were from low, middle, and high levels of management. This population was selected because of the accessibility of the respondents who works for this ministry. The researcher contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia before the study, and they approved the study. The total number of the participants were 110 employees from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all of them worked for more than one year by the time the research study conducted. The questionnaires and surveys formulated were closed-ended and short to attract a high level of participation.

**Data Collection Strategies & Procedures**

This study on the influence of participative leadership on employee performance in the Saudi public sector utilized the survey guide for collecting primary data. The methods of data collection were questionnaires and surveys using the already established research questions as reference. The research questions formulated for this study explore the relationship between participative style of leadership and the employee performance in the Saudi public sector organizations. The researcher considered the following when he drafted the questionnaire items:

- The items are necessary and measured key variable in the research questions.
- The items are created with consideration that the questionnaire participants read items quickly and may at times skip the main words. Therefore, negative words such as NO or Not were highlighted, put in block letters, and bolded.

- The questions were worded in a way that is understandable to the people in the population being studied. Similarly, the researcher made items clear in understanding to avoid any confusion.
- The researcher avoided writing biased items that may lead to specific responses from participants.
- The researcher chose to make that the items options contain all possible responses.
- The response category was designed to obtain similar response from all participants.

The questionnaire started with an invitation and professional introduction that states the goals and purpose of the survey. It provided information about the researcher conducting the survey.

In terms of *why* and *who,* the online survey carried out with the aim of assessing the effects of participative leadership on employee performance in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Traditionally, autocratic leadership was utilized in the public sector. Government representatives making this enquiry see invaluable benefits of democratic leadership through employees' responses and enhanced motivation that improves worker and organizational performance. In terms of *when*, the researcher administered the survey questionnaires online from abroad. In terms of *how*, the questionnaires were web-based, where the participants received a link from SurveyMonkey into their respective WhatsApp numbers to participate in the study. The responses obtained through the researcher's SurveyMonkey account. The surveys are intended to efficiently help gather data from a set of respondents. The survey was made mainly of closed ended questions. The data collection period was one week. Real names of the participants were not used in the study. The contacts obtained from some friends who work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia, at the choice of the employees.

The survey used well designed questions prepared in simple, English words and have an Arabic version of the same produced because most employees do not have a good grasp of the English language. It enabled the content to be understood by everyone to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. The online survey used Likert-type scale with five alternative responses for each statement. It ranged from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) with a central option neutral neither disagree nor agree (3). Once completed, the researcher recevied their filled survey questionnaires back for analysis through the researcher's Surveymonkey account.

## Tools/Instruments Used

### *Online Survey*

Online surveys are a blend of questionnaire-style questions usually used to collect numerical survey data because they can be easily evaluated. A questionnaire can be defined as a research instrument that consists of a series of questions and other prompts purposely meant for collecting information from respondents (Harkness et al., 2010). A questionnaire is made up of questions that seek to respond to the questions associated with the study's objectives. In a questionnaire, there are both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions increase consistency while the open-ended questions are used to maximize the generation and collection of data. Questionnaires consist of three types, which include unstructured questionnaires, structured questionnaires, and semi-structured questionnaires (Thietart, 2001). Structured questionnaires make use of closed-ended questions in carrying out the analysis of statistical data because of the preparation of response frequencies. Semi-structured questionnaires make use of open-ended questions that are developed using a particular structure and sequence that allow the participants to give their responses in a specific manner while providing these responses using their own words (Oppenheim, 1992).

This research study employed structured questionnaires since they are entirely concerned with closed-ended questions that would enable participants to respond in the best way they felt comfortable. The technique that is used to collect data in this study was the quantitative method. It checked against the problem being studied to ensure that it is gathering data that is reliable, representative, and valid. Content validity of the questions used was ensured by creating questions that reflected the impact of the participative leadership style on employees' performance.

The first question focused on examining the leadership style that employees perceive their managers employ in order to meet organizational goals. The question, "According to employees in the Saudi public sector, do managers practice a participative leadership style in meeting organizational goals?" sought to determine the extent participants believe managers practice a participative leadership when pursuing organizational goals. To determine their perceptions of this fact, the research question presented ten statements that helped to measure their response using the Likert scale. For instance, Statement 4 "The manager empowers employees to make decisions" measures the number of times participants have witnessed participative leadership that supports workers' contribution to decisions made. On the other hand, Statement 5 "The manager allows employees to determine how to do their own assignments" aims to determine the extent participants felt like managers provided workers with space to perform their duties without unnecessary or any supervision.

The second question aimed to determine if the participants believed there was a correlation between a participative leadership style and the support workers felt they receive at work. Specifically, it tried to determine if they agreed or disagreed with the idea that participative leadership enhances workers' sense of workplace support. To help measure their

response, the research question also presented ten statements such as Statement 1 “My performance improves when my manager consults me on key organizational issues,” which aims to measure the degree to which the participants felt valued enough to be consulted in the decisions made. Similarly, Statement 7, “The leadership approach used by management has a direct impact on my productivity” aims to identify if the participants believe that the leadership used at their respective organizations affected their productivity.

On the other hand, the third question helped to understand how participative leadership style influenced the performance of the employees in Saudi Arabia public sector. The question was: According to employees in the Saudi Arabia public sector, does the participative leadership style influence the performance of employees? How? To help gather accurate and effective measures, the question presents ten statement for the participants to respond to using a more effective five score Likert scale measure. For instance, Statement 2 “The manager encourages creativity at the workplace” offers the participants the opportunity to determine if they felt they were allowed to be creative in the workplace which would motivate them to perform better while Statement 1 “the manager inspires collaboration and cooperation among employees” encourages them to determine if they felt the managers created a work environment that encourages collaboration and cooperation.

The fourth research question investigated the impact a participative leadership has on workers’ motivation more directly by presenting ten statements to determine the impact participative leadership has on employees’ motivation. For instance, Statement 2 is “The manager helps us find meaning in the work,” which offers a clear measure for them to express their belief in whether or not they find meaning in their work through the leadership provided. In the same way, Statement 10 “The manager believes in rewarding his/her employees” measures

the degree to which the participants believe that leaders offered their employees reasons to motivate them to perform their respective roles better. Financial rewards have traditionally been the official way of motivating workers (Sharma & Jain, 2013).

The last part of the research instrument was used for collecting general and personal information such as age of respondents, job status, and job experience so that general observations can be made with regards to any trends and factors that might affect job performance. In addition, information of leadership style and whether the efficacy of leadership style was a function of characteristics of employees such as age and job experience were gathered. As Sharma and Jain (2013) pointed out, “different people require different styles of leadership…for example, a new hire requires more supervision than an experienced employee does” (p. 310).

**Human Subjects Considerations**

In any given research, ethical consideration is important. Ethics refers to the standards and norms that distinguish between the wrong and right deeds. Research followed ethical norms and standards to avoid manipulation of data. Additionally, the primary goal of a research study was to promote the pursuit of truth and knowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2018). Since the study involved human subjects, it was expected to adhere to the IRB guidelines for the participant’s protection. First, a proposal was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review since without their approval it would not be possible to conduct research involving human subjects. In this study, the researcher acquired the participants’ consent and ensured that their participation was voluntary. The data collection procedure began immediately after the researcher received an approval letter from the university to go into the field (see Appendix B). The approval letter from the university helped the researcher access the permit for undertaking

the research. After IRB approval, informed consent was sought and obtained from all the participants (see Appendix C). The purpose of the study was disclosed to the participants and request voluntary participation. Any personal data collected was treated with confidentiality and no one will be allowed to access identifiable data. Finally, the identity of the survey participants were anonymous.

**Proposed Analysis**

With regards to the data used, the research primarily relied on the Likert scale scores provided in the respondents' answers for the online survey to convert the collected data into quantitative data for analysis. Generally, Likert scale refers to a psychometric scale that is commonly used in studies that apply questionnaires for data collection. This scale is effective for scaling the responses of the participants in survey research (Likert, 1932). The two common variations of this scale are the seven-level and the five-level scales rating. For this study, the researcher applied the five-level scale. In its application, the study used the Likert scale to rate the level of agreement and the frequency of use of the respondents to it (Boone & Boone, 2012). For instance, in determining if the managers engage in participative leadership, the study posed statement that identify the traits of this leadership style to which the respondents will response with the level of agreement ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. From this perspective, it is essential to note that the use of the Likert scale enabled the study to obtain measures of central tendency such as mean, median, and mode that relate to its variables.

Based on the obtained responses of the Likert scale, the study applied regression analysis using SPSS. It is essential to note that SPSS is a statistics software package that is useful for statistical analysis. For this study, the research used SPSS to conduct regression analysis on the collected data to estimate the relationship between the variables in the study (Bryman & Cramer,

2009). The independent variable for this study is the participative leadership while the dependent variables as employees' performance. Before applying regression analysis, the research used SPSS to obtain measures of central tendency in the collected data to show how the type of leadership employed in an organization, its impact on the employees' performance, and influence on employees' motivation. The researcher then used the obtained measures of central tendency for these variables to conduct a regression analysis to show the correlation between the participative leadership style and employees' performance as well as its impact on employees' motivation in public-sector entities in Saudi Arabia.

**Means to Ensure Study Validity**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the study adhered to the institutional requirements for confidentiality through anonymity of the participants in order to motivate non-bias responses in the collected subjective data. However, the validity of the questionnaire and survey instruments were assessed through pilot testing. A pilot test was undertaken prior to the actual data collection in order to ensure the validity of the instruments of data collection. A pilot test is an important tool in ensuring the quality of data collection instruments and that the questionnaire answers the research questions, thus meeting the objectives of the study. This involved assessing the extent the questions provide useful quantitative data based on the responses received and measures the researcher can draw from through application of the Likert scale. Also, to ensure internal validity, the questions that posted were able to explain the outcome of the research. The questions that were asked help the researcher to identify the relationship between the dependent and independent variable. On the other hand, the questions ensured reliability because they provided the same type of information when either managers or junior employees answer them. All the questions used the same wording and structure in order to

provide consistency. For instance, the responses of the question: working under a manager who believes in decentralization increases my productivity in the workplace? The scale of responses ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree as respondents selected the response that matches their level of agreement about this statement.

To further ensure the validity and reliability of the findings of this research, the researcher considered the sampling methods and application of methods consistently in the study. It is essential to note that through the use of appropriate sampling techniques for selecting the participants, the study was be able to produce valid and generalizable results applicable to the population. In this regard, the sampling methods ensured that the participants were an equal representation of the entire population. Regarding reliability, the study ensured that it applies the same steps for every participants. As such, since the study used online survey, it ensured reliability by providing the same questionnaires to the selected population.

Finally, the reliability of the instruments measured by the consistency of the answers provided by the participants. Statements such as “my performance level increases when I get involved in the decision-making process”, which require respondents to show whether they agree or disagree with the assertion, helped in identifying the type of leadership and management used in their departments. In addition, the relationship between the leadership style and employee performance were assessed. Furthermore, statements such as, “the leadership approach used by management has a direct impact on my productivity” assisted the researcher in explicating the impact of the leadership style on employees’ performance.

**Plan for Reporting Findings**

Chapters 4 and 5 will provide detailed accounts of the findings from the online survey through the results of a thematic analysis. Chapter 4 will present the data analysis and

presentation section of the proposal in which the relevant data shall be presented along with detailed accounts of the formulas applied to develop the measures of central tendency. Chapter 5 will provide an extensive discussion of the significance of these findings highlighted in Chapter 4 in relation to the research questions. This section will feature the extent of the findings to whether an answer is provided to the research questions, or not.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of participative leadership on employee performance in the Saudi Arabian public sector; specifically, how participative leadership patterns attribute to an employee's performance, motivation, and productivity. This was informed by the fact that Saudi Arabian public sector is currently experiencing leadership challenges, including the lack of effective leadership style, poor communication skills, poor motivation, and inability to meet performance targets (Hatcher, 2005). The Public sector in Saudi Arabia is also experiencing stiff competition from the private sector. Therefore, entities in the public sector must develop ways of improving leadership and productivity. To achieve the stated objective, the study employed questionnaires to collect data from a sample of 110 employees from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Saudi Arabia public sector. It drew the sample of low and middle-level management employees working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia. The survey questionnaire was distributed online to employees to collect data on the four research questions that focused on whether leaders use participative leadership style in meeting organizational goals, and impact of participative leadership on the employees' feeling of support, performance, and motivation. The online questionnaires were administered to the participants, who received a link from SurveyMonkey in their WhatsApp accounts with the invitation to take part in the research. Some friends who work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs helped the researcher to reach the targeted sample of the study. The survey was distributed by the researcher's friends who work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to their colleagues through their WhatsApp groups' accounts. The researcher received responses through his SurveyMonkey account. The timeframe for data collection was one week. The respondents' names were not revealed. Well-developed questions in simple English words were used in the survey, alongside

the Arabic version of the questionnaire because the majority of employees have low English skills.

Chapter 4 focused on the results for the research questions: The first research question was: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, do managers practice participative leadership in meeting organizational goals. The objective of this question was to examine whether or not leaders in the Saudi public sector practiced participative leadership style. The second research question was: According to employees in the Saudi Arabia public sector, is there a significant relationship between a participative leadership and the employee feeling of support. This aimed at determining whether the employees felt that the participative leadership contributed their feelings of support in the workplace. The third research question was: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, does the participative leadership style influence the performance of the employees? How? This question sought to determine the relationship between participative leadership behaviors and employees' effort or performance. The fourth research question was: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, what is the impact of the participative leadership style on employee motivation.

This section provide an overview of the results for all four research questions in order, and the descriptive statistics for demographic features of the participants. In particular, this chapter discusses the results of practicing participative leadership for research question one, employees feelings of support research question two, employee performance research question three, and employee motivation research question four. This chapter also provides a Spearman correlations for each research question. Finally, the last section of this chapter summarizes the overall findings of the study.

**Research Question 1: Practicing Participative Leadership**

Research Question 1 was: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, do managers practice participative leadership style in meeting organizational goals? Participants' response to items in Research Question 1 found highest agreements for manager considering the opinions and suggestions for employees, and allowing them to determine the best way to perform their assignment, and lowest agreement on items of managers empowering employees to make decisions and supporting decentralization. None of the demographic variables, age, job grade level, education, years of organization, and years worked overseas has significant correlation with items in Research Questions 1. Table 2 displays the ratings for the practicing participative leadership items sorted by highest agreement. These ratings were given using a five-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*. The highest levels of agreement were for "The manager considers the opinions and suggestions of employees before implementing organizational strategies" ($M$ = 2.90, $SD$ = 1.25) and "The manager allows employees to determine how to do their own assignments" ($M$ = 2.95, $SD$ = 1.22). The lowest levels of agreement were for "The manager empowers employees to make decisions" ($M$ = 3.39, $SD$ = 1.17) and "The manager believes in and supports decentralization" ($M$ = 3.37, $SD$ = 1.31).

Table 3 displays the Spearman correlations for the practicing participative leadership scale and ten items with age, job grade level, education, years with organization, and years worked overseas to support Research Question 1. None of the correlations for the demographic variables with the practicing participative leadership scale and items were significant.

**Table 2**

*Ratings of Practicing Participative Leadership Items Sorted by Highest Agreement (N = 110)*

| Item | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|
| The manager considers the opinions and suggestions of employees before implementing organizational strategies | 2.90 | 1.25 |
| The manager allows employees to determine how to do their own assignments | 2.95 | 1.22 |
| The manager treats me fairly and equally | 3.04 | 1.29 |
| The manager supports and motivates workers as they work in their respective job assignments | 3.05 | 1.34 |
| The manager believes in and implements teamwork | 3.07 | 1.29 |
| The manager encourages me to be creative for developing a more productive work environment | 3.08 | 1.40 |
| The manager is flexible which makes my performance is above the expectation | 3.10 | 1.35 |
| The manager creates reliable channels of communication for feedback following group discussions | 3.16 | 1.25 |
| The manager believes in and supports decentralization | 3.37 | 1.31 |
| The manager empowers employees to make decisions | 3.39 | 1.17 |

*Note*. Ratings based on a five-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*.

**Table 3**

*Correlations for Practicing Participative Leadership Scale and Items with Demographics (N = 110)*

| Variable | Age | Job Grade Level | Education | Years With Org. | Years Worked Overseas |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Practicing Participative Leadership Scale | .01 | .02 | .15 | .01 | .11 |
| The manager believes in and implements teamwork | .00 | -.02 | .13 | -.02 | .02 |
| The manager considers the opinions and suggestions of employees before implementing organizational strategies | -.03 | -.06 | .09 | -.02 | .15 |
| The manager believes in and supports decentralization | .00 | .09 | .10 | .03 | .12 |
| The manager empowers employees to make decisions | .09 | .07 | .12 | .04 | .04 |
| The manager allows employees to determine how to do their own assignments | .03 | .03 | .14 | .03 | .13 |
| The manager creates reliable channels of communication for feedback following group discussions | .09 | .02 | .11 | .05 | .13 |
| The manager is flexible which makes my performance is above the expectation | -.02 | .04 | .17 | -.06 | -.05 |
| The manager encourages me to be creative for developing a more productive work environment | .05 | .07 | .18 | .00 | .03 |
| The manager supports and motivates workers as they work in their respective job assignments | .03 | .03 | .18 | -.02 | .16 |
| The manager treats me fairly and equally | -.10 | -.07 | .07 | -.01 | .09 |

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$.

**Research Question 2: Employee Feelings of Support**

Research Question 2 was: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, is there a significant relationship between a participative leadership style and the employee feeling of

support? In Research Question 2, the study found highest agreement on the items of manager recognizing employees' contribution and empowerment, and lowest agreement on items on performance improving when managers consults employees and managers who support decentralization. None of the demographic variables, age, job grade level, education, years of organization, and years worked overseas has significant correlation with items in Research Questions 2. Table 4 displays the ratings for the employee feeling of support items sorted by highest agreement. These ratings were given using a five-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*. The highest levels of agreement were for "Recognizing my contribution makes me more responsive and effective" ($M$ = 1.32, $SD$ = 0.65) and "Working under a manager who empowers employees and allows them to show their full potential increases my productivity" ($M$ = 1.33, $SD$ = 0.62). The lowest levels of agreement were for "My performance improves when my manager consults me on key organizational issues" ($M$ = 1.72, $SD$ = 0.94) and "Working under a manager who believes in decentralization increases my productivity in the workplace" ($M$ = 1.55, $SD$ = 0.93).

Table 5 displays the Spearman correlations for the employee feeling of support scale and the ten individual items with age, job grade level, education, years with organization, and years worked overseas to support Research Question 2. None of the correlations for age, job grade level, education, or years worked overseas with the employee feeling of support scale and items were significant. Employees with more years in the organization had less agreement with the statement for "My performance level increases when I get involved in the decision-making process" ($r_s$ = .21, $p$ = .03).

**Table 4**

*Ratings of Employee Feeling of Support Items Sorted by Highest Agreement (N = 110)*

| Item | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|
| Recognizing my contribution makes me more responsive and effective | 1.32 | 0.65 |
| Working under a manager who empowers employees and allows them to show their full potential increases my productivity | 1.33 | 0.62 |
| Working under a manager who puts trust in employees in operational and decision making processes increases my productivity | 1.35 | 0.67 |
| Working under a manager who gives support and frequent communication increases my productivity | 1.37 | 0.63 |
| When management consults me before making a decision, I will put extra effort to ensure achievement of results | 1.42 | 0.77 |
| My performance level increases when I get involved in the decision-making process | 1.43 | 0.76 |
| Working under a manager who believes in team working increases my productivity | 1.45 | 0.75 |
| The leadership approach used by management has a direct impact on my productivity | 1.49 | 0.83 |
| Working under a manager who believes in decentralization increases my productivity in the workplace | 1.55 | 0.93 |
| My performance improves when my manager consults me on key organizational issues | 1.72 | 0.94 |

*Note*. Ratings based on a five-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*.

**Table 5**

*Correlations for Employee Feeling of Support Scale and Items with Demographics (N = 110)*

| Variable | Age Level | Job Grade | Education | Years with Org. | | Years Worked Overseas |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employee Feeling of Support Scale | .09 | .01 | -.07 | .14 | | .04 |
| My performance improves when my manager consults me on key organizational issues | .13 | .02 | -.09 | .15 | | .11 |
| My performance level increases when involved in the decision-making process | .15 | .12 | -.01 | .21 | * | .07 |
| Working under a manager who believes in decentralization increases my productivity in the workplace | .01 | .04 | -.05 | .09 | | .02 |
| Working under a manager who believes in team working increases my productivity | .14 | .04 | .01 | .17 | | .09 |
| Recognizing my contribution makes me more responsive and effective | .05 | .07 | -.08 | .14 | | -.03 |
| When management consults me before making a decision, I will put extra effort to ensure achievement of results | .14 | .10 | .05 | .14 | | .03 |
| The leadership approach used by management has a direct impact on my productivity | .09 | -.05 | -.13 | .14 | | .08 |
| Working under a manager who puts trust in employees in operational and decision making processes increases my productivity | .10 | .05 | -.10 | .15 | | .03 |
| Working under a manager who empowers employees and allows them to show their full potential increases my productivity | .04 | .01 | -.05 | .09 | | -.10 |
| Working under a manager who gives support and frequent communication increases my productivity | .04 | .05 | .01 | .14 | | .04 |

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$.

**Research Question 3: Employee Performance**

Research Question 3 was: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, does the participative leadership style influence the performance of the employees? In Research Question 3, the results showed highest agreement on items on manager helping employees with complex problems and inspiring collaboration among the workers, and lowest agreement on the managers' help to the struggling workers and helping employees understand the organization's vision and objectives. None of the demographic variables had significant relationship with the items for the performance of the employees. Table 6 displays the ratings for the employee performance items sorted by highest agreement. These ratings were given using a five-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*. The highest levels of agreement were for "The manager helps solve complex problems at work" ($M$ = 2.24, $SD$ = 1.14) and "The manager inspires collaboration and cooperation among the employees" ($M$ = 2.32, $SD$ = 1.23). The lowest levels of agreement were for "The management of the organization where I work help struggling employees meet their target" ($M$ = 2.89, $SD$ = 1.21) and "The manager ensures that everyone understands the vision and objectives of the organization" ($M$ = 2.81, $SD$ = 1.27).

Table 7 displays the Spearman correlations for the performance of the employees' scale and the 10 individual items with age, job grade level, education, years with organization, and years worked overseas to support Research Question 3. None of the correlations for age, job grade level, or years with organization with the performance of the employee scale and items were significant. Those with more education agreed less with (a) "My manager believes in training as an important aspect of improving performance" ($r_s$ = .25, $p$ = .008) and (b) "The manager ensures that everyone understands the vision and objectives of the organization" ($r_s$ =

.20, $p$ = .04). Those employees that worked more years overseas agreed less with (a) "The management of the organization where I work helps struggling employees meet their target." ($r_s$= .22, $p$ = .02) and (b) "The manager emphasizes on competence as an important part of performance." ($r_s$ = .19, $p$ = .05).

**Table 6**

*Ratings of Employee Performance Items Sorted by Highest Agreement (N = 110)*

| Item | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|
| The manager helps solve complex problems at work. | 2.24 | 1.14 |
| The manager inspires collaboration and cooperation among the employees. | 2.32 | 1.23 |
| The manager works together with the employees to come up with workable targets and goals. | 2.38 | 1.23 |
| The manager encourages creativity at the workplace. | 2.42 | 1.30 |
| The manager emphasizes on competence as an important part of performance. | 2.49 | 1.29 |
| The manager ensures role clarity among employees at work | 2.51 | 1.29 |
| The manager gives employees the authority to make operational decisions which leads to improved performance. | 2.53 | 1.24 |
| My manager believes in training as an important aspect of improving performance. | 2.69 | 1.26 |
| The manager ensures that everyone understands the vision and objectives of the organization | 2.81 | 1.27 |
| The management of the organization where I work helps struggling employees meet their target. | 2.89 | 1.21 |

*Note*. Ratings based on a five-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*.

**Table 7**

*Correlations for Performance of the Employees Scale and Items with Demographics (N = 110)*

| Variable | Age | Job Grade Level | Education | Years With Org. | Years Worked Overseas |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Performance of the Employees Scale | .06 | .05 | .14 | .06 | .12 |
| The manager inspires collaboration and cooperation among the employees. | -.10 | -.07 | .02 | -.08 | -.02 |
| The manager encourages creativity at the workplace. | .08 | .03 | .09 | .09 | .07 |
| The manager works together with the employees to come up with workable targets and goals. | .06 | -.01 | .06 | .05 | .01 |
| The manager helps solve complex problems at work. | .04 | -.04 | .05 | .06 | .03 |
| The manager gives employees the authority to make operational decisions which leads to improved performance. | .01 | .03 | .09 | .07 | .02 |
| The manager ensures role clarity among employees at work | .00 | -.01 | .07 | -.01 | .03 |
| The management of the organization where I work helps struggling employees meet their target. | .15 | .17 | .18 | .11 | .22 * |
| My manager believes in training as an important aspect of improving performance. | .05 | .14 | .25 ** | .11 | .17 |
| The manager emphasizes on competence as an important part of performance. | .04 | .14 | .17 | .09 | .19 * |
| The manager ensures that everyone understands the vision and objectives of the organization | .05 | .12 | .20 * | .05 | .17 |

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$.

**Research Question 4: Employee Motivation**

Research Question 4 was: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, what is the impact of the participative leadership style upon employee motivation? In Research Question 4, the study results showed that highest agreement on management considering creative ideas by employees and helping employees find meaning in their work. However, there is lowest support for items on delegation of authority and reception of employees' input. The results also showed no significant correlation between demographical variables and individual items for the employee motivation. Table 8 displays the ratings for the employee motivation items sorted by highest agreement. These ratings were given using a five-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*. The highest levels of agreement were for "The wellness of the employees is a primary goal of the management" ($M$ = 2.54, $SD$ = 1.32), "Creative ideas are considered by the management when raised by the employees" ($M$ = 2.74, $SD$ = 1.34), and "The manager helps us find meaning in the work" ($M$ = 2.74, $SD$ = 1.29). The lowest levels of agreement were for "Authority in the organization is delegated to the point that all employees act on their own" ($M$ = 3.06, $SD$ = 1.28) and "The management of the organization where I work is open and receptive to employees' input" ($M$ = 3.01, $SD$ = 1.31).

Table 9 displays the Spearman correlations for the employee motivation scale and the 10 individual items with age, job grade level, education, years with organization, and years worked overseas to support Research Question 4. None of the correlations for age or years with organization with the employee motivation scale and items were significant. Those in a higher-grade level agreed less with "Authority in the organization is delegated to the point that all employees act on their own" ($r_s$ = .22, $p$ = .02). Those with more education agreed less with (a) the employee motivation scale ($r_s$ = .21, $p$ = .03); (b) "The manager helps us find meaning in the

work" ($r_s$ = .20, $p$ = .04); (c) "Authority in the organization is delegated to the point that all employees act on their own" ($r_s$ = .19, $p$ = .05); (d) "The management of the organization where I work makes me loyal and happy" ($r_s$ = .25, $p$ = .009); (e) "The wellness of the employees is a primary goal of the management" ($r_s$ = .23, $p$ = .01), and (f) "The manager believes in rewarding his/her employees" ($r_s$ = .24, $p$ = .01). In addition, employees with more years of work experience overseas agreed less with (a) "The management of the organization where I work makes me loyal and happy" ($r_s$ = .19, $p$ = .04) and (b) "The wellness of the employees is a primary goal of the management" ($r_s$ = .21, $p$ = .03).

**Table 8**

*Ratings of Employee Motivation Items Sorted by Highest Agreement (N = 110)*

| Item | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|
| The wellness of the employees is a primary goal of the management | 2.54 | 1.32 |
| Creative ideas are considered by the management when raised by the employees | 2.74 | 1.34 |
| The manager helps us find meaning in the work | 2.74 | 1.29 |
| The manager makes employees feel good about their work | 2.77 | 1.30 |
| The management of the organization where I work makes me loyal and happy | 2.83 | 1.37 |
| The manager gives attention to all employees | 2.88 | 1.36 |
| The manager believes in rewarding his/her employees | 2.92 | 1.40 |
| The manager demonstrates a high level of trust and confidence in the employees to work on their own to meet the organizational performance standards | 2.99 | 1.28 |
| The management of the organization where I work is open and receptive to employees' input | 3.01 | 1.31 |
| Authority in the organization is delegated to the point that all employees act on their own | 3.06 | 1.28 |

*Note*. Ratings based on a five-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*.

**Table 9**

*Correlations for Employee Motivation Scale and Items with Demographics (N = 110)*

| Variable | Age | Job Grade Level | Education | Years With Org. | Years Worked Overseas |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employee Motivation Scale | .13 | .14 | .21 * | .11 | .13 |
| The manager gives attention to all employees | .10 | .05 | .15 | .08 | .14 |
| The manager helps us find meaning in the work | .09 | .10 | .20 * | .07 | .05 |
| Creative ideas are considered by the management when raised by the employees | .09 | .05 | .13 | .04 | .12 |
| The manager makes employees feel good about their work | .17 | .12 | .10 | .07 | .08 |
| Authority in the organization is delegated to the point that all employees act on their own | .10 | .22 * | .19 * | .09 | .01 |
| The manager demonstrates a high level of trust and confidence in the employees to work on their own to meet the organizational performance standards | .17 | .11 | .12 | .12 | .07 |
| The management of the organization where I work is open and receptive to employees' input | .04 | .10 | .18 | .03 | .09 |
| The management of the organization where I work makes me loyal and happy | .13 | .13 | .25 ** | .13 | .19 * |
| The wellness of the employees is a primary goal of the management | .18 | .16 | .23 ** | .18 | .21 * |
| The manager believes in rewarding his/her employees | .01 | .17 | .24 ** | .09 | .16 |

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Table 10 displays the frequency counts for selected variables. In the study, ages ranged from 27 to 40 years (36.4%), 41 to 50 years (50.0 %), to 51 to 60 years (13.6%) with a mean age of $M$ = 41.85 years ($SD$ = 7.26). Most participants were aged 41to 50 years (50.0%). About half of the employees were individual contributors (51.8%) and the rest were management (48.2%). Most had either a bachelor's degree (45.5%) or a master's degree (40.9%). Years with their organization ranged from 2 to 10 years (26.4%) to 21to 40 years (22.7%) with a mean of $M$ = 15.93 years ($SD$ = 8.55). Years worked overseas ranged from zero to 5 years (27.3%) to 21to 31 years (4.5%) with a mean of $M$ = 8.85 years ($SD$ = 5.80).

Table 11 displays the psychometric characteristics for the four summated scale scores: practicing participative leadership, employee feeling of support, performance of the employees, and employee motivation. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients were all above $\alpha$ = .90. This suggested that all scales had acceptable levels of internal reliability. That is, since the Alpha value of Cronbach is more than 0.70, it shows that survey questionnaire had a strong or above average internal reliability (Islam et al., 2018). That is, the survey questionnaire used for the research is reliable.

Table 12 displays the Spearman inter-correlations among the four summated scale scores: practicing participative leadership, employee feeling of support, performance of the employees, and employee motivation. Three of the six correlations were significant. Specifically, higher scores for practicing participative leadership were correlated with higher scores for performance of the employees ($r_s$ = .66, $p$< .001) and higher scores for employee motivation ($r_s$ = .67, $p$< .001). In addition, higher scores for performance of the employees was correlated with higher scores for employee motivation ($r_s$ = .86, $p$< .001).

**Table 10**

*Frequency Counts for Selected Variables (N = 110)*

| Variable | Category | *n* | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age [a] | | | |
| | 27 – 40 | 40 | 36.4 |
| | 41 – 50 | 55 | 50.0 |
| | 51 – 60 | 15 | 13.6 |
| Grade Level | | | |
| | Individual Contributor | 57 | 51.8 |
| | Management | 53 | 48.2 |
| Education | | | |
| | High school | 11 | 10.0 |
| | Bachelors | 50 | 45.5 |
| | Masters | 45 | 40.9 |
| | Doctorate | 4 | 3.6 |
| Years with Organization [b] | | | |
| | 2 – 10 | 29 | 26.4 |
| | 11 – 15 | 40 | 36.3 |
| | 16 – 20 | 16 | 14.6 |
| | 21 – 40 | 25 | 22.7 |
| Years Worked Overseas [c] | | | |
| | 0 – 5 | 30 | 27.3 |
| | 6 – 8 | 28 | 25.4 |
| | 9 – 13 | 29 | 26.4 |
| | 14 – 20 | 18 | 16.4 |
| | 21 – 31 | 5 | 4.5 |

[a] Age, *M* = 41.85 years, *SD* = 7.26
[b] Years with Organization: *M* = 15.93 years, *SD* = 8.55
[c] Years Worked Overseas: *M* = 8.85 years, *SD* = 5.80

**Table 11**

*Psychometric Characteristics for Summated Scale Scores (N = 110)*

| Score | Number of Items | *M* | *SD* | Low | High | *α* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Practicing participative leadership | 10 | 3.11 | 1.05 | 1.00 | 5.00 | .95 |
| Employee Feeling of Support | 10 | 1.44 | 0.61 | 1.00 | 5.00 | .93 |
| Performance of the Employees | 10 | 2.53 | 1.05 | 1.00 | 5.00 | .95 |
| Employee Motivation | 10 | 2.85 | 1.13 | 1.00 | 5.00 | .96 |

*Note*. Ratings based on a five-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*.

**Table 12**

*Spearman Inter-Correlations Among the Summated Scale Scores (N = 110)*

| Score | 1 | | 2 | 3 | | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Practicing participative leadership | 1.00 | | | | | |
| 2. Employee Feeling of Support | -.05 | | 1.00 | | | |
| 3. Performance of the Employees | .66 | **** | .07 | 1.00 | | |
| 4. Employee Motivation | .67 | **** | -.04 | .86 | **** | 1.00 |

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$.

**Summary**

In summary, this study used data from 110 Saudi public sector employees to investigate the impact of participative leadership on employee performance in the Saudi Arabian public sector; specifically, how participative leadership patterns attribute to an employee's motivation, satisfaction, performance, and productivity. The total number of participants was 110 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the results showed that 50% of the participants were aged 41to 50 years with mean age of 41.85 years. The results also showed that 51.8% of the participants were employees and 42.2 % managers, 45.5% had a bachelor's degree and 40.9% had master's degree. The study also found differences in the years that employees have worked in their organizations and overseas. The Cronbach Alpha reliability indicated that the summated scale scores had acceptable levels of internal reliability. A total of 110 Saudi public sector employees from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were surveyed for this study to answer the four research questions. The key findings from this study were positive impact of participative leadership and employees feeling of support, motivation, and performance. This study also shows some elements of other leadership styles in Suadi Arabia public sector because of some participants disagreed with items used to determine the presence of participative leadership style. For example, the study found lowest levels of participants' agreement on managers empowering employees in making decisions and supporting decentralization in their effort to achieve organizational goals. Similarly, the findings indicate that participants agreed and disagreed with some elements of participative leadership such as delegation of duties and giving employees opportunity to share their ideas and opinions in the decision-making.

The findings in Research Question 1 showed that Saudi public sector managers engage in the participative leaderships traits like delegation. Participants also noted that managers

empower employees to determine the best way to perform their assignment. This suggests that managers in Saudi Arabia use traits of participative leadership approach in their interaction with employees. However, the findings also show that some participants felt that their managers portrayed traits inconsistent with the participative leadership style. This indicates that other leadership styles are still popular in the Saudi public sector, especially the autocratic, bureaucratic, and transformative leadership styles. The findings do not show any significant correlation between these demographic variables such as age, grade level, education, and years worked overseas and items of practicing participative leadership.

Second, the findings in Research Question 2 showed that most of the participants felt the participative leadership style plays role in the employees feeling of support. However, the findings indicate that the employees with more years with organization agreed less with the statement their performance level increased when involved in the decision-making process. Perhaps those with more years with organization know that even if they give their contribution, the final decision rests with the leader.

Third, the findings of response to Research Question 3 indicated that some participants felt that participative leadership style influences the performance of employees through traits such as collaboration, opportunity to participate in the decisions, and responsibility. Lastly, responses to items for Research Question 4 reveal that some participants see participative leadership to influence the employees' motivation. The findings showed that employees' motivation improves when leader is supportive and listen to them or their opinions in the decision-making process.

The consultative behavior, delegation, and listening to employees' opinion by the leaders in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi motivates employees who respond by putting effort in

their work thereby improving their productivity and job performance. The result also finds significant correlation between the job grade level, education and years worked overseas and the participants feeling that managers do not engage in participative leadership. The results showed participants in a higher-grade level agreed less with "Authority in the organization is delegated to the point that all employees act on their own" ($r_s$ = .22, $p$ = .02), so those with highest-grade level felt that there was no delegation in their workplace. Those with more education agreed less with the employee motivation scale ($r_s$ = .21, $p$ = .03). Overall, the findings showed that participants with more education did not agree with motivation scale, meaning in their work, delegation of authority, feeling loyal and happy in the workplace, and management emphasis on the employees' wellness, and rewarding of employees by managers.

Chapter 5 gives the analysis, discusses, and compares these findings to the literature on participative leadership style; it gives conclusions on leadership and motivation theories; draws conclusions, and gives implications and recommendations for future research on the same topic to enhance generalizability of the findings to the Saudi public sector organizations. Also, Chapter 5 suggests a series of recommendations to improve leadership and performance of Saudi public sector. Moreover, Chapter 5 offers policy and practitioner recommendations based on the findings of this study. The recommendations based on the findings of this study will focus on how the government can transform the public sector to improve the employees and organization performance.

# Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

In this chapter, comparison is made between the results of the study and the literature, conclusions are drawn and appropriate recommendations are made. In particular, the chapter focuses on demonstrating how the study findings answer all the four research questions. As such, the results are interpreted in the light of the research objectives and the importance of the findings to the Saudi public sector and policy makers are discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the areas of future research, practitioner recommendations, and policy recommendations. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the study.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of participative leadership on employee performance in the Saudi Arabian public sector. This was informed by the fact that Saudi Arabian public sector is currently experiencing leadership challenges, including the lack of effective leadership style, poor communication skills, poor motivation, and inability to meet performance targets (Hatcher, 2005). The Public sector in Saudi Arabia is also experiencing stiff competition from the private sector. Therefore, entities in the public sector must develop ways of improving leadership and productivity. As the objective of the study was to educate organizational leaders on the significance of their leadership and its effect on the employee performance, it examined the way participative leadership patterns attribute to employee's performance, motivation, and productivity based on the Saudi public sector.

## Research Question 1: Practicing Participative Leadership

Research Question 1 was "According to employees in the Saudi public sector, do managers practice participative leadership style in meeting organizational goals?" this research question sought to determine whether the managers in Saudi Arabia public sector use participative leadership style to influence employees in attaining the organizational goals.

According to Table 2, participants felt that managers considered their opinions and suggestions before implementing the organizational strategies. Participants also noted that managers empower employees to determine the best way to perform their assignment. This shows that managers in Saudi Arabia use some traits of participative leadership approach in their interaction with employees. According to the literature consulted in this study, participative leadership is the managers' ability to establish a supportive and empowering work environment whereby all people have responsibility in sharing opinions and suggestions (Northouse, 2018; Vroom, 2019). But since the results also show participants agreed less that their managers use participative leadership traits such as empowering employees to make decisions ($M$ = 3.39, $SD$ =1.17) and supporting decentralization ($M$ = 3.37, $SD$ = 1.31), there seems to be other leaderships styles in the Saudi Arabia public sector. This agrees with the literature in the present study that shows that most public-sector organizations in the Saudi Arabia do not use participative leadership that involves delegation of authority to employees, but rather leadership styles such as bureaucratic and transformational leadership characterize these organizations (Iqbal et al., 2015). The demographic variables of the participants, including age, job, job grade level, education, years with organization, and years worked were not significant, and it did not have significant corrections with their responses to items in this question (see Table 3).

The finding that leaders considered the opinions and suggestions, creative ideas of employees, and gave them freedom to determine how to perform their assignment is in agreement with studies in literature that participative leadership style is accommodative, inclusive, and empowering (Dalluay & Jalagat, 2016; Gipson et al., 2017). In the study, Dalluay and Jalagat (2016) found that participative leaders set organizational goals and objectives together with other employees and cooperate with managers of departments/units to achieve

organizational goals. Using a sample of 150 participants drawn from cooperative firms in Philippines, Dalluay and Jalagat found that employees said to be satisfied with participation in setting organizational goals and objectives. Consistent with present study, Dalluay and Jalagat (2016) found that participative leadership style contributes to the achievement of organizational goals when manager accepts opinions and suggestion from the employees. Similarly, Iqbal et al. (2015) found that participative leadership style improves productivity among employees because participative leaders leave decision-making to employees, which creates a feeling of empowerment. In the study conducted among managers and workers of Al-Ghazi Tractor firm in 2000-2011, Iqbal et al. (2015) found that the feeling of empowerment among employees results in their commitment to their assigned tasks and organizational or departmental goals (Iqbal et al., 2015). This agrees with the results on the present study of manager considering the opinions and suggesting of employees before implementing organizational strategies ($M$= 2.90, $SD$ = 1.25; see Table 2).

There was also direct correlation between giving employees a voice (opinions and suggestions) and organizational effectiveness. The present study supports this correlation between employee voice and achievement of organizational goals as evident from the highest levels of agreement on the items “The manager considers the opinions and suggestions of employees before implementing organizational strategies. The manager allows employees to determine how to do their own assignments.” The results indicate both direct impact of participative leadership and employee voice to the organizational effectiveness. Similarly, the findings of other studies indicate that participative leadership approach encourages employees to share their ideas, opinions, and suggestions, which contributes to the organizational effectiveness (Dalluay & Jalagat, 2016).

But the findings of the present study whereby some of the participants agreed that leaders engage in participative leadership behaviors in attaining organizational goals is inconsistent with the findings of previous studies showing leaders in Saudi public sector ignore behaviors of participative leadership style (Almudarra, 2017; Baddar et al., 2016). In the study with public hospitals nurse managers in Saudi Arabia, Baddar et al. (2016) found that a majority of managers did not delegate to the younger employees. The lack of delegation indicates that the leaders in the Saudi public hospitals did not use participative leadership approach. This contrast with the findings of the present study were there was highest level of agreement on the item "The manager allows employees to determine how to do their own assignments" ($M$ = 2.95, $SD$ = 1.22). Similarly, Almudarra (2017) has found that leaders in Saudi education sector use behaviors inconsistent with the participative leadership style. In a systematic review study, Almudarra (2017) found that supervisors in the Saudi public education sector use authoritative and controlling leadership that are incompatible with findings of the present study where managers give employees freedom to choose how to perform their assignments (see Table 2).

**Research Question 2: Employees' Feeling of Support**

Research Question 2 was "According to employees in the Saudi public sector, is there a significant relationship between a participative leadership style and the employee feeling of support?". The purpose of this research question was to evaluate employees' perspectives related to participative leadership approach in making them experience feelings of support and provide insights on the way public organizations in Saudi Arabia can use this style of leadership to improve employees' feelings of support and empowerment. Results of responses to items in Research Question 2 revealed a majority of the participants felt that participative leadership style contributes to the employees' feeling of support. According to Table 4, there was highest level of

agreement among the participants on some items on employees' feeling of support. These items are "Recognizing my contribution makes me more responsive and effective ($M$ = 1.32, $SD$ = 0.65), and 'Working under a manager who empowers employees and allows them to show their full potential increases my productivity ($M$ = 1.33, $SD$ = .65)." These responses in Table 4 reveal that behaviors associated with participative leadership approach makes employees feel supported, a feeling that results in improve productivity and performance. The Spearman correlations for the employees feeling of support scale and the ten individual items with age, job grade level, education, years with organization, and years worked overseas found no significant correlations between the items and employees feeling of support (see Table 5).

This finding on the item that managers empower employees is consistent to Dolly and Nonyelum (2018) that behaviors of participative leaders enhance job performance of subordinates. In their descriptive study investigating the effect of democratic leadership approach on the performance of 74 employees working in academic libraries in Nigeria, Dolly and Nonyelum (2018) found that democratic leadership has positive impact on employees' productivity, eliminates the need for rules, develop skilled employees willing to give their best and seek responsibility. They found that the results in high job performance by the subordinates because they feel involved and work with enthusiasm (Dolly & Nonyelum, 2019). This is consistent with the results of the present study as participants agreed that working under a manager who supports them, engages in frequent communication, and put trusts in the employees' decision-making increases their productivity ($M$ = 1.37, $SD$ = 0.63; $M$ = 1.35, $SD$ = 0.67). Eva et al. (2019) support the effect of trust established by the participative leaders on the employees' job performance.

Further, the findings about the highest levels of agreement by the participants on the item "Recognizing my contribution makes me responsive and effective ($M$ = 1.32, $SD$ = 0.65) is consistent with previous study on relationship between participative leadership and affective trust that develops in employees (Eva et al., 2019). Eva et al. (2019) investigated the impact of the participative leadership on the performance of top management teams of new ventures in Shanghai, China has found positive relation between participative leadership and affective and cognitive trust, and intra-group trust ($p < 0.01$). This indicates that employees respond with improved performance from the strong emotional relationship they establish with participative leader.

The findings that employees with more years in the organization agreed less with the item "My performance level increases when I get involved in the decision process ($r_2$ =.21, $p$ = .03; see Table 5) disagrees with the existing literature that shows positive relationship between engaging employees in decision making and their performance (Bhatti et al., 2019; Dike & Madubueze, 2019). Dike and Madubueze (2019) found that under the democratic leadership approach, management accomplishes planning by involving employees, which bring out trust in employees who respond with improved performance or productivity (Dike & Madubueze, 2019). The results of the present study, especially the denial of the employees with more years in the organization that their level of performance increases when involved in the decision-making disagrees with the existing literature. The statement is incompatible with Bhatti et al. (2019) findings that participative leaders encourage affective trust in employees by involving them in the decision-making process, which makes them to put effort in their performance. Nonetheless, the findings that employees with more years feeling that their performance does not increases with their involvement in the decision-making is supported by the literature on the disadvantages

or cons of the participative leadership, especially the difficulty in reaching a decision. Those with more years with organization understand that even if they give their contribution, the final decision rests with the leader.

**Research Question 3: The Performance of Employees**

Research Question 3 was "According to employees in the Saudi public sector, does the participative leadership style influence the performance of the employees?". The objective of this research question was to determine the way participative leadership affects or influence employees' performance in the Saudi Arabia public sector. It was anticipated the participants would offers opinions on the potential of participative leadership in influence the performance or productivity of employees in the Saudi public sector. The overall perception among the participants is that participative leadership can improve the productivity of employees in the Saudi public sector. Participants' responses to items in Research Question 3 showed that some of the participants felt that participative leadership style has positive relation even though not significant relation with job performance of employees. Table 6 shows the participants rated some items on employees' performance favorably. In particular, the highest agreement by participants that managers help them in solving complex problems at work

($M$ = 2.24, $SD$= 1.14) and inspires collaboration and cooperation among the employees ($M$= 2.32, $SD$ = 1.23) indicates the positive impact of this type of leadership style on the employees' job performance. Nonetheless, the Spearman correlations result indicate no significant correlation for age, years of service, and job grade level with the performance of employees' scale on basis of items of questionnaires. Those with more education agreed less with (a) "My manager believes in training as an important aspect of improving performance" ($r_s$ = .25, $p$ = .008) and (b) "The manager ensures that everyone understands the vision and

objectives of the organization" ($r_s$ = .20, $p$ = .04). Those employees that worked more years overseas agreed less with (a) "The management of the organization where I work helps struggling employees meet their target." ($r_s$= .22, $p$ = .02) and (b) "The manager emphasizes on competence as an important part of performance." ($r_s$ = .19, $p$ = .05) (see Table 7).

The highest agreement by participants that managers help them in solving complex problems at work ($M$ = 2.24, $SD$ = 1.14) and inspires collaboration and cooperation among the employees ($M$= 2.32, $SD$ = 1.23) is consistent with Dalluay and Jalagat (2016) and Islam et al. (2018) who found positive correlation between participative leadership style and employees' job performance. Basit et al. (2017) study of the employees from a private company in Malaysia had found similar results about the participative leadership and employees' job performance. Through descriptive analysis, Basit et al. (2017) ranked the three styles of leadership, autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire based on the mean and standard deviation to determine which style had the highest effect on the employee performance (dependent variable). They found the democratic leadership approach to have the highest mean and standard deviation value, which indicated that the participative approach had highest impact on the employees' job performance. Basit et al. (2017) concluded that under the democratic approach, the employees enjoy greater responsibility without supervision and management helps them completes tasks, which enhances their job performance. This aligns with the findings of the present study whereby the employees at the Saudi public sector feel that the management inspires collaboration and cooperation among them ($M$ = 2.32, $SD$ = 1.23).

The results of the present study are supported several other recent studies using regression analysis have found positive relationship between participative leadership and employee job performance (Akparep et al., 2019; Lor & Hassan, 2015; Lumbasi et al., 2016;

Maaitah, 2018; Oladeji & Ayinde, 2018; Veliu et al., 2017). In the study examining the impact of various leadership styles on the performance of employees, Veliu et al. (2017) found that transactional, charismatic, and bureaucratic leadership styles had negative impact on the employees' job performance, and positive impact of the transformational and democratic leadership styles. As such, Veliu et al. (2017) support the findings of this study where participants feel that managers inspire cooperation and collaboration. As the results of the present study shows, past studies attribute the improved performance to the participative leadership that involves encouraging innovation and creativity among employees. For example, a study of managers of 13 firms in the Kenya found that 82.6% of the participants noted that participative leadership helped employees in making quality decisions and associated it to the consulting employees during the decision-making (Lumbasi et al., 2016). In the same study, Lumbasi et al. (2016) established that 86.9% of the managers supported the assertion that participative leadership made it possible for the employees to improve the quality of services they provided to customers, and 88.4% of managers felt that the participative leadership facilitated innovation among their workers. In a study comparing the influence of different leadership styles on the employee performance, Lor and Hassan (2017) found participative leadership to have a positive but insignificant influence on employee job performance. Accordingly, the findings of the present study support previous research showing that participative leadership has positive impact on employee performance.

The study also found that the participants with more education agreed less with (a) "My manager believes in training as an important aspect of improving performance" and (b) "The manager ensures that everyone understands the vision and objectives of the organization". Perhaps, the participants with more education might agree less with these items because they

aspire for certain training programs that meet their level of education (Fawzi, 2014). Additionally, the present study findings that the participants who had worked more years overseas agreed less with the items "The management of the organization where I work help struggling employees meet their target" ($M$ = 2.89, $SD$ = 1.21) and "The manager emphasizes on competence as an important part of performance" ($r_2$ = .19, $p$ =.05). Perhaps, the participants who had worked more years felt leaders in Saudi public sector did not use behaviors of participative leadership style. Moreover, these participants might need more help from their managers while they work overseas since they are far from home and family, and live in different cultures.

**Research Question 4: The Employee Motivation**

Research Question 4 was "According to employees in the Saudi public sector, what is the impact of the participative leadership style upon employee motivation?". This research question sought to determine participants' perspective on whether or not participative made them to feel motivated based on the past evidence showing leadership as key factor in employees' motivation. Table 8 shows that participants' responses to the items of Research Question 4 indicate that a majority of participants felt that participative leadership style has a positive impact on employees' motivation in Saudi public sector. According to ratings of motivation items in Table 8, there was highest agreement among the participants that management placed emphasis on the wellness of employees ($M$ = 2.54, $SD$ = 1.32), managers considered creative ideas raised by the employees ($M$ = 2.74, $SD$ = 1.34), and managers help employees find meaning in the work ($M$ = 2.74, $SD$ = 1.29). However, there was lowest level of agreement among the participants on the full delegation of authority ($M$ = 3.06, $SD$ = 1.28) and organization being open and receptive to employees' input ($M$ = 3.01, $SD$ = 1.31; see Table 8). Further, the Spearman correlations for the

employee motivation scale and the 10 individual items with age, job grade level, education, years with organization, and years worked overseas found no significant correlations for age or years with organization with the employee motivation scale.

The results showing the highest agreement among the participants that management placed emphasis on the wellness of employees ($M$ = 2.54, $SD$ = 1.32), managers considered creative ideas raised by the employees ($M$ = 2.74, $SD$ = 1.34), and managers help employees find meaning in the work ($M$ = 2.74, $SD$ = 1.29) are consistent with findings of study in Saudi Arabia (Alghazo & Al-Anazi, 2016). Alghazo and Al-Anazi (2016) investigated the relationship between different leadership styles and employees' motivation in petrochemical organization through interview with 50 employees from the petro-chemical firm and found that managers interested in motivating their employees are supportive and consider the needs of their employees first. They also found that listening to the subordinates' opinions and suggestions is critical to improving their work atmosphere and motivating employees (Alghazo & Al-Anazi, 2016). All these are consistent with the results of the present study as indicated by the highest level of agreement among the participants that managers motivated them by considering their wellness and their creative ideas. It indicates that managers who assume participative leadership style create an environment that motivates employees. A study conducted in with a sample of 605 participants of university lecturers and management employees from Kenya public and private universities had found similar results (Kiplangat, 2017). Kiplangat (2017) found that 94% of the participants agreed that working in the institution with participative leadership approach resulted in higher job satisfaction. The major reasons attributed to the higher job satisfaction by the participants include teamwork, opportunity to engage in creativity, and improved morale/motivation (Kiplangat, 2017).

The aspects of participative leadership of considering the workers' needs and allowing them to be participative in decision-making serves as psychological motivational activity. In the study about the role of participative leadership and intrinsic motivation among elementary school teachers in Turkey, Sagnak (2016) found that participative leadership served as a significant source of intrinsic motivation for teachers ($p < 0.01$). According to Sagnak (2016), participative leadership in elementary schools influenced the individual and organizational outcomes because it served to increase the motivation among teachers. This was attributed to the behaviors of participative leaders, including involvement of teachers in decisions-making processes that improved teachers feeling of autonomy, and ultimately their motivation (Sagnak, 2016). This relates with the results of the present study that management in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia consider the creative ideas raised by the employees and make them feel good about their work. This motivates them as confirmed by findings of other studies consulted in literature (Akpoviroro et al., 2016; Lumbasi et al., 2016; Oloo & Orwar, 2016). The findings of study with junior staff at Uchumi supermarkets in Kenya indicate the positive influence of participative management, and motivation and performance (Oloo & Orwar, 2016). Through Spearman correlation coefficient, Oloo and Orwar (2016) found positive influence of participative decision-making and staff motivation, and significant relation with employees' performance. This indicates that management allowing employees to participate in the decision-making process by consulting them or taking their views motivates them (Oloo & Orwar, 2016). This aligns with the findings of the present study that participative leadership in the Ministry of foreign affairs in Saudi Arabia motivates them by making them feel loyal and happy.

In their study about the impact of participative leadership on the workers' productivity, Akpoviroro et al. (2018) found that managers use participative leadership as a tool to motivate

workers. They found that employees' participation in the process of making decision on issues affecting their work and them through delegation serves as a psychological motivational practice of boosting the morale and productivity of employees (Akpoviroro et al., 2018). Lumbasi et al. (2016) establish a clear link between the practices of participative leadership, employee motivation, and performance. Consistent with the items used in the present study to determine the role of participative leadership in improving employees' motivation, Lumbasi et al. (2016) found that recognizing employees correlated with improved performance. Similarly, the findings of the present study that consideration of employees' creative ideas is one aspect that motivates employees in the Ministry of foreign affairs in Saudi Arabia is consistent with a study by Sharma (2018) that found consultative behavior by participative leaders before making final decision and implementation to motivate employees. This motivates employees because it creates the feeling that the management appreciates and values them (Sharma, 2018). The highly motivated employees improve their overall productivity and performance (Akpoviroro et al., 2018; Ibrahim & Bahyaye, 2019; Rana et al., 2019; Sharma, 2018). That is, employee participation in the decision-making results in positive attitude in employees, which influence their productivity and performance.

The findings that participants with higher-grade level and more education agree less with motivation items disagrees with the literature that behaviors of participative leadership improve influence motivation of employees. The present study shows participants with a higher-grade level agreed less with "Authority in the organization is delegated to the point that all employees act on their own" ($r_s$ = .22, $p$ = .02). The results also show participants with more education agreed less with (a) "The manager helps us find meaning in the work" ($r_s$ = .20, $p$ = .04); (b) "Authority in the organization is delegated to the point that all employees act on their own" ($r_s$ =

.19, $p$ = .05); (c) “The management of the organization where I work makes me loyal and happy” ($r_s$ = .25, $p$ = .009); (d) “The wellness of the employees is a primary goal of the management” ($r_s$ = .23, $p$ = .01), and (e) “The manager believes in rewarding his/her employees” ($r_s$ = .24, $p$ = .01), so those with more education agreed less with motivation scale, meaning in their work, delegation of authority, feeling loyal and happy in the workplace, and management emphasis on the employees’ wellness, and rewarding of employees by managers. Perhaps, the participants with higher-grade level and more education agreed less with these items because they have higher level of understanding of what motivating workplace means. Moreover, participants with more education and higher-grade level might be aware leaders in their workplace uses a different leadership style rather than participative approach. This disagrees with prior research that has found that participative behaviors of leaders such as delegation of authority plays a critical role in providing employees with intrinsic motivation and empowerment experience (Akpoviroro et al., 2018; Sharma, 2018).

**Final Thoughts About the Literature**

The findings of the present study show that employees in the Saudi public sector have different views about the leadership approach by their managers. In particular, participants’ response to Research Question 1 shows that while managers engages in the participative leaderships traits, including giving employees a voice in decision–making and delegation of decision making, other participants felt that their managers portrayed behaviors not consistent with participative leadership including empowering employees to make decisions and supporting decentralization. The reason for these different views about managers’ traits is that participative leadership is yet to gain popularity in the Saudi public sector that largely relies on the autocratic, and bureaucratic leadership styles (Iqbal et al., 2015). In addition, demographic variables of the

participants, including age, job, job grade level, education, years with organization, and years worked influence the perspectives of employees' regarding the leadership style used by the managers in the Saudi public sector. However, the present study did not find any significant correlation between these demographic variables and items of practicing participative leadership.

The findings of the current study align with the participative leadership style literature. In response to Research Question 2, the literature in studies show that leaders use participative leadership practices in meeting organizational goals (Dalluay & Jalagat, 2016; Gipson et al., 2017; Iqbal et al., 2015; Kalsoom et al., 2018; Oloo & Orwar, 2016). Consistent with the findings of the current study, literature from the past studies shows that leaders use practices of participative leadership styles, including employee participation in the decision-making in meeting the organizational goals.

In response to Research Question 2, the literature in the studies is consistent with the findings of the present study about the significant relationship between the participative leadership style and employees feeling of support (Dike & Madubueze, 2019; Dolly & Eva et al., 2019; Nonyelum, 2018). The literature shows that there is an affective relationship between leaders using participative leadership style and employees feeling of support. However, the findings that employees with more years with organization agreed less with the statement their performance level increased when involved in the decision-making process is inconsistent with the previous studies that employees' involvement in decision making results in trust in their leaders (Bhatti et al., 2019; Dike & Madubueze, 2019).

In response to Research Question 3, the literature in the studies reviewed in the present study also supports the findings that participative leadership style influences the performance of employees. The participative leadership influences employees' performance by promoting

collaboration, giving them greater responsibility, and opportunity to participate in the decision-making (Basit et al., 2017; Dalluay & Jalagat, 2016; Dyczkowska & Dyczkowski, 2018; Ince, 2018; Islam et al., 2018; Kareem et al., 2019; Okpamen, 2017; Peker et al., 2018). Other studies in the literature using regression analysis have determined the significance of the relationship between participative leadership style and employees' performance (Akparep et al., 2019; Lor & Hassan, 2015; Lumbasi et al., 2016; Maaitah, 2018; Oladeji & Ayinde, 2018; Veliu et al., 2017). Only a single study in literature disagrees with the findings of the present study by showing participative leadership style has less influence on the performance of employees (Saleem et al., 2020). In the study with a sample of coordinators and vice principals in Pakistan, Saleem et al. (2020) found the participative leadership to have negative correlation with classroom environment and discipline (Saleem et al., 2020). These findings suggest that participative leadership do not influence the performance of coordinators and vice principals in Pakistan.

Lastly, responses to items related to Research Question 4 revealed an agreement between the findings of the present study and literature that participative leadership has positive impact on employees' motivation (Akpoviroro et al., 2016; Alghazo & Al-Anazi, 2016; Ibrahim & Bahyaye, 2019; Kiplangat, 2017; Lumbasi et al., 2016; Rana et al., 2019; Sagnak, 2016; Sharma, 2018). The employees' motivation improves when they perceive leadership as supportive and listening to their opinions related their work and well-being. But, the feelings by participants with more education and with more overseas experience that their managers did not engage in participative leadership suggest that some participants work under managers using different leadership styles such as authoritarian.

Second, the findings of the present study contribute to the previous study showing the switch from authoritative to collaborative leadership to increase efficiency and performance

(Rahman et al., 2014). Only one study Rahman et al. (2014) that had hinted the switch from authoritarian to participative leadership approach in the Saudi public sector to increase efficiency and performance without considering the variables included in the present study such as how it influences employees feeling of support and motivation. Therefore, the findings of the present study contribute to this literature about the participative leadership and employee performance in the Saudi public sector. In particular, the findings indicate the effectiveness of the participative leadership style in improving the performance of Saudi public sector. But outside Saudi public sector, the current study replicates the findings of past studies particularly in the European and Asian countries. Past studies cited in literature have found participative leadership style to have positive impact on the employee performance and motivation.

Third, the findings fit the theoretical framework of the study, including motivation theories. The present study findings that participative leadership has positive impact on the employee motivation fit with Douglas McGregor Theory X, one of the motivational theories forming the foundation of the present study. Under this theory, employees are self-motivated to complete tasks because the leadership involves them in the decision-making process. The motivation to complete tasks increases employees' productivity that eventually results in the attainment of organizational goals as the revealed by the findings of this study. This also aligns with the motivational factors in the Herzberg's two-factor theory, especially the issue of participative leaders giving employees responsibility and empowerment.

In summary, most of the current literature in the studies supports the current study findings that leaders use participative leadership in meeting organizational goals, has impact on the employees' feeling of support, performance, and motivation. However, a study conducted in Pakistan disagrees with the findings and literature of other studies by showing participative

leadership style to have least impact on the employee performance. The study only found positive correlation between participative leadership and teaching planning, but least impact on the performance of teacher job compared to other leadership styles, including achievement-oriented, supportive, and directive leadership. However, the current study is supported by the extensive literature that shows the participative leadership style to influence employee performance. The findings contribute to the participative leadership theory in Saudi Arabia where there has been no study on the impact of this leadership on the employees' performance within the public sector. The findings also align with the theoretical framework of study, particularly motivation theories like McGregor Theory X and motivational factors in Herzberg two-factor theory. Aspects of responsibility and empowerment are key elements of these two theories found to motivate Saudi public sector employees.

**Conclusion and Implications**

From the findings of this study, it was concluded that the participative leadership approach has an impact on the employees' performance in the Saudi public sector in the aspect of the employees feeling a sense of support, motivation, and performance. The most important aspect of the participative leadership that results in improved job performance is the employee voice in terms of opinions, ideas, and suggestions during the decision-making on issues affecting their wellbeing and work. This consultative behavior, delegation, and listening to employees' opinion by the leaders in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi motivates employees who respond by putting effort in their work thereby improving their productivity and job performance. The effort to consult employees in the decision-making in the participative leadership also contributes to the organizational effectiveness or attainment of the organizational goals. These findings are supported by the recent studies examining the role of participative

leadership on performance of employees in the public and private sector contexts. Only Saleem et al.'s. (2020) study contrasts the findings of this study by showing participative leadership to have least effect on the performance of employees.

The findings provide practical implications for the public-sector organizations and leaders in Saudi Arabia to enhance employees' productivity and job performance. First, the findings of this study from theoretical perspective add to the existing literature on the effectiveness of participative leadership in promoting job performance of the public sector. Second, from the practical perspective, the findings of this study provide Saudi public sector policy makers and leaders with an understanding that adopting the participative leadership enhance employees' feeling of support, motivation, and performance. Of particular importance is the need for the leaders of the Saudi public sector organizations to seek input from employees and listen to their opinions and suggestions during decision-making on issues affecting employees and their work. This study indicates that leaders of Saudi public sector organizations can enhance job performance by engaging employees in the decision-making, valuing their ideas, and including their suggestions in the final decision.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study offers great insights about the effect of the participative leadership approach to the employee performance of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia. The study recommends that future research on the same topic should increase the number of the organizations from the Saudi public sector because this study only considered employees at Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia. Future research should consider organizations in different Ministries in Saudi Arabia to ensure that the findings will apply to the Saudi public sector.

The second recommendation for future research is to increase the number of participants from 110 participants, used in this study. Larger sample will lead to sufficient and accurate results about the relationship of participative leadership and job performance of employees in the Saudi public sector. Therefore, future research on the effect of participative leadership on the job performance should consider a larger sample collected from different organizations in the Saudi public sector to come up with sufficient results to apply to the Saudi public sector.

The third recommendation for future research is considering expanding the variables in this study to investigate the effect of participative leadership on more variables other than job performance. Expanded variables should include work commitment and turnover. There is also need to expand variables in the study to include other types of leaders, including transformational, servant, and transactional leadership styles because they too influence employee performance.

The fourth recommendation for future research is use more data collection methods such as interview and survey questionnaire. This will facilitate the collection of more accurate and detailed data on the relationship between participative leadership and job performance in Saudi public sector. Interviews or focus groups are effective methods of ensuring that participants provide detailed answers to the research questions.

The fifth recommendation for future research is the use of mixed research design. This should involve use of the qualitative and quantitative research methods to draw on the strengths of each of these research methods. Mixed research design will improve the findings of the current research on participative leadership and employees' job performance in Saudi public sector.

Lastly, future research should repeat the same research about the effect of the participative leadership approach to the employee performance of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia with changes to demographic variables of the participants. For example, future study should include the income of the participants. Income is a major demographic variable likely to influence employees' feeling of motivation at the workplace.

**Policy Recommendations**

The findings of this study are critical to the policy contribution in Saudi public sector. First, the HRM policy for Saudi public sector organization should include clear delegation of authority, employee empowerment, decentralized communication for the managers, and democratic approach to give employees the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process of their organization. That is, there is need to embrace a different type of leadership style apart from the autocratic and bureaucratic leadership styles found in the Saudi Arabia public sector organizations.

Second, organizations in the Saudi public sector should feature gradual removal of autocratic leadership approach and emphasize on the adoption of the collaborative, participative leadership. In its place, the Saudi public sector organizations should formulate policies encouraging the adoption of participative leadership style characterized by employee empowerment and participation in the decision-making process. The objective of such policy is to promote good relationships between the public-sector leaders and employees that originate from the participation in the making organization decisions associated with sense of belonging and empowerment in employees, which will motivate and improve their productivity toward achieving the set organizational goals.

Lastly, Saudi public sector might consider organizing training and development course or program for leaders to learn and understand the skills required of the participative leadership and help them overcome individual barriers. The public-sector policy requiring training of the leaders about the participative leadership is critical because most of them improve their knowledge and skills performing practical work before their transfer to the leadership position based on the brilliant skills used in performing practical tasks. The transition from the technical sphere to into the leadership position without adequate care creates challenges related to effective way of engaging employees to improve their performance to achieve organizational goals. This explains why reports show that Saudi public sector organizations are ineffective and the performance of different government ministries is below the expectations. Therefore, a policy outlining the required participative leadership style for the individuals with skills used in performing practical tasks taking up leadership position in the government ministry will ensure the performance of the public sector meets the expectations.

**Practitioner Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that organizations in the Saudi public sector ensure employees take part in the decision-making processes to enhance their motivation, productivity, and job performance. However, it is critical to ensure that employees in the public sector have necessary skills on the issues of which the organization is making decisions to improve the quality of the process. Further, there must be good relationship between the leaders of public sector organizations and employees to encourage consultation and sharing of information during the decision-making. Great emphasis on the significance of consultation behaviors in employee motivation, feeling of support, performance, and motivation in the present study indicates that organizations in Saudi public sector should hold regular

meetings to seek suggestions and ideas from the employees before making and implementing decisions to make them feel honored and valued. This will help the management of organizations of Saudi public sector to boost employees' productivity and performance. Further, as the findings of this study reveals that the performance of organizations in Saudi public sector depend on different leadership approach such as autocratic and some participative leadership approaches, this study recommends that management of other organizations in the public sector continue to implement participative leadership approach across their units and operations.

Lastly, the findings of this study indicate the significance of the Saudi public sector developing leadership training policies and mentoring programs aimed at equipping the top managements with the participative leadership skills. Executive coaches should lead the mentoring programs to help the top, middle-level, and lower level leaders in the Saudi public sector improve their participative leadership skills as mentioned by the participants' response in the current study. Furthermore, executive trainers can use the current findings to develop appropriate training interventions for participative leadership customized to the individual needs of each public-sector organization in Saudi Arabia to improve employees' performance.

This study is unique because it shows the benefits of the participative leadership style that should be applied by the Saudi government to boost the employee performance in the public sector. The findings of this study show the potential of participative leadership style to solve leadership problems in Saudi public organizations, including the inability to meet performance targets and poor motivation of employees. The characteristics of participative leadership style such as the delegation and listening to employees' voices or opinions motivates the employees to respond by putting more effort thereby improving their job performance and productivity. In this

way, this study shows the need to consult employees during the decision-making to enhance goal attainment.

Overall, the study advances new knowledge about the need for leaders of Saudi public sector organizations to adopt new leadership approach characterized by consultation of employees, delegation, and listening to their opinions during the decision-making to improve both their productivity and organizational performance. Moreover, the findings of the study show the organizations in Saudi public sector should consider the participative leadership style as cure to the leadership challenges such as low productivity and poor motivation currently facing them. Also, it portrays participative leadership as an effective style in enhancing the effectiveness and performance of Saudi public sector.

**Final Summary**

In summary, this study investigated the impact of participative leadership on employee performance in the Saudi Arabian public sector. It was informed by the leadership challenges facing the Saudi Arabia public sector, including failure to adopt effective leadership style, poor motivation, and inability to meet performance targets. There is also fierce competition to Saudi Arabian public sector from the private sector.

Over the years, Saudi Arabia begun public-sector reforms to increase efficiency and performance to improve poor management. Training of leaders has been at the center of Saudi public sector reforms. Despite these reforms, the performance of Saudi public sector remains poor. Therefore, the objective of this study was to educate organizational leaders on the importance of their leadership style on employee performance by investigating how patterns of participative leadership influence employee performance, motivation, and feeling of supporting based the Saudi public sector. To achieve the stated objective, the study employed questionnaires

to collect data from a sample of 110 employees from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Saudi Arabia public sector. It drew the sample of low and middle-level management employees working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia. The survey questionnaire was distributed online to employees to collect data on the four research questions that focused on whether leaders use participative leadership style in meeting organizational goals, and impact of participative leadership on the employees' feeling of support, performance, and motivation.

The study found positive correlation between dependent and independent variables. According to the findings, some leaders in Saudi Arabia public sector use participative leadership in meeting organizational goals. However, the findings showed that some participants indicated that their managers did not use participative leadership behaviors such as delegation, and instead used leadership behaviors associated with autocratic leadership approach. Nonetheless, the present study found positive impact of participative leadership on the employees' feeling of support, performance, and motivation.

The study findings agree with the literature that participative leadership style has significant positive relationship with employees' performance and ultimately organizational performance. The major elements of participative leadership associated with improved employees' performance include giving employees voice, consultation behavior, and delegation. This is consistent with the participative leadership literature found in studies already conducted on the topic. Therefore, this study provides policymakers and leaders in the Saudi public sector with their reason for adopting participative leadership to turn around the performance of Saudi public sector. There is also the need to have HRM policies for Saudi public sector organization to consider delegation of authority, empowerment, and democratic/participative leadership to allow employees to participate in the decision-making on matters that affect them and their work.

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# APPENDIX A

## Survey Questionnaire

Research Question 1: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, do managers practice a participative leadership style in meeting organizational goals?

Please indicate in the box that strongly shows your views either agree or disagree.

| Practice of a participative leadership style | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1- The manager believes in and implements teamwork | | | | | |
| 2- The manager considers the opinions and suggestions of employees before implementing organizational strategies | | | | | |
| 3- The manager believes in and supports decentralization | | | | | |
| 4- The manager empowers employees to make decisions | | | | | |
| 5- The manager allows employees to determine how to do their own assignments | | | | | |
| 6- The manager creates reliable channels of communication for feedback following group discussions | | | | | |
| 7- The manager is flexible which makes my performance is above the expectation | | | | | |
| 8- The manager encourages me to be creative for developing a more productive work environment | | | | | |
| 9- The manager supports and motivates workers as they work in their respective job assignments | | | | | |
| 10- The manager treats me fairly and equally | | | | | |

Research Question 2: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, is there a significant relationship between a participative leadership style and the employee feeling of support? Please indicate in the box that strongly shows your views either agree or disagree.

| The relationship between the participative leadership style and employee feeling of support. | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1- My performance improves when my manager consults me on key organizational issues | | | | | |
| 2- My performance level increases when I get involved in the decision-making process | | | | | |
| 3- Working under a manager who believes in decentralization increases my productivity in the workplace | | | | | |
| 4- Working under a manager who believes in team working increases my productivity | | | | | |
| 5- Recognizing my contribution makes me more responsive and effective | | | | | |
| 6- When management consults me before making a decision, I will put extra effort to ensure achievement of results | | | | | |
| 7- The leadership approach used by management has a direct impact on my productivity | | | | | |
| 8- Working under a manager who puts trust in employees in operational and decision making processes increases my productivity | | | | | |
| 9- Working under a manager who empowers employees and allows them to show their full potential increases my productivity | | | | | |
| 10- Working under a manager who gives support and frequent communication increases my productivity | | | | | |

Research Question 3: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, does the participative leadership style influence the performance of employees? How?

Please indicate in the box that represents your feelings/views about each of the statement.

| How participative leadership style influences the performance of employees | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The manager inspires collaboration and cooperation among the employees. | | | | | |
| 2. The manager encourages creativity at the workplace. | | | | | |
| 3. The manager works together with the employees to come up with workable targets and goals. | | | | | |
| 4. The manager helps solve complex problems at work. | | | | | |
| 5. The manager gives employees the authority to make operational decisions which leads to improved performance. | | | | | |
| 6. The manager ensures role clarity among employees at work | | | | | |
| 7. The management of the organization where I work helps struggling employees meet their target. | | | | | |
| 8. My manager believes in training as an important aspect of improving performance. | | | | | |
| 9. The manager emphasizes on competence as an important part of performance. | | | | | |
| 10. The manager ensures that everyone understands the vision and objectives of the organization | | | | | |

Research Question 4: According to employees in the Saudi public sector, what is the impact of the participative leadership style upon employee motivation?

Please indicate in the box that represents your feelings/views about each of the statement.

| The impact of a participative leadership style on employees' motivation | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1- The manager gives attention to all employees | | | | | |
| 2- The manager helps us find meaning in the work | | | | | |
| 3- Creative ideas are considered by the management when raised by the employees | | | | | |
| 4- The manager makes employees feel good about their work | | | | | |
| 5- Authority in the organization is delegated to the point that all employees act on their own | | | | | |
| 6- The manager demonstrates a high level of trust and confidence in the employees to work on their own to meet the organizational performance standards | | | | | |
| 7- The management of the organization where I work is open and receptive to employees' input | | | | | |
| 8- The management of the organization where I work makes me loyal and happy | | | | | |
| 9- The wellness of the employees is a primary goal of the management<br>10- The manager believes in rewarding his/her employees | | | | | |

**Part 2: General information**

1. What is your age?
2. What is your job grade level?
3. What is your level of education?
4. How long have you worked for your current organization in the public sector?
5. How many years have you worked overseas?

# APPENDIX B

## IRB Approval

PEPPERDINE

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

### NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: July 08, 2020

Protocol Investigator Name: Thamer Alsubaie

Protocol #: 20-05-1362

Project Title: THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATIVE LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN SAUDI ARABIA

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Thamer Alsubaie:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

# APPENDIX C

## Participants' Informed Consent Form

### 1. ENGLISH VERSION

**IRB Number # 20-05-1362**

**Study Title:** The Influence of Participative Leadership on Employee Performance

**Principal Investigator:** Thamer Alsubaie

**Invitation**
You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

**Why are you being asked to be in this research study?**
If you are 19 years of age or older, and an employee in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia, you may participate in this research.

**What is the reason for doing this research study?**
I am conducting this research study to investigate the impact of participative leadership on employee performance in the Saudi Arabia public sector. The Saudi Arabian public sector is currently experiencing some leadership challenges such as lack of adopting an effective leadership style, poor motviation, low productivity, and inability to meet performance targets, among others. The results of this study will help in educating organizational leaders on the significance of their leadership and their effect on employee performance, and discover how participative leadership patterns attribute to an employee's motivation, satisfaction, performance, and productivity in the Saudi public Sector.

**What will be done during this research study?**
If you agree to voluntarily to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey, which is anticipated to take between 10-15 minutes. The electronic survey includes 40 multiple choices questions that primarily ask for your perception about the relationship between the participative leadership and employee performance in the workplace. And at the end of the survey you will be asked a general information such as your age, job status, and job experience.

**How will my data be used?**
Your responses to this survey will be kept de-identified and confidential. The questionnaires will be web-based, where you will receive a link from SurveyMonkey into your respective email or WhatsApp. Your answer will be obtained via the researcher's SurveyMonkey account where the data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. The participants' responses will be de-identified, and the relationship between you and your organization, managers and others will not be affected whether you participate in the study or not. Nobody will be allowed to access the data except the researcher.

**What are the possible risks of being in this research study?**
Potential risks or discomforts associate it with this research may include the boredom and physical fatigue from sitting while you are doing the survey.

**What are the possible benefits to you?**
There is no direct benefit to the participants such as money or rewards. However, there are potential benefits such as an increase of understanding on the impact of adoption participative leadership style on Saudi Arabia's public and private sectors. In particular, the outcomes of this study may benefit both sectors to apply an

effective leadership style that will help in stimulating and increasing the employee performance as well as the organizational performance.

**What will being in this research study cost you?**
There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

**Will you be compensated for being in this research study?**
No compensation will be provided for your participation in this research study.

**What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?**
Your welfare is the major concern for the researcher. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact the researcher on his cellphone or email listed at the beginning of this consent form.

**How will information about you be protected?**
Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data.
The data will be stored electronically through a secure server and will only be seen by only the researcher during the study. Your responses to this survey will be kept de-identified and confidential. The questionnaires will be web-based, where you will receive a link from SurveyMonkey into your respective email. Your answer will be obtained via the researcher's SurveyMonkey account where the data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. Your responses will be de-identified, and the relationship between you and your organization, managers and others will not be affected whether you participate in this research study or not. Nobody will be allowed to access the data except the researcher. The only person who will have access to your research records is the researcher. The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as group or summarized data and your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

**What are your rights as a research subject?**
You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.
For study related questions, please contact the investigator listed at the beginning of this form.
For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):
Phone: +1(310)568-2305
Email: gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

**What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?**
You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study (withdraw) at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator, your organization, or with Pepperdine University. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

**Documentation of informed consent**
You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By continuing your consent to participate is implied. If you want, you should print a copy of this page for your record.

**Investigator certification:**
*My signature certifies that all elements of informed consent described on this consent form have been explained fully to the subject. In my judgment, the participant possesses the capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research and is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent to participate.*

**2. ARABIC VERSION**

عنوان الدراسة: تأثير القيادة التشاركية على أداء الموظف

الباحث الرئيسي: ثامر السبيعي هاتف خلوي +415xxxxxxx
البريد الإلكتروني: (
رسالة دعوة
أنت مدعو للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية. تهدف المعلومات الواردة في هذا النموذج إلى مساعدتك على تحديد ما إذا كنت تريد المشاركة أم لا. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة، يرجى طرحها.

لماذا يطلب منك أن تكون في هذه الدراسة البحثية؟
إذا كنت تبلغ من العمر 19 عامًا أو أكثر، وكنت موظفًا في وزارة الخارجية في المملكة العربية السعودية، فيمكنك المشاركة في هذا البحث.

ما سبب إجراء هذه الدراسة البحثية؟
أنا أجري هذه الدراسة البحثية لمعرفة مدى تأثير القيادة التشاركية على أداء الموظفين في القطاع الحكومي في المملكة العربية السعودية. يعاني القطاع الحكومي في المملكة العربية السعودية حاليًا من بعض التحديات القيادية مثل الافتقار إلى تبني أسلوب القيادة الفعال وضعف التحفيز وانخفاض الإنتاجية وعدم القدرة على تحقيق أهداف الأداء. ستساعد نتائج هذه الدراسة في تثقيف القادة التنظيميين حول أهمية قيادتهم وتأثيرهم على أداء الموظفين، واكتشاف كيف تساعد القيادة التشاركية إلى رفع أداء الموظف، ورضاه، وإنتاجيته في القطاع الحكومي السعودي.

ما الذي سيتم عمله خلال هذه الدراسة البحثية؟
إذا وافقت على المشاركة طواعية في هذه الدراسة، فسيُطلب منك إكمال الإستبيان، والذي من المتوقع أن يستغرق 10 دقايق. يتضمن الاستطلاع الإلكتروني 40 سؤالاً خيارات متعددة حول العلاقة بين القيادة التشاركية وأداء الموظف في مكان العمل. وفي نهاية الاستطلاع، سيُطلب منك معلومات عامة مثل عمرك وحالتك الوظيفية ومرتبتك الوظيفية.

كيف سيتم استخدام بياناتي؟
سيتم الاحتفاظ بسرية إجاباتك على هذا الاستطلاع. سيتم الحصول على إجابتك عن طريق حساب SurveyMonkey للباحث حيث سيتم تخزين البيانات بتنسيق إلكتروني محمي بكلمة مرور. سيتم إلغاء عند الانتهاء، ولن تتأثر العلاقة بينك وبين مؤسستك والمديرين وغيرهم سواء شاركت في الدراسة أم لا. لن يُسمح لأحد بالوصول إلى البيانات باستثناء الباحث.

ما هي المخاطر المحتملة للإجابة على هذه الدراسة البحثية؟
قد تشمل المخاطر أو المضايقات المحتملة المرتبطة بهذا البحث الملل والتعب الجسدي من الجلوس أثناء الإجابة.

ما هي الفوائد المحتملة لك؟
لا توجد فائدة مباشرة للمشاركين مثل المال أو المكافآت. ومع ذلك، هناك فوائد محتملة مثل زيادة فهم تأثير أسلوب القيادة التشاركية على القطاعين العام والخاص في المملكة العربية السعودية. على وجه الخصوص، قد تفيد نتائج هذه الدراسة كلا القطاعين لتطبيق أسلوب القيادة الفعال الذي سيساعد في تحفيز وزيادة أداء الموظفين وكذلك الأداء التنظيمي.

ما الذي سيكلفك في هذه الدراسة البحثية؟
لا توجد تكلفة عليك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية.

هل سيتم تعويضك لكونك في هذه الدراسة البحثية؟
لن يتم تقديم أي تعويض لمشاركتك في هذه الدراسة البحثية.

ماذا يجب أن تفعل إذا كان لديك مشكلة خلال هذه الدراسة البحثية؟

رفاهيتك هي الشاغل الرئيسي للباحث. إذا كانت لديك مشكلة كنتيجة مباشرة للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة، فيجب عليك الاتصال مباشرة بالباحث على هاتفه الخلوي أو بريده الإلكتروني المدرج في نموذج الموافقة هذا.

كيف ستتم حماية المعلومات الخاصة بك؟
سيتم اتخاذ خطوات معقولة لحماية خصوصيتك وسرية بيانات الدراسة الخاصة بك.
سيتم تخزين البيانات إلكترونيًا من خلال خادم آمن ولن يشاهدها إلا الباحث أثناء الدراسة. سيتم الاحتفاظ بسرية إجاباتك على للباحث حيث سيتم تخزين البيانات بتنسيق SurveyMonkeyهذا الاستطلاع. سيتم الحصول على إجابتك عن طريق حساب إلكتروني محمي بكلمة مرور. سيتم إلغاء إجاباتك عند الانتهاء ولن تتأثر العلاقة بينك وبين مؤسستك والمديرين وغيرهم سواء شاركت في هذه الدراسة البحثية أم لا. لن يُسمح لأحد بالوصول إلى البيانات باستثناء الباحث. الشخص الوحيد الذي سيتمكن من الوصول إلى سجلاتك البحثية هو الباحث. قد يتم نشر المعلومات من هذه الدراسة في المجلات العلمية أو تقديمها في الاجتماعات العلمية ولكن سيتم الإبلاغ عن البيانات كبيانات جماعية أو تلخيصية وسيتم الحفاظ على سرية هويتك.

ما هي حقوقك كموضوع بحث؟
يمكنك طرح أي أسئلة بخصوص هذا البحث والإجابة على هذه الأسئلة قبل الموافقة على المشاركة في الدراسة أو أثناءها.
للأسئلة المتعلقة بالدراسة، يرجى الاتصال بالباحث المذكور في بداية هذا النموذج.
IRBللأسئلة المتعلقة بحقوقك أو شكاواك بشأن البحث، اتصل بمجلس المراجعة المؤسسية
الهاتف: +13105682305
البريد الإلكتروني:

ماذا سيحدث إذا قررت عدم المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية أو قررت التوقف عن المشاركة بمجرد أن تبدأ؟

يمكنك أن تقرر عدم المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية، أو يمكنك التوقف (الانسحاب) في أي وقت قبل أو أثناء أو بعد بدء البحث لأي سبب. إن عدم المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية أو اتخاذ قرار بالانسحاب لن يؤثر على علاقتك بالمحقق أو لن تخسر أي مزايا يحق لك الحصول عليها. .Pepperdineبمؤسستك أو بجامعة

توثيق الموافقة المستنيرة

أنت تتخذ قرارًا طوعيًا بشأن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية أم لا. الاستمرار يعني موافقتك على المشاركة.

شهادة المحقق:

يشهد توقيعي على أن جميع عناصر الموافقة الموضحة في نموذج الموافقة هذا قد تم شرحها بالكامل للموضوع. يمتلك المشارك القدرة على إعطاء الموافقة للمشاركة في هذا البحث ويعطي الموافقة طوعًا ومعرفة للمشاركة.