

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL**

**An Investigative Study of the Present Professional  
Preparation for Teachers in Primary Schools in Saudi  
Arabia, with Especial Reference to Islamic and  
Arabic Subjects**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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by:

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# Abbreviations

**GOTEVT:** The General Organisation of Technical Education and Vocational Training.

**GPGE:** General Presidency of Girls' Education.

**KAAU:** King Abdul-aziz University.

**KFU:** King Faisal University.

**KFUPM:** King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals.

**KSU:** King Saud University.

**UQU:** Umm Al-Qura University.



# Glossary

*Al-Bulkhi:* a famous scholar in the eighth century, whose main interest was in the Prophet tradition.

*Al-Ghazzali:* a great Persian Islamic scholar of the sixth century.

*Al-Jahalliyy:* an Arabic word derived from the word *Jahal* which implies ignorance.

*Al-Madrasah Alnazamiyy:* the first formal school established by *Nizamul Mulk* in Baghdad in 1067

*Al-Tafsir:* the interpretation of the Quran.

*Allah:* God.

*Hadith:* an account of what the prophet did or of something said or done in his presence of which he clearly approved.

*Higra:* the Prophet's migration to *Medina* which took place on the 15th of July 622 AD. This date was selected to mark the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

*IbnKhalidun:* a great scholar in the eighth century, and author of *Prolegomena (Muqaddimah)*.

*IbnMisqaveh:* a great scholar and translator during the eighth century.

*IbnTaymiyyah:* a great 13th century scholar, who is very well known as a writer in the Islamic field.

**Imam Mailik:** a prominent Islamic scholar during the eighth century.

**Kaabah:** the holy house in Mecca.

**Kutabe:** a school teaching Islamic studies, reading and writing.

**Madrash:** school.

**Mecca:** the birthplace of Islam and the place of Muslim pilgrimage.

**Medina:** the city of the prophet Mohammad after the *Hegria*, and the second holy city of Islam.

**Muaddib:** one who refines, or teaches manners, one who disciplines.

**Nizamul Mulk:** Persian ministry for Islamic state in the 11th century.

**Sahih Al-Bukhari:** the first, most authentic collection of the prophet's traditional sayings, collected by Al-Bukhari.

**Shariah:** the totality of the religious and moral laws of Islam.

**Sultan:** king.

**Tarbyyah:** education.

**Umar Ibn Khattab:** the second Caliph of *Islam* and one of the Prophet's main Companions.

# Abstract

The central aim of this thesis was to examine the experience of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the preparation and training of prospective Arabic and Islamic primary teachers at the Teachers' Colleges with special attention to professional preparation, as perceived by Arabic and Islamic student teachers, teaching staff and officials in the Ministry of Education, and also the Deans and Vice-Deans of Teachers' Colleges.

The study incorporates a full review of literature concerning the pre-service teacher training programme in general and in Arabic and Islamic subjects in particular. A profile of Saudi Arabia and its modern educational system is presented, while the core concepts of Islamic education and related issues are also discussed, and the situation of Arabic and Islamic subjects in Saudi schools is described.

The key contribution of the thesis is an evaluation of the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme in the Teachers' colleges, drawing on the available documents and regulations, and on the questionnaire survey of 127 Arabic and Islamic student teachers and 346 teaching staff from Arabic, Islamic and Education departments in Teachers' colleges. Their perspectives are complemented by information and opinions obtained through

interviews with college Deans and Vice-Deans, and relevant ministerial officials.

The survey returns and interviews .revealed a number of problems. Respondents indicated dissatisfaction with several aspects of the teacher training programmes, particularly those associated with teaching practice. Imbalance and lacunae in the curriculum, inadequate facilities, poor preparation for the practicum, and deficiencies in the supervision and evaluation of teaching practice were among the problems highlighted. Appropriate remedies are recommended to improve the status and quality of teacher training and future research priorities are also identified.

**Part I:**  
**Study Context**

# Chapter One

## The Nature of the Study

### 1.1 Introduction

Education is a key element in the economic progress of any society. It prepares people for the world of work. It produces manpower such as engineers, doctors, and teachers. Therefore, in order to achieve the national objectives of any country, special attention must be paid to teaching programmes, to ensure that effective learning takes place.

The education of teachers is a very important part of the development of any educational system. Beeby has said that there are two factors by which any development in an education system can be judged: the level of general education of its teachers, and the amount of training they have received(1). Ifode, in his study, Comparative Analysis of Pattern and Trends of Teacher Education in Nigeria, argued that good teacher training programmes are often the key to the achievement of educational goals. He affirmed that the supply and training of teachers lies at the very heart of the educational process(2).

The importance of educational authorities establishing effective training programmes to achieve their objectives, is fully recognised in many parts of the world. National reports, studies, and



professional meetings have recognised teacher education as being among the most important factors which contribute to the quality of education(3). This fact is a very critical one which occupies the minds of many policy-makers around the world. Pearson summarised what has been written and said about this issue in his work, The Teacher: Theory and Practice in Teacher Education, where he stated that:

**Questions and problems of education soon become questions and problems of teacher education. It is not uncommon, and it is certainly understandable, that we turn our attention to the preparation of teachers when we are concerned with the education of the young and with the quality of schools(4).**

In the United States of America, concern has been expressed by scholars and specialised organisations, regarding the quality of teacher preparation. In 1980, a group of scholars investigated teacher education in depth, and they identified in specific terms reasons for dissatisfaction with teacher education. They argued that

**During the last past decade, criticism of public education has grown to a crescendo. Much of this dissatisfaction is aimed at teacher training programmes. Rapid changes in society and technology have led to revolutionary changes in public expectation of schools in general and of teachers in particular. Many teacher training institutions have been accused of preparing teachers for students and schools that no longer exist. These institutions have lost contact with their constituency and continue to prepare teachers as they did twenty years ago. Thus, the preparation teachers receive has become less and less relevant to actual on-the-job performance requirements(5).**

The scholars aimed to suggest some ways and models to improve teacher education, in the belief that the low quality of teacher education lay behind the lack of quality in public education. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, education and training of teachers is considered at the very heart of the current reform of British education(6).

For developing countries, the challenge and risk involved in developing education is even greater than in western countries. Even if they have the political will to change, they are often constrained by scarcity of economic resources. Nonetheless, many developing countries have expressed their concern about this issue. For instance, in the Arab world, many conferences and professional meetings have been held, based on recommendations of the Arab League. Some of these events took place on the international level, with Arab League countries as planners and sponsors. The first Arab conference with respect to teacher preparation, known as the "Arab Teacher Preparation Seminar", was held in Beirut in 1959 under the supervision of the cultural department in the Arab League. The participants developed forty-four recommendations that covered many issues and focused on the role of the teacher in Arab nationalisation, Arabic language, objectives of the teacher preparation programme, content and curricula, admission, evaluation

and duration of study(7). In 1966, Damascus hosted a seminar about the “Integration of Curricula Foundations in the Institutions of Female and Male Teacher Preparation”. This meeting was supervised and sponsored by the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organisations(8).

One of the major initiatives by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation was a meeting held in Muscat (Oman) in 1979, the purpose of which was to discuss the educational strategy requirements for preparing Arab teachers. By the end of the seminar, the participants had proposed forty-seven recommendations, focusing on admission, the goals of the programme, Arabic language, the Islamic culture, curriculum content, the relationship between teacher preparation institutions and other agencies in the society, the use of modern technology and media, evaluation of the programmes and graduates, supporting the programmes with qualified faculty members, ease of access to advanced education, libraries, long term plans, establishing new specialisations, research, and cooperation with specialised agencies and institutions, nationally and internationally(9).

A number of professional meetings have also been held at regional levels, especially in the Gulf region. In January 1984, the

Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, with the cooperation of the International Council on Education for Teaching, organised a conference in the University of Qatar to discuss teacher education in the Arab Gulf States. The conference witnessed the presentation of many papers in Arabic and English and focused on the current need for teacher education in the Gulf States, and challenges facing it. Also, international and modern perspectives on teacher preparation were presented(10). In another effort by the Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, the authorities responsible for teacher preparation held a meeting in Bahrain in December, 1988, to study and discuss the current provision for preparation of elementary school teachers in the member States. The participants agreed on many recommendations, focusing on six areas, namely admission policy, the content of the curriculum, methods of preparation, practical education, research and studies, and general recommendations(11).

On the national level, educators and planners in Saudi Arabia have recently demonstrated concern with the quality of teacher preparation programmes. Accordingly, many conferences and professional meetings have been held to discuss this issue. On the 8th December 1992, King Saud University, College of Education, held a study group on the theme of "The Strategy For Teacher Preparation". It was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Education,



the General Presidency of Female Education, Ministry of Planning, and deans of colleges of education along with others: researchers, scholars, faculty members from colleges of education and teacher colleges(12). The second conference on teacher preparation for public education in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia was held with the approval of royal decree No. 5/511110 between 21-23 Shawal, 1413 A.H. (13-15 April, 1993). This conference focused on the quality of teacher preparation for public education. More than one hundred and twenty papers were sent to the conference, of which only sixty papers were chosen and presented. The conference decided upon recommendations to cover five headings: the policy of education in Saudi Arabia, the objectives and curricula and the programmes of teachers preparation in institutions; choosing students for teacher preparation institutions; the quality of preparation for teachers, and general recommendations(13). However, despite all these efforts, many problems face teacher preparation in the Arab states, including Saudi Arabia. The nature and scope of these problems are indicated in the following section.

## **1.2. The Depth of the Problem**

Despite the commitment of political leaders to improvement of education, including teacher preparation, a gap has continued to exist between written policies and what is actually happening. A seminar about improving Islamic education in the Gulf States, held in Qatar, reached the conclusion that policies on teacher preparation were patchy in the Gulf States and had resulted in a shortage of local teachers and a consequent importation of expatriate ones. Commenting on the disadvantages of this, they recommended an immediate increase in enrolment at colleges of education, a reevaluation of the aims of education, and the introduction of modern educational research(14).

In fact, the real issue in many developing countries (including Saudi Arabia) is the lack of knowledge and limited information about the function of teacher education in these societies. As has already been indicated, proposals for reform flow from the government agencies and international organisations, to the specialists in the field. However, the fundamental question which should be addressed is, how much do we know about the development and achievement in teacher education in each country? Research offers numerous suggestions as to how developing countries can improve their teacher preparation programmes. However, the problem in many countries is



not only the lack of financial resources or the political will, but also the shortage of research and its poor quality.

Damah studied the existing teacher preparation institutions in Arab Gulf States and criticised the research about teacher education in the region, in an attempt to urge educators and educational institutions to improve their research quality and to search for the real issues.

The data also indicates that research studies are generally executed by individual effort rather than through a broad research plan. Furthermore, most of these studies are theoretical in nature and far from the actual teaching practice. They are also poor in originality and scientific depth, and seldom contribute to the process of improvement in teaching. Therefore, it is necessary that more effort be exerted in this area (15)

Another criticism came from the former Director General of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS), who wrote about teacher education in the Arab Gulf States and questioned the relevance of research to the need in the region:

The lesson learned from the outcomes of the existing educational research centres in some Arab countries does not pay off. Furthermore, in numerous cases educational research is irrelevant to educational practice(16).

To summarise the problem, we should go beyond the established fact of the importance of the quality of teacher

preparation in achieving better quality education. What seems to be forgotten by the advocates of quality and reform in third world countries (including Saudi Arabia), is the inadequacy of knowledge about educational problems, a situation admitted by many of those involved in the field. Unlike the advanced countries, methods of research in the developing societies are often primitive, and the product is irrelevant.

**The reasons for this lack of clarity include the lack of research on teaching and teachers, the need to synthesise the research which has been conducted, and the simple fact that we are at a relatively primitive stage in terms of our ability to sort out critical factors that make a difference in education(17)**

Al-Karni and Al-Thubaiti, in their study about the future functions of colleges of education in Saudi Arabia, found research field studies to be very necessary for the improvement of the quality of education(18)

It is clear from the above, that there is a need for research to remedy the shortage of knowledge about the functions and requirements of teacher preparation programmes in Saudi Arabia, before coherent and relevant improvement policies can be formulated. This study seeks to contribute in this effort, by investigating the professional preparation of elementary school

teachers in Saudi Arabia, with special reference to Arabic and Islamic studies.

### **1.3. Background to the Study**

This study is concentrating on the preparation of teachers of Islamic studies and Arabic, as these two subjects constitute the most important components of the elementary curriculum in Saudi Arabia. They have a high status, and indeed, only a few decades ago, the whole educational system was focused on them.

In the modern educational system in Saudi Arabia, Islamic thinking and Arabic are accorded priority in the curriculum at all levels. Islamic and Arabic studies are taught at all stages of the educational system. In the elementary stage, Saudi Arabian planners give particular attention to these two subjects. In his book, The History of Education in Saudi Arabia, Al-Saloom observed that Islamic religion and the Arabic language account for between 50 and 55% of the primary school curriculum(19).

Islamic studies have a strong relationship with the Arabic language, since Arabic is seen as the language of divine revelation. It is nationally considered a vitally important part of Islamic religious education, and scholars have often emphasised the necessity of

learning Arabic in order to fulfil Islamic education. Knowledge of this language is necessary to understand both the Quran, and the Prophet's tradition. This linking of the teaching of Arabic and Islamic education lies at the core of the present study.

Any attempt to improve the efficiency of education in general, and Islamic and Arabic education in particular, must address itself to the importance of teacher preparation. Indeed, teaching Arabic or Islamic studies in modern schools is not an easy job. It is rather a complicated one which requires a high level of ability from the people appointed to do it. Calls to improve the quality of teacher preparation for teachers of Arabic and Islamic subjects have been heard from many researchers, whose work is full of urgent demands to remedy the perceived professional weakness of Arabic and Islamic teachers. In a survey by the Arab Organisation for Education and Science, a sample of educationalists and experts in the Arab world were asked about the level of competence of Arabic teachers in the region. 80% of the respondents expressed the view that the Arabic teachers fall below the quality needed and expected of them. It was suggested that the main reason for this problem was the deficiency of teacher training programmes(20).

Similarly, in his study about ways of developing the methods of teaching Islamic studies, Al-Sane observed that the efforts which are expended on developing Islamic teaching methods do not fulfil the required objectives. He recommended that in order to fulfil the required objectives, attention must be paid towards the pre-service training of Islamic teachers(21). Supporting this view, Al-Shafee, Al-Meajal and Al-Sadan have stated during the last decade that the methods of teaching of Islamic and Arabic subjects are often poor. Their work has sharply criticised the many schools where Islamic and Arabic education are taught by lecture only and where students do not participate. Further, their studies made it plain that educational media were not used to attract the learners. The story-telling style was absent, and teachers did not make effective use of instrumental aids(22)(23)(24).

This deficiency is particularly serious, if we consider that Islamic and Arabic teachers are expected to be the most excellent teachers as they teach the faith and the language of the Quran and that these two subjects, Islamic studies and Arabic, constitute the most important components of the elementary curriculum in Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, in a seminar held by fourteen experts from the Gulf region about improving Islamic education in Gulf States, the first suggestion was that a specific study of Islamic teacher



preparation should be carried out. Also, it was emphasised that attention must be paid to teacher training in general and to professional preparation in particular(25).

Therefore, this study focuses particularly on professional preparation in the pre-service training of Arabic and Islamic elementary school teachers at the Teachers' Colleges operated by the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. This professional preparation will be examined mainly from the perspectives of student-teachers (who are studying in the final semester in the Islamic and Arabic departments), teaching staff in the Arabic, Islamic and Education Departments and officials in Ministry of Education and in Teachers' Colleges who are concerned with Teacher preparation at elementary school level. It is hoped that the findings of the study will throw light on the problems raised above and that it will be possible to derive recommendations to improve the situation, as well as suggestions for future research in the same field.

#### **1.4. The Importance of this Study**

The importance of the research comes from the importance of teacher education itself. The education of teachers is a very significant part of the development of any educational system and indeed, the key to quality of education is quality in the training of teachers. So, this

study will examine the present professional preparation programme of primary school Islamic and Arabic teachers in Teachers' Colleges and will explain the attitudes of student-teachers of Arabic and Islamic subjects and their teaching staff towards the training programme in general, and professional preparation in particular.

The researcher believes that good professional preparation will produce well qualified teachers and this investigation of the professional preparation of teachers of Islamic and Arabic studies could provide insight into how the preparation of teachers of these subjects and, hence, their subsequent teaching effectiveness, could be improved.

Although several studies of education in Saudi Arabia have been conducted, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, very little literature or research has concerned itself with the preparation of elementary school Islamic and Arabic teachers. Moreover, there have been recent changes in the teacher training programme in teacher colleges in terms of the curriculum and of the duration of the programme (for more details see chapter six)(26). Therefore, the study will contribute by evaluating the new programme, and drawing attention to its strengths and weaknesses so that those involved in planning and implementation may be aware of the need and means

for improvement. Finally, it is hoped the study will provide information and insights useful to other researchers concerned with improving training programmes in general and those in Saudi Arabia in particular.

### **1.5. The Objectives of the Study**

As the main aim of the study is to examine the present professional preparation programme for Islamic and Arabic primary teachers in Teachers' Colleges, to determine problems and to suggest possible solutions, the following specific objectives may be identified:

1. To highlight the advantages and disadvantages of the training programme in general and professional preparation in particular as it is currently provided to primary school teachers of Islamic and Arabic studies;
2. To identify the problems which face student teachers during implementation of the training programme;
3. To identify the problems which face the members of teaching staff during implementation of the training programme;

4. To identify to what extent educational aids and facilities are adequate and accessible;

5. To identify to what extent the members of the teacher training staff are involved in the planning of the programme;

6. To suggest improvements based on the findings with regard to the above and to make recommendations for future research.

### **1.6. The Scope of the Study**

The study is limited to the following:

1. This study is concerned with the professional preparation in the pre-service training programme of primary school teachers of Islamic and Arabic subjects in the Teachers Colleges operated by the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia;

2. The study will focus on male teachers only, because schools in Saudi Arabia are not co-educational, so males and females are segregated from each other throughout all educational stages. Moreover, cultural constraints make it difficult, if not impossible, for a male researcher to gain access to female respondents.

3. This study will include the whole population of student teachers in their final semester of study, and the members of teaching staff, in the Arabic, Islamic and Education departments in Teachers' Colleges, and with officials in the Ministry of Education and in Teachers' Colleges concerned with planning and administration of teacher preparation for elementary schools.

### **1.7. Methodology and Sources of Data**

For the purpose of the investigation, four sources of data will be used:

(A): documents and publications relevant to the area of the investigation, in both Arabic and English;

(B): a questionnaire directed to student teachers of Islamic and Arabic studies in the final semester of the course;

(C): a questionnaire directed to members of the teacher training staff in Arabic, Islamic and Education departments in the Teachers' Colleges.

(D): personal interviews with officials in the Ministry of Education and Teachers' Colleges.

### **1.8. Overview of the Thesis**

The thesis is organised in four parts, the whole comprising thirteen chapters.



## Part I: Study Context

This part covers two issues:

1. The nature and the purpose of the study are clarified in CHAPTER ONE.
2. A profile of Saudi Arabia and its education system is provided in CHAPTER TWO.

## Part II: Literature Review

This part contains a review of relevant literature, as follows:

(A): In CHAPTER THREE, for non-Arab readers, an overview is presented of Islamic and Arabic Education, including the concept of Islamic and Arabic education, its historical background, its aims and objectives, its significance, and the relationship between Islamic and Arabic subjects.

(B): CHAPTER FOUR: focuses on available literature in both English and Arabic regarding pre-service teacher education in general and preparation of teachers of Islamic and Arabic subjects in particular.

## Part III: Status of Arabic and Islamic Education in Saudi Arabia

This part discusses the status of Islamic and Arabic subjects in Saudi Arabia schools, and considers how the teachers of such subjects are trained.

CHAPTER FIVE: is about Islamic and Arabic education in Saudi schools; including teaching aims, the status of these subjects within the curriculum and aspects of teaching methods and assessment.

CHAPTER SIX: describes the content and structure of the current professional preparation programme for elementary school teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies in the Teachers' Colleges in Saudi Arabia.

### Part III: Empirical Survey

This part presents the details of the empirical investigation carried out by the researcher among student teachers, teacher trainers and officials, regarding the preparation programme provided by Teachers' Colleges. This part comprises the following chapters:

(1): CHAPTER SEVEN: explains the research design and methodology.

(2): CHAPTER EIGHT: presents the responses from the student teachers' questionnaire.

(3): CHAPTER NINE: presents the responses from the teaching staff questionnaire.

(4): CHAPTER TEN: analyses the results from the questionnaires addressed to student teachers and teaching staff.

(5): CHAPTER ELEVEN: complements the above findings by reporting the opinions and information given by the officials interviewed.

(6): CHAPTER TWELVE: discusses the findings of the study in the light of the literature.

(7): CHAPTER THIRTEEN: presents the conclusion of the study, suggestions, recommendations and ideas for possible development.

## **1.9. Definition of Terms**

To ensure clarity of content throughout the project, the following terms will be employed:

### **1. Elementary Education**

This is the first level of the education system in Saudi Arabia. It takes the form of a six year course and begins at the age of six, continuing for six years.

### **2. Teachers' Colleges**

This term refers to the teacher training colleges supervised by the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for the training of elementary school teachers, including those teaching Islamic and Arabic studies.

### **3. Major Fields**

#### **(i). (Islamic) / Islamic Course**

A principal subject of study in the teacher college in which the student is required to take a specified number of courses for four years as part of the requirements for obtaining the qualification of Bachelor of Islamic Studies and Education, eventually to be licensed as a teacher of Islamic studies in elementary schools.

#### **(ii). (Arabic)/ Arabic Course**

A principal subject of study in the teacher college, in which the student is required to take a specified number of courses for four years as part of the requirements for obtaining the qualification of Bachelor of Arabic and Education, eventually to be licensed as a teacher of Arabic in elementary schools.

### **3. Teacher Education**

A formal structured process in which knowledge and experience are conveyed to student teachers with the aim of making them capable of teaching effectively and efficiently.

#### **4. Initial/Pre-service/ Teacher Training Programme**

The above names are used synonymously, to mean a set of activities and experience given to those intending to become teachers, with the aim of preparing them to work as teachers.

#### **5. Professional Education**

Providing student teachers with knowledge of the theory and practice of teaching, with the aim of developing their understanding of teaching and the learning process, and enabling them to acquire the necessary skills to enable them to be effective teachers.

#### **6. Teaching Practice**

Observation, participation and actual teaching done by student teachers under the guidance and supervision of a supervisor.

#### **7. Student Teacher**

A student who is learning to teach and is enrolled in the teacher education programme (Teachers' College).

#### **8. Supervisor/Trainer/Lecturer**

These are staff appointed to teach at the Teachers' Colleges and to supervise student teachers during the teaching practice period.

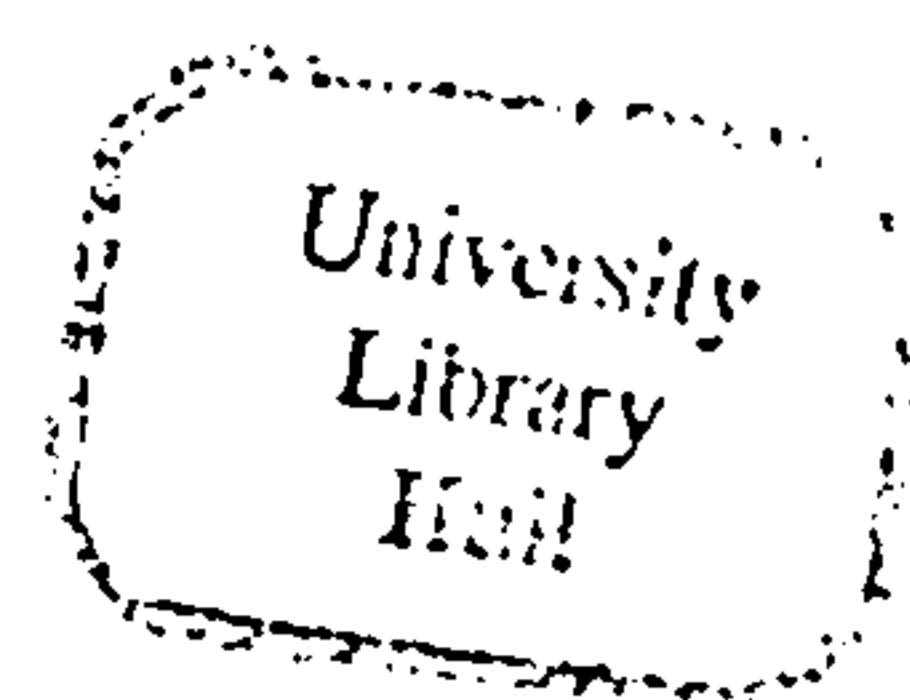


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# **Chapter Two**

## **Profile of the Kingdom and its Education System**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to examine the present professional preparation for primary school teachers of Islamic and Arabic education in Saudi Arabia. In order to see the issue in context, some background information is desirable. Accordingly, this chapter provides a brief introduction to Saudi Arabia, including its geography, climate, population, religion and economy. It then goes on to outline the history of education in Saudi Arabia, before explaining the various components of the present educational system in the country. These factors inevitably influence the character of Islamic and Arabic education. It is hoped, therefore, that this chapter will introduce readers, especially those who are not familiar with the Saudi education system, to the background to the research problem and prepare them to understand the issues which will be discussed in forthcoming chapters.

### **2.2. Background Information about Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia is an independent Muslim Arab monarchy first established in 1902 by King Abdul-azeez Al-Saud. The official name of the country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, came into existence in



1932 when Abdulazeez Ibn Abdur-Rahman al Saud, who was simultaneously King of Hijaz and Sultan of Najd and Dependencies, united the two parts of his state under one administration and one name. At the same time, the government also decided to settle the Bedouin in communities. Three types of Bedouin community have been identified. At the risk of oversimplification, these can be seen as: nomadic Bedouin, semi-nomadic Bedouin; and settled Bedouin(1).

The habitat and way of life of Saudi Arabian people have, for centuries, been forged by two influences: desert life and the Islamic *Sharia* (the totality of the religious and moral laws of Islam). These influences are reflected in the character, customs and traditions of the Saudi people. The associated values include: liberality, generosity, early marriage and Arab poetry and proverbs. The Arabic language is the official language of the kingdom. It is the sacred language of the holy Quran and therefore of Islam, although English and other European languages are widely used by banks and companies that serve non-Arab employees.

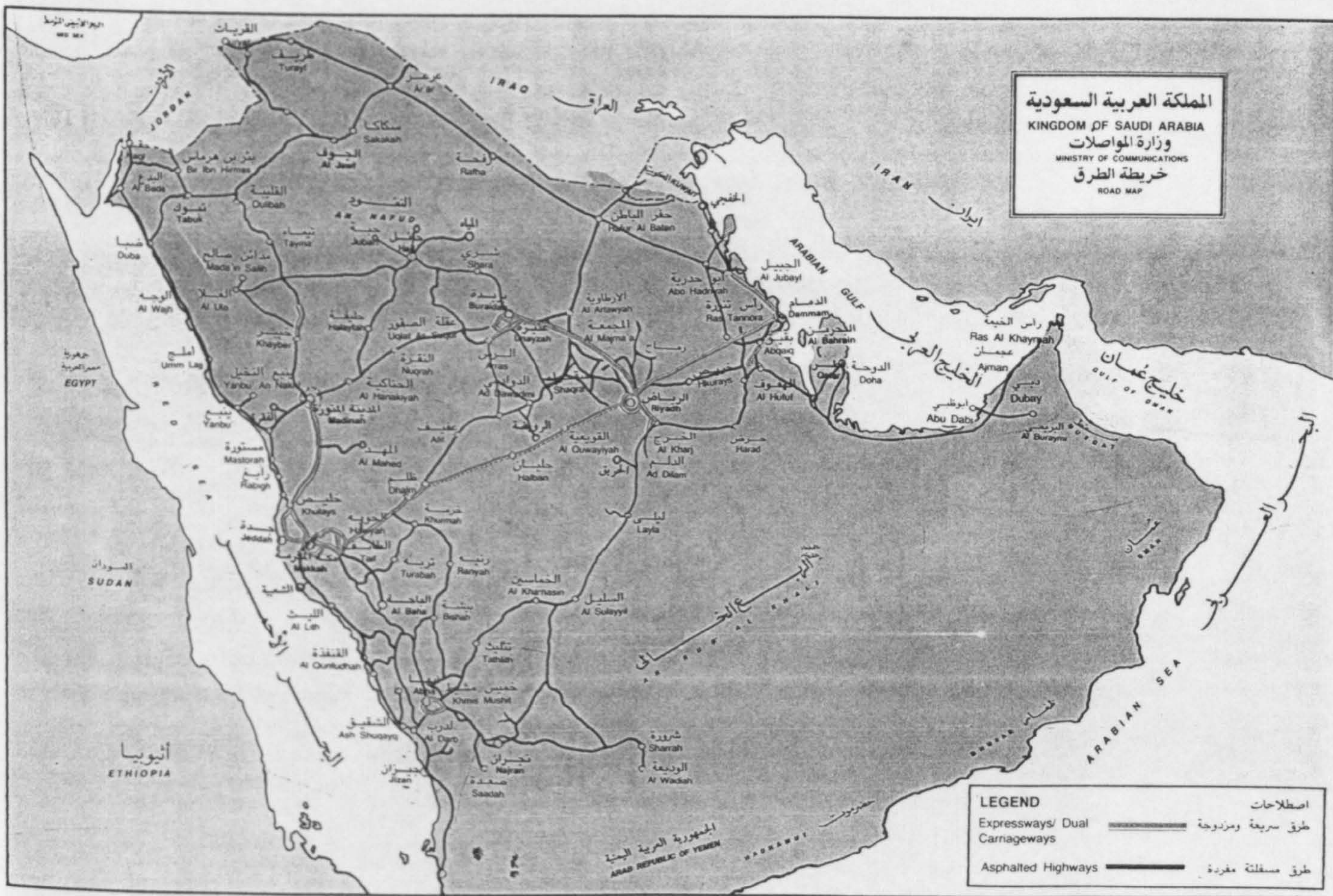
### **2.2.1. Geography**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the second largest country in the Arab world, is located in Southwest Asia. It occupies about 2, 261, 060

square kilometres. It is bordered on the east, by the Arabian Gulf and the states of Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman; to the west, by the Red Sea; to the north, by the states of Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan, and to the south, by the state of Yemen.(2) (See Figure 1). Saudi Arabia is one of only two Arab countries without direct colonial experience (the other one is Yemen).(3).



**Figure 1: Map of Borders of Saudi Arabia**





### 2.2.1.1. The Regions and Major Cities

Saudi Arabia is divided into thirteen regions or administrative divisions, as indicated in Table 1 and Figure 2:

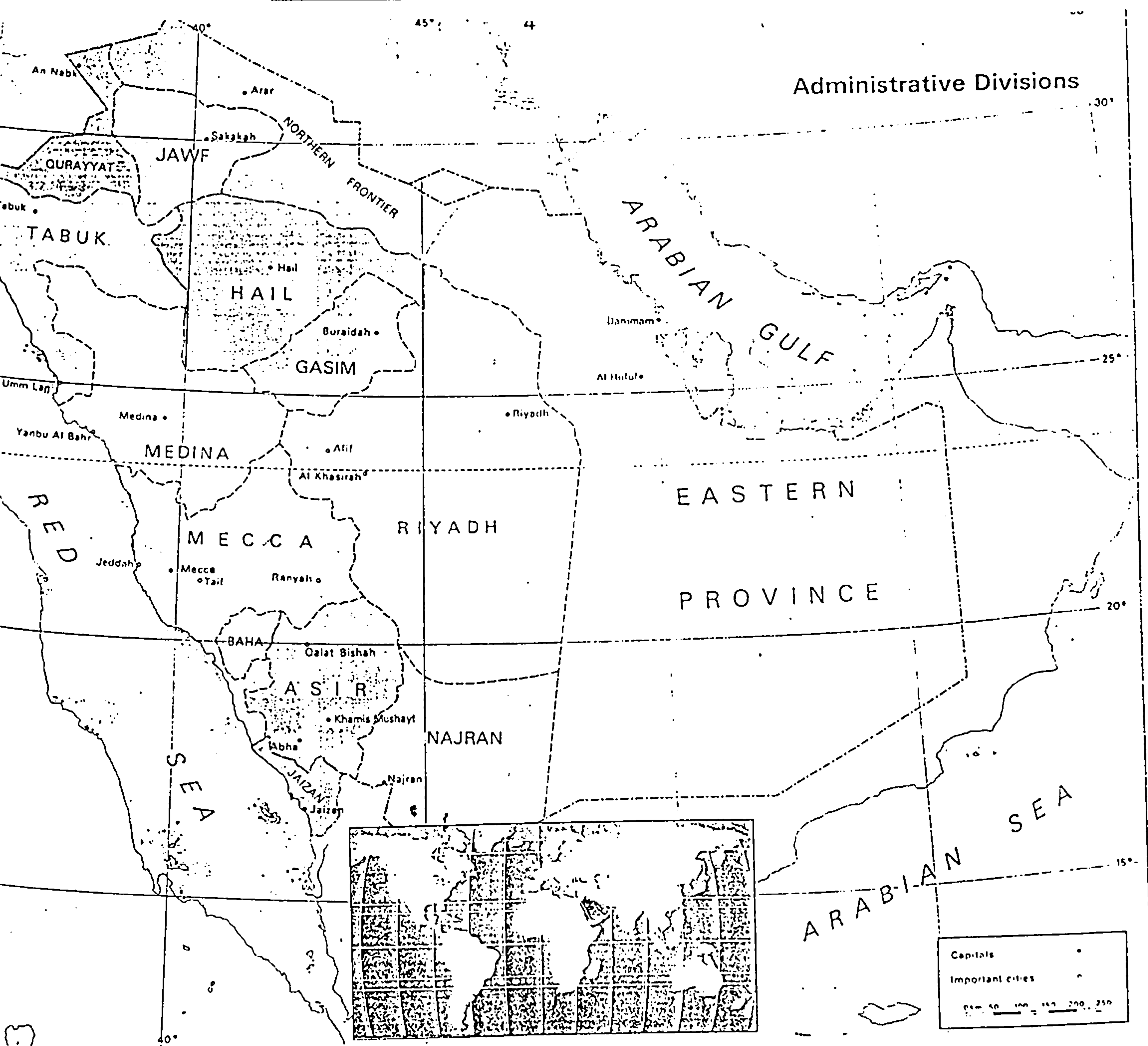
**Table 1: The Thirteen Regions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Capital</b>
Riyadh	Riyadh (Kingdom's Capital)
Mecca	Mecca
Al-Madina	Al-Madina
The Eastern Region	Dammam
Al-Qasseem	Buraidah
Asir	Abha
Tabuk	Tabuk
Hail	Hail
The Northern Region	Arar
Jizan	Jizan
Najran	Najran
Al-Jouf	Sakaka

Ministry of Information: Saudi Arabia: Landmarks of Progress.  
Ministry of Information, Foreign Information, Saudi Arabia, 1994, p  
108-109.



**Figure 2: Map of Administrative Divisions in Saudi Arabia**



Bindagji, H, H. Atlas of Saudi Arabia. Oxford University Press in association with Lovell Johns, Ltd., Oxford, England, 1978, p 4.

There are over 6,000 cities, towns and villages in the kingdom. The six main cities are: Riyadh, the capital, in the central region (Najd); Dammam, the main port, in the eastern region (Al-Ahsa); Mecca and Medina, the holy cities of Islam, Jeddah, the main port, in the western region (Al-Hijaz) and Abha in Asir (the southern region)(4).

### **2.2.2. Climate**

Saudi Arabia's climate is controlled by a subtropical high pressure system(5). However, Saudi Arabia is such a large country, that its climate varies from one region to another. The nation-wide average temperature is 18 degrees C. Local averages vary considerably, for example from 30 to 45 degrees in the middle, western and eastern regions, and from 7 degrees to 33 degrees C. in the north. In the southwest, the temperature in winter falls below zero.(6)

### **2.2.3. Population**

Most of the population is concentrated in large cities such as Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Mecca, Taif and Medina. According to the 1992 census, the total population of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is 16,929,29 of whom 12,304,825 are Saudi nationals. The population density is seven persons per square kilometre(7). In 1990, the

Ministry of Finance and National Economy reported that the age distribution of the population was as shown in Table 2:

**Table 2: Saudi Arabian Population**

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-4	8.95%	8.63%	17.58%
5-9	7.49%	7.24%	14.73%
10-14	6.36%	6.16%	12.52%
15-19	4.91%	4.67%	9.58%
20-24	4.38%	3.75%	8.14%
25-29	4.34%	3.05%	7.39%
30-34	4.50%	2.49%	6.98%
35-39	3.97%	2.12%	6.08%
40-44	2.84%	1.79%	4.63%
45-49	2.00%	1.46%	3.46%
50-54	1.49%	1.18%	2.67%
55-59	1.11%	0.95%	2.07%
60-64	0.80%	0.74%	1.54%
65-69	0.57%	0.57%	1.14%
70-74	0.35%	0.38%	0.74%
75-79	0.21%	0.25%	0.46%
80+	0.12%	0.16%	0.28%
Total	54.40%	45.60%	100.00%

Statistics Ministry of Finance and National Economy, National Census, 1990, p. 30.

#### **2.2.4. Religion**

Saudi Arabia is the heartland of Islam; its constitution is based on the Holy Quran, and its law is the Islamic *Sharia* (The totality of the religious and moral laws of Islam). In the International Handbook of Education System, it has been stated that:

**Saudi Arabia is the heartland of Islam, the guardian of the Holy places; and nowhere is the influence of religion felt more directly or explicitly. Theoretically, religion and the state are one, and**



the Saudi constitution is the Quran. The law is *Shari'a* (The totality of the religious and moral laws of Islam) law and the principal school adhered to is the Hanbali school, although the other three main law schools of Islam are also recognised and respected(8).

Islam is dominant in Saudi Arabia, and affects every part of life(9). From this fact we can see the great importance of Islamic education which is based on the sources of Islamic religion: the Quran and *Hadith* (an account of what the Prophet did or of something said or done in presence of which he clearly approved) and Arabic education, since Arabic is considered the language of revelation.

### **2.2.5. Economy**

Before the discovery of oil, Saudi Arabia was extremely poor. Most people were gathered in tribes, taking care of their sheep or camels, following the rainfall across the desert to survive. Until world war two, the Saudi Arabian economy was a simple one, dependent upon subsistence farming, small time trading, pearl fishing, the export of camels, and pilgrimage dues. In 1938 oil was discovered in the eastern province, but was not exploited to any great extent until the establishment of ARMCO in 1946. Twenty-five years later, Saudi Arabia was one of the world's major oil producers(10). Saudi Arabia leads all middle Eastern countries in the production and exportation



of oil, natural gas and petrochemicals. It possesses more than the rest of the world's reserves put together. To exploit this resource, two major industrial cities in Jubail and Yanbu have been built, the biggest of their kinds in the middle east. The two cities contain a multitude of factories and plants for basic manufacturing industries and petrochemical industries. Heavy industries are also being promoted by the government to lessen its dependence on oil, which forms 92% of the kingdom's national income(11). There is no doubt that Saudi wealth has affected every aspect of life, changing social values, providing more educational opportunities and health facilities and raising the standard of living.

### **2.3. The History of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Generally speaking, the early history of education in Saudi Arabia is the story of a few *kuttab*s (schools teaching Islamic studies, reading and writing), attended a small proportion of the population, to gain knowledge of the Quran and *Hadith*.

Since the Islamic religion is the most important factor in Saudi Arabian culture, religious considerations determine the nature of education, as they do all activities and policies of both government and people. It is well known that the religion and customs of the Saudi people do not allow unrelated males and females to mix.

Therefore, education is segregated, and the types and history of education in Saudi Arabia are divided into two categories:

(I). Boys' Education.

(ii). Girls' Education.

### **2.3.1. Boys' Education**

Saudi Arabia as a sovereign country is about sixty nine years old, and the modern educational system established by the government is still younger. Sixty-nine years ago, formal education was not known in the area. In those days education consisted of reading and reciting the Quran, and the rote method was emphasised. In many parts of the country, mosque schools and kuttabs were the only schools available.

Lipsky pointed out that:

**Until twenty-five years ago, formal education in Saudi Arabia was entirely in the Islamic tradition of religious and classical learning, and was available to a tiny segment of the country's youth(12).**

Al-Bunyan also, in a recent study of Saudi Arabian Secondary Technical Institutes, observed that at the beginning of the twentieth century, education was entirely traditional in Najd, the central province of the country. However, it was free of charge in most cases, and it was supported locally by individual scholars. The situation was similar in Al-Ahsa, the Eastern region, and in Asir, the

Southern region. The Western region, Al-Hijaz, was more exposed to modern influences because of its religious and commercial status and also due to the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina, which are centres for pilgrimage(13) Tibawi, in his book, Islamic Education, tells us that there were a few private schools in this area, sponsored by individual benefactors, including the Al-Falah schools which were supported by voluntary contributions of resident Muslim communities originating in India and Indonesia. These private and community schools emphasised religion, because they were in the cradle of Islam, though some added such 'modern' subjects as history, geography and mathematics to their curriculum(14).

Al-Zaid, in a more recent book, Education in Saudi Arabia, has mentioned other private schools. Saulatniyya school at Mecca city, long acknowledged as the best in the kingdom, had been founded as early as 1870. Another Islamic school called Dar Al-Faaizeen established in 1883, and the Al-Falah school, founded in 1916, were also created in Mecca. All these schools were philanthropic, and they had come into being through private initiatives as a service provided by immigrants to the holy land. They were all significantly influenced by new educational ideas that had penetrated into India and Turkey from non-Muslim countries(15). After his arrival in Mecca in 1923, King Abdullazeez called a

meeting of experts and scholars in Mecca, and it was decided that it was time to introduce modern education systematically all over the country(16).

### 2.3.1.1. The Directorate of Education

In 1924 the Directorate of Education was established to form the nucleus for the first modern educational system in Saudi Arabia and to spread and direct the expansion of learning and knowledge. The Directorate opened schools and institutes of higher learning all over the Kingdom (see Table 3)(17).

**Table 3: Estimated Number of Saudi Arabian Students and Teachers, by Educational Stage, in 1950.**

Stage	Number of Schools	Students enrolled	Teachers employed
<b>Elementary Schools</b>	127	22,431	839
<b>Village Schools</b>	70	2,622	101
<b>Evening Schools</b>	13	1,135	122
<b>High Schools</b>	12	415	22
<b>Boarding Schools</b>	-	297	-
<b>Students Abroad ( College level)</b>	-	121	-
<b>Students Abroad (Below college level)</b>	-	112	-
<b>Total</b>	222	27,133	1,084

Al-Bunyan, A. Analysis of the Current Provision of Vocational Skills in a Sample of Saudi Arabian Secondary Schools. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1992, p 39.

From 1924 to 1953 this directorate achieved a number of educational goals. One of the achievements was the establishment in



1948 of an industrial school with Egyptian staff and curriculum. The school taught the usual theoretical and practical subjects appropriate to a trade school, as well as English and other subjects(18). However, progress was slow, because of the poverty of the country, and high level of illiteracy(19).

#### **2.3.2.2. The Ministry of Education**

In 1953, the national education system was wholly reformed, the previous Directorate of Education being replaced by a new Ministry of Education headed by Prince Fhad (who succeeded as King in 1982).(20) The new Ministry was given the specific task of expanding the national school system, to give it a modern basis comparable with that of Western states. Within a year of its establishment, the number of students in the elementary schools of the country rose from 22,431, to 59,839. However this expansion was confined to elementary education until 1958, when a conference was held in Saudi Arabia which recommended the development of further and higher educational facilities, as far as the Kingdom could afford them.(21).

Al-Meajal described this as marking a new era in the history of educational organisation in Saudi Arabia, as regional educational offices were established throughout the country to be local representatives of the Ministry of Education, charged with the duty of

administering and supervising education in their districts(22). At present, the ministry is one of the most important ministries in the country, and its style has been influenced by the British system through Egypt and by the French system through Lebanon and Syria(23).

### **2.3.2. Girls' Education**

Before 1960, girls' education was almost non-existent in the country, although there were a few private schools which followed a curriculum of their own, and a number of *Kuttabs* which taught Islam to girls(24). Because of the nature of the society and its socio-cultural outlook, girls' education developed more than thirty years after than that of boys. Al-Zaid observed that:

**Prior to 1960, when the general Presidency for Girls Education was established, the education of girls was limited and was conducted by private institutions in very few towns of the kingdom. The idea of girls' education met with strong opposition in some areas of the kingdom, when the Presidency first began to carry out its official duties. However, this opposition has changed at present into keen support everywhere(25).**

In fact, the real starting point for the formal education of girls was the establishment of the General Presidency for Girls' Education (GPGE) in 1960 to supervise the education of girls at all levels. This department played an increasingly important role. Its work was defined by the Ministry of Planning in 1964 as having the objective

of bringing women up in a sound Islamic way so that they can fulfil their duties as successful housewives, and ideal wives, while also preparing them for other activities that suit their nature such as teaching, nursing and medicine(26). In 1970, there were only 15 elementary schools for girls in the country, which served 5180 female students(27). The generous financial support of the Saudi government to girls' education helped this vital sector to develop remarkably in 30 years. Table 4 shows the number of schools, students and teachers in girls' education in Saudi Arabia in 1992.

**Table 4: The Number of Schools, Students and Teachers in Girls' Education in Saudi Arabia in 1992.**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Full-time Teachers</b>
Primary	4247	870539	61233
Intermediate	1447	287999	21527
Secondary	715	144923	12062

Al-Hakel, S. School Administration and Its Manpower in Saudi Arabia. Dar Al-Shaple, Saudi Arabia, 1994, p 21.

## **2.4. The Present Educational System**

### **2.4.1. General Objectives**

The current basis of the education policy of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom was established in 1970. The agreed general objectives of education require that:

students learn to understand in a correct and comprehensive manner. This determination involves that the Islamic creed is planted and spread, and that students are furnished with Muslim values, teachings and ideals. The student is to be equipped with the skills and knowledge which enable him to contribute constructively to the development of the Saudi Arabian society economically, socially and culturally having been fully prepared to become a useful member in the building of his community(28).

The policy defines further objectives for each stage and kind of education in three stages, according to the age of the students.

#### **2.4.2. Structure, Administration and Organisation of the Schools**

Although education is considered a priority for the country, it is not compulsory. The Saudi delegation to the thirty-fifth International Conference on Education, UNESCO in 1968 stated three reasons behind this: (a)because education is valued by the general population, the majority of children are sent to schools without any compulsion; (b)regular schools are alien to the lifestyle of the Bedouin nomads, and other forms, such as mobile schools, have been found to be more satisfactory for this segment of the population; (c):there is still a shortage of teachers which is not fully met, even by recruitment from neighbouring Arab countries(29).



Saudi schools are open for five days a week, from Saturday to Wednesday, being closed on Thursdays and Fridays. The school day begins at 8.00 a.m. and ends at 2.00 p.m., and every student attends seven periods of instruction, each lasting approximately forty-five minutes, each day. Students have twenty minutes for lunch, and thirty minutes are devoted to noon prayer every day(30).

The Ministry of Education, the Presidency of Girls' Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and the General Organisation of Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVT) are the principal authorities responsible for education in the kingdom(31). There are four stages in the Saudi school system.

These are:

- a) The Kindergarten level, which caters for children under the age of six years.
- b) The Primary level, for pupils between six and eleven years.
- c) The Intermediate level, for pupils between twelve and fifteen years.
- d) The Secondary level, for students between fifteen and eighteen years.



Beyond the school system there is University level education, for students between the ages of nineteen and twenty-four, and later at the Higher degree level(32).

#### **2.4.2.1. Kindergarten**

Kindergarten caters for children under the age of six. This stage is not formally included by the Ministry of Education in the educational ladder and attendance is not a prerequisite for admission to elementary school(33). In 1990/90, there were 214 public kindergartens, and 432 private kindergartens, representing 33.1% and 66.91% respectively of the total.(34).

#### **2.4.2.2. Primary Stage**

Primary education in Saudi Arabia is comprised of the first grade to the sixth grade, leading to intermediate school. Students are admitted at six years of age(35). Al-Saloom has pointed out that there were two types of primary school before 1953, the first for students who lived in the villages, and the second for children in the towns. There were some differences in the curriculum and the pattern of study between the two types of school(36). However, after 1953 the Ministry of Education extended the fuller curriculum of the town schools to the village schools, to ensure that the same opportunity of study should be open to all, and that the quality of education received

by students should be the same(37). As we can see in Table 5, a steady and impressive expansion of elementary education in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been witnessed, as indicated by the large increase in the number of schools, classrooms, classes, pupils and teachers.

**Table 5:Development of the Primary Schools until 1992**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Classrooms</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Full-time Teachers</b>
1963/64	600	3710	95960	4057
1970/71	1072	7374	174514	7802
1978/79	3638	26607	517096	28156
1983/84	14413	34801	688170	45404
1989	4806	42763	919949	55381
1992	5307	48248	986822	65020

Al-Hakel, S. School Administration and Its Manpower in Saudi Arabia. Dar Al-Shapel, Saudi Arabia, 1994, p 21.

The educational policy of the Kingdom, defined in 1970, set the objectives of the elementary schools as follows:

- . To implant the true Muslim faith in the heart of the child, and to raise him to behave in accordance with Islamic behaviour with a complete manifestation of its rules in his character, body, mind and language, and to identify with the Muslim nation;
- . To train students to perform their prayers and to observe the rules of conduct and good manners;

- . To develop the basic skills in the student, particularly those of language, arithmetic and physical fitness;
- . To provide the student with a suitable amount of information in all the various subjects;
- . To acquaint him with the blessings bestowed by God on him and on his social and geographical environment, so that he may make good use of his gifts, allowing them be beneficial to him and to his environment;
- . To cultivate aesthetic tastes, nurturing creative activities, and building a sense of appreciation for his handiwork;
- . To develop his talents so that he is aware of his duties and rights appropriate to his age and the special particularities of the stage in which he is passing, and to inculcate love for his fatherland and loyalty to his superiors who are charged with authority;
- . To generate in the student the desire to seek useful knowledge, to learn serviceable work and to benefit from leisure time;
- . To prepare the pupil for that phase of life which is to follow his present one(38).

#### **2.4.2.3. Intermediate Stage**

While intermediate and secondary education were combined before 1952, after 1957 the intermediate schools were separated from secondary schools, becoming a distinct stage. As a result, students who have successfully completed the sixth grade of primary

education now proceed to intermediate schools for three years, from the age of 12 to 15 years (39). As a result of a new policy, the number of schools rose from 20 in 1952 to 1,363 in 1986 (the number of classes rose from 1,297 to 13,646 in the same period (see Table 6). The number of students in intermediate schools reached 342,993 in 1992.

**Table 6: The Development of Intermediate Schools until 1992**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Classrooms</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Full-time Teachers</b>
1963/64	17	97	2338	156
1968/69	237	1491	42921	2640
1978/79	906	5872	143725	10172
1983/84	1323	7751	203252	14947
1989	1766	10651	279770	20559
1992	2162	13646	142992	26409

Al-Hakel, S. School Administration and Its Manpower in Saudi Arabia. Dar Al-Shapel, Saudi Arabia, 1994, p 18.

The educational policy of the Kingdom defined in 1970 determined the objectives of intermediate schools as aiming at the following goals:

- . To strengthen the Islamic faith in the souls of the student, making it serve as a controller of conduct and behaviour as well as a developer of love, devotion and fear of God;



- . To provide the experience and knowledge appropriate for his age and to lay a foundation of the basic principles of culture and science;
- . To arouse the desire to seek knowledge, and to habituate him to meditation and scientific study;
- . To develop the mental faculties and various skills of the student through proper guidance and instruction;
- . To educate him according to the qualities of Islamic social life, which is characterised by brotherliness, co-operation, the performance of duty, and a sense of responsibility;
- . To train him to serve the society of his fatherland, and to develop in him a spirit of sincerity and loyalty to his superiors;
- . To prompt his zeal for the Glory of his Muslim nation and its march along the path of glory and honour;
- . To cultivate in him the habit of using his time in good reading, of using his leisure time in beneficial work and of carrying out his activities in such a manner as to make his Islamic personality richer and stronger;
- . To strengthen the student's ability to recognise and withstand misleading rumours, destructive doctrines and alien thoughts, according to the level of his age;
- . To prepare him for the phases of life to follow his present one(40).

#### **2.4.2.4. Secondary Stage**

This stage, again, lasts three years, for pupils between fifteen and eighteen years of age. It comprises the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades. This level provides many forms of guidance and preparation and consists of several divisions in which the holders of the intermediate certificate are enrolled, in line with the regulations set by the concerned authorities. It includes Islamic institutions, teacher training, vocational school (agricultural or industrial), art school, athletic school, and all other smaller schools that may be established in the future.(41)

Most students enter into a general secondary school which covers general courses such as religion and Arabic, English, history, physics, chemistry, mathematics and physical education. Students who reach tenth grade have a choice between scientific or literary studies. The literary section emphasises subjects such as Arabic, English, geography, history and others, while the scientific section emphasises subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics. Students may be enrolled in one or other of these areas according to their abilities and inclinations(42). Table 7 shows the steady and impressive expansion of secondary education in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia which has been witnessed, as indicated by

large increase in the number of schools, classrooms, classes, pupil and teachers.

**Table 7: The Development of Secondary Schools until 1992**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Classrooms</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Full-time Teachers</b>
1958/59	16	76	1260	105
1968/69	50	368	9584	477
1978/79	259	2092	54941	3003
1983/84	462	3096	79990	5140
1989	581	4777	127042	8195
1992	758	6033	156480	10677

Al-Hakel, S. School Administration and Its Manpower in Saudi Arabia. Dar Al-Shapel, Saudi Arabia, 1994, p 21.

Along with the other stages, the secondary stage contributes to the realisation of the general objectives in education, in addition to its own special objectives which include:

- . To continue to fulfil the duty of loyalty to God alone, so that all deeds are performed to please Him, and to be straightforward in all things, according to His laws;
- . To consolidate the Islamic faith through which the student will have a sound outlook on the universe, man's life on earth and in the Hereafter, and to provide the basic notions and the Islamic culture

which can make him feel proud of Islam, capable of spreading the message and of defending it;

- . To enable him to be a good, active member of the Islamic nation;
- . To encourage the student to fulfil his loyalty to Islam in general and to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in particular, with a deep vision, an aspiration for the highest social standing and the physical strength appropriate to his age;
- . To take care of the capabilities of the students and their various inclinations which begin to flower during this period, and to direct such capabilities and inclinations in a manner suitable for them and in a way which enables them to realise the aims of Islamic Education according to its full meaning;
- . To develop scientific thinking in the student, to deepen his interest in research, experimentation, detailed systematic study, use of references, and habituate him to sound study methods;
- . To provide opportunities for capable students and to prepare them to pursue their studies in various specialisations and at various levels in the Higher Educational Institutes and University Colleges;
- . To prepare all students for work in various fields of activity at proper levels;
- . To enable the graduation of vocationally and technically qualified persons to meet the needs of the country at the first stage of



education, and to perform religious, technical, agricultural, commercial, industrial and other jobs effectively;

□. To establish family consciousness for the sake of founding sound Muslim families;

□. To prepare students to fight spiritually and physically for the sake of God;

□. To take care of the youth according to Muslim principles, remedying their intellectual and emotional problems, and helping them to pass this difficult period of their life successfully and safely;

□. To let the students develop good habits of useful reading and to stimulate in them a desire to acquire further knowledge, to perform good deeds, and utilise their leisure time in a beneficial manner that will enrich their personalities and uplift the conditions of their society;

□. To build a positive consciousness through which the student can face destructive and misleading trends with confidence(43).

### **2.4.3. Religious Education**

As indicated previously, Saudi Arabia is the heartland of Islam and its constitution is based on the Holy Quran. It contains the two holiest places in the Muslim world, Mecca (the birth place of the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, and site of his Divine Revelation in 610 AD) and Medina (where the Prophet was forced to

flee with his followers in 622 AD. and where he was finally buried). One must understand the strong position of religion in the country, in order fully to understand its education system. In the 43rd International Conference on Education, in Geneva in 1992, it was stated that:

**Islam dictates that learning is an obligation on every Muslim, men or women. This obligation which gives education the status of religious duty is the cornerstone of education in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia(44).**

Education in Saudi Arabia is based on a heritage of Islamic education which goes back to the time of the prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him), who is considered the first teacher in Islamic education. In Saudi Arabia, religious education has two aspects: informal and formal.

#### **2.4.3.1. Informal Education**

This kind of education occurs mostly in the mosques, where it is largely undertaken by volunteers. From the earliest days of Islam, the mosque has played a very important role in Muslim life. Mosques were intended by the Prophet to be the places of learning, as well as of prayer and of marriage. They were also to be the centres at which the army was organised, and a home for the homeless, and they continue to play some of these important roles in modern times. Al-Sharaf, in a recently unpublished study of Islamic Religious

Education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia explained their current role thus:

The mosque in Saudi was always at the heart of the community. It is still the case nowadays. When the time for prayer comes, people close offices. Markets stop trading, the University come to a stand-still, and most Government Ministers break for fifteen minutes to perform prayer, then they all return back to normal work(45).

The education syllabus of the mosques focuses on the Quran, the *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), the Creed, and *seerah* (the biography of the Prophet (PBUH)). Education in the mosques is still very popular. People of different ages attend classes, adults as well as children, and teaching is regular, often being maintained on a daily basis, all year long(46). While formal education has succeeded the mosques as the main focus of Islamic education, it has not displaced them. While they are now the second educational institution in Saudi Arabia, their ethos penetrates the entire system.

#### **2.4.3.2. Formal Education**

This branch of Islamic Education is controlled by the government, and is divided into two categories, according to the supervisory authority.

##### **A)- Schools for Teaching and Memorisation of the Quran**

Teaching the Quran in schools represents a large part of Religious Education in Saudi Arabia. These schools aim to teach the Quran through memorisation of the holy book. There is no difference

between them and the general schools, except in their emphasis on teaching the Quran(47). A document(1970) has specified the goals of these schools, saying that 'they will work to extend the memorisation of the book of *Allah* (God) '(48).

#### B)- Religious Schools

Some Islamic Education is controlled by the Imam Ben Saud University, through Religious schools both inside the Kingdom and among Muslim communities elsewhere, e.g. in the USA, Japan, Indonesia and the Arab Emirates(49). There are now fifty-four such schools answerable to the university's control, in which study is encompassed in two stages (in accordance with educational practice elsewhere in the Kingdom). Students begin at ordinary primary schools and then enter the intermediate stage for three years. They must have a primary school certificate and be not over sixteen years of age in order to be admitted. On completion of this stage, students pass to the secondary stage which also consists of three years, but must not exceed eighteen years at entry and must have achieved their intermediate school certificates in order to be admitted(50).

#### 2.4.4. Private Schools

As has already been mentioned, private education is the oldest educational system in Saudi Arabia. For many decades, before and after the unification of Saudi Arabia, these schools served Muslim



students both from Saudi and from other countries. Nowadays, the majority of these schools conform to the established curricula and receive funds from the government. The State encourages private schools at all levels under the supervision of the relevant technical and administrative authorities and a special law has been passed for this purpose. Licences for opening private schools are issued by the concerned educational authorities, only to Saudi citizens(51). There are now 1,065 private schools all over the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, that offer education to children by means of the regular school curricula(52). The educational policy of the Kingdom, defined in 1970, is to ensure that private schools achieve the same standard of education and facilities as government schools. To this end, the government role includes:

- Making sure that the trend in private schools complies with the requirements of Islam;

- Estimating the extent of financial aid given to each school in order to maintain equality and balance among the various private schools and institutes;

- Assisting private schools to achieve the general objectives of education as far as supervision and technical support are concerned(53).

### **2.4.5. Technical Education**

The government has established a special organisation for technical education, under the name of 'The General Organisation of Technical Education and Vocational Training'. This government organisation is responsible for industrial, commercial and agricultural education. There are vocational and pre-vocational training centres in most cities in Saudi Arabia, to produce skilled and semi-skilled manpower for the development of industry. These centres have many kinds of programme at pre-secondary, secondary and higher education stages(54). Table 8 shows the basic components of technical education by types and level.

**Table 8:Provision of Technical Education by Types and Level in 1993 in Saudi Arabia.**

	<b>Industrial</b>		<b>Commercial</b>		<b>Agricultural</b>
	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Higher</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Higher</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Colleges	8	7	22	4	1
Classes	284	143	281	17	16
Students	3444	7025	7025	374	408
Teachers	882	510	501	19	40
Administrators	210	136	123	19	40

Ministry of Education. Development of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Data Centre, 1992, p. 30.

The educational policy of the Kingdom, defined in 1970, determined the objectives of technical education as aiming at the following goals:

-Concerned government authorities shall establish necessary institutions to meet Saudi Arabia's needs for workers in farming, business, industry and other fields;

-Concerned educational authorities shall adopt all means of encouraging students to enrol in technical and vocational training. They shall open the opportunities for graduates to work with companies, institutions, factories, and installations. The concerned ministers shall adopt the necessary measures to provide work for graduates and organise their status(55).

#### **2.4.6. Adult Education**

In order to overcome the problem of illiteracy and to raise educational standards among the population generally, the government has attached importance to adult education and supports this kind of education, technically and administratively. Classes for males are held in the evening, while those for females are held during the daytime, beginning in the afternoon and ending before sunset. Most of the adult education schools are held in the buildings of public schools; the majority of teaching is carried out by the teachers and administrators of day schools(56). Enrolment in adult education is on the increase, and the government interest in these programmes is increasing. Now, there are 103,111 adult students and 2,260

centres for adult education(57). The major objectives of adult education are:

- Supplying illiterate adults with the necessary amount of religious knowledge;
- Teaching reading, writing, and elementary arithmetic.
- Enlightening them about the general affairs of life(58).

#### **2.4.7. Special Education**

Special education provides instruction to mentally handicapped, blind and deaf children of both sexes(59). It is supervised by a special department in the Ministry of education. Both general and vocational training are provided in the institutes of special education. The general education section includes courses similar to the courses for normal pupils in elementary, intermediate and secondary schools. There is, of course, some modification of the subject matter and methods of teaching. Currently, there are 6,354 students and 54 institutes for special education(60).

The major objective of this kind of education is to care for handicapped individuals, providing them with religious and other necessary general education and training them in skills suitable to their nature and level of ability, in order to help them attain the



highest standard of living possible and consistent with their capacities(61).

#### **2.4.8. Teacher Training**

Educational planners in Saudi Arabia are faced with a difficult and pressing problem, namely, the acute shortage of well-trained native teachers. This problem has persisted ever since modern education in Saudi Arabia was established. According to the Ministry of Education, in 1991 non-Saudi teachers represented 30% of the total number of teachers(62). With this in mind, the authorities in Saudi Arabia have set up plans to produce teachers who are qualified educationally and technically, by establishing many teacher education programmes. The educational policy of the Kingdom, defined in 1970, determined the major objectives of teacher education programmes as follows:

- New courses shall be constantly introduced into teachers' colleges and education departments in response to the country's needs as permitted by the timetable;
- Recruitment to the administrative and teaching staff in these colleges shall be done in line with general educational objectives as stated above, namely morality, scientific standards, and educational competence;

-Students enrolled in teachers' colleges will be granted special financial and social privileges;

-Teacher training will be a continuous operation. A plan is set up to train and upgrade teachers who have been professionally disqualified by the new educational standards of the nation and another plan is under way to provide in-service training to enable practising teachers to qualify for higher posts in their field of specialisation(63).

#### **2.4.8.1. Teacher Training for Male Teachers**

In Saudi Arabia, public formal teacher training is a recent development. Al-Saloom reported that formal teacher training for male teachers dates back to the early the 1950s(64). At present, the teacher training programme is divided into two groups:

- (i). Elementary school teachers;
- (ii). Intermediate and Secondary school teachers.

##### **(i)-Elementary School Teachers**

As will be explained in more detail in Chapter Five, the eighteen Junior Colleges all over the kingdom, supervised by the Ministry of Education, represent the principal indigenous institutions for the preparation of prospective elementary teachers in the kingdom. However, in 1988 these colleges underwent some changes in terms of

the curriculum and the duration of the programme and were renamed Teachers' Colleges, instead of Junior Colleges(65).

#### (ii)-Intermediate and Secondary Teachers

For intermediate and secondary school teachers, the responsibility for teacher training and preparation is vested in the universities and colleges of education(66).

#### **2.4.8.2. Teacher Training for Female Teachers**

While the preparation of prospective female elementary teachers came as late as the 1960s, the development in such provision was generally similar to that for preparation of male elementary teachers(67).

#### (i)-Elementary Female Teachers

Teacher training for female elementary school teachers is carried out through the eighteen Junior Colleges all over the kingdom, supervised by the General Presidency of Girls' education(GPGE). These represent the main source of prospective elementary teachers in the kingdom(68).

#### (ii)-Intermediate and Secondary Teachers

For intermediate and secondary school female teachers, the responsibility for teacher training and preparation is vested in the

colleges of education under the supervision of the General Presidency of Girls' Education and the universities which have opened some colleges especially for female students and established separate female campuses(69).

#### **2.4.9. Higher Education**

In a country like Saudi Arabia, where primary education began only in the late 1930s, and where a serious secondary educational programme was established only in 1953, it is natural that higher education was at first given a lower priority than general education. In fact, colleges and universities are a new phenomenon in Saudi Arabia. Prior to 1949, higher education was non-existent and graduates from secondary school were sent to neighbouring Arab states to complete their studies. The first Saudi institution of higher education to be established was the *Sharia* or Islamic Law College in Mecca. Its primary purpose was to train Muslim judges and intermediate and secondary school teachers(70). Gradually, the number of higher institutions increased. In 1975 the Ministry of Higher Education was formed to shoulder most of the responsibilities for higher education. The Ministry of Higher Education stated that:

**The Ministry of Higher Education and the universities in the kingdom's have a common role based on their the original teaching of Islam and the kingdom's educational policy, stipulating that universities shall be bound by Islam as to creed,**



worship, law, constitutional way of life, and framework of education(71).

The objectives of higher education have emerged from the general social and economic objectives of the nation which include:

□. To promote loyalty to God and to continue the process of providing the student with the Islamic culture which will make him feel responsible, as part of his duty towards God, for the Muslim nation so that his educational and practical abilities may be useful and fruitful;

□. To prepare citizens who are highly qualified, educationally and intellectually, to perform their duties towards their country and to promote learning in the light of proper Islamic beliefs and sound Islamic principles;

□. To provide an opportunity for highly gifted persons to continue study in the various specialisations;

□. To perform a positive role in the field of scientific research, thus contributing to world progress in arts, science and inventions and finding the appropriate sound solutions to the requirements of modern life and its technological aspects;

□. To give a boost to the movement of academic research and production so that academic advancement is in the service of Islamic thought, and to enable the country to play a leading role in building human civilisation based on genuine principles which can lead

mankind to righteousness and integrity of conduct, and to prevent them from slipping into the degradation of material and secular diversions;

□. To translate useful science and arts into Arabic and enrich the Arabic language by incorporating loan terms and expressions according to the needs of Arabic translation, and make this knowledge available to the largest number of citizens;

□. To undertake innovative training and study services which enable graduates to understand new developments which appear after their graduation(72).

To be admitted as a higher education student, one must successfully have completed the secondary level. For those who wish to study science or technology, a knowledge of English language is required. Money, however, is not necessary as tuition is free and other stipends are provided for those who need them(73).

#### **2.4.9.1-Higher Education for Males**

At present there are seven major universities arranged over sixteen campuses and they cover the entire kingdom. They grant B.Sc., B.A, MA, M.Sc. and PhD degrees(74).

#### 2.4.9.1.1- King Saud University in Riyadh (KSU)

King Saud University is the largest and oldest University in the country, having been established in 1957 as the University of Riyadh(75). The university has nineteen colleges in addition to the King Khalid University Hospital and King Abdulazeez University Hospital (76).

#### 2.4.9.1.2-The Islamic University in Medina

The Islamic University of Medina was founded in 1961. This university has five colleges with eleven different branches(78). Al-Farisi commented that the Islamic University in Medina is analogous to Al-Azhar University in Cairo, having as its aim the instruction of Muslim students from all over the world in order to produce knowledgeable Islamic scholars(78).

#### 2.4.9.1.3. King Abdulazeez University in Jeddah (KAAU).

King Abdulaziz University was established in Jeddah in 1967 as a private institution supported by voluntary contributions in accordance with Arab, American and British advice. Its first degree schemes were of five years length, to compensate for the rather low standard of secondary education in Saudi Arabia(79). However the University now has ten colleges, and the following centres are contained within it:

-King Fahad Centre for Medical Research;

- The Economic Research Centre;
- The English Language Centre;
- The Centre for Technical Education.(80).

#### 2.4.9.1.4. The Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud University in Riyadh

The Riyadh Religious school is the nucleus of the Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud, commonly known as The Imam University(81). It was founded in 1974, and was chartered as a University, which now has thirteen colleges. It also has six institutes outside of the kingdom, in addition to fifty institutes for religious studies spread through the country(82).

#### 2.4.9.1.5. King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals in Daharan (KFUPM)

The Petroleum and Minerals University was founded as a college in 1963, and was chartered in Dahrán. In 1975 the official name of the college became University of Petroleum and Minerals. In 1986 the university was renamed, King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals. Its work is concerned with oil and mineral extraction and processing, and it now has seven colleges.(83)

#### 2.4.9.1.6. King Faisal University in Dammam (KFU)

King Faisal University, established in 1974, was inaugurated during the academic year 1975/76 with two campuses, at Dammam and



Hofuf in Al-Ahsa(84). It has six colleges and a number of training stations and centres.(85)

#### 2.4.9.1.7. University of Umm Al-Qura in Mecca (UQU)

This University was founded in Mecca by an order from King Fahad in the course of the third development plan for Saudi Arabia in 1979(86). Apart from its Colleges of Education, Engineering, and Applied Science, the University is primarily concerned with the study and teaching of Islam and Islamic Culture(87).

#### **2.4.9.2. Higher Education for Females**

As has already been mentioned, the General Presidency of Girls' education in Saudi Arabia is the sole supervisor of all forms of female education. It plays a major role in the supervision of women's higher education. A total of twelve teacher-training colleges were opened between 1970 and 1980 in different regions of Saudi Arabia(88). Moreover, fifteen junior colleges have been established under the supervision of the General Presidency of Girls' Education, where students study for two years to obtain an Intermediate Diploma in education. Applicants must have a secondary school certificate(89).

**Table 9: The Number of Students in Higher Education (1991)**

<b>University</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
<b>King Saud University in Riyadh(KSU)</b>	32,235
<b>Imam University in Riyadh</b>	14,615
<b>Islamic University in Medina</b>	2,593
<b>King Abdulazeez University in Jeddah (KAAU)</b>	32,476
<b>Umm Al Qura University in Mecca (UQU)</b>	15,862
<b>King Fahad University of petroleum in Daharan (KFUPM)</b>	4,528
<b>King Faisal University in Dammam (KFU)</b>	5,508

Al-Hakel, S. School Administration and Its Manpower in Saudi Arabia. Dar Al-Shaple, Saudi Arabia, 1994, p 18.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has presented a brief profile of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, before introducing its education system. It has been seen that formal education in Saudi Arabia is a relatively recent phenomenon. Early education was non-formal, and followed a limited curriculum focusing mainly on the Quran and the *Hadith*. Since the establishment of formal education, however, there has been rapid quantitative development at all levels, and conscious attempts have been made to introduce modern curricula and teaching methods.

The most striking feature of the Saudi education system is the primacy of Islam, which provides the *raison d'être* of education at all levels. Statements of educational objectives and policy show that the whole education system is focused on the development not only of students' cognitive abilities, but also of their moral sensibility and social skills in accordance with Islamic values, so that they may fulfil their expected role in an Islamic society. Thus, in Saudi Arabia, it is not really possible to think of general education at whatever level, separately from Islamic education .

In the following chapter, this theme will be explained in more depth, in order to highlight the special nature and role of the curriculum subjects, Islamic Studies and Arabic, on which this study is focused.

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**Part II:**  
**Literature Review**

# Chapter Three

## Islamic Education

### 3.1. Introduction:

Education is a key element in the economic progress of any society. Indeed, Bertrand Russell observed that education is the key to the new world(1). His standpoint is one which is rooted in a human ideal, for an ancient Chinese proverb says:

**If you are planning for the year, plant grains.  
If you are planning for the decade, plant trees.  
If you are planning for a millennium, plant men(2).**

It is through education that men are rooted and the millennia are built. Indeed, beliefs, thoughts and heritage influence the form of education for any society. In his article, Islamic Education: Its Principles and Aims, Al-Taftazani emphasised this idea when he said:

**Every nation has its beliefs, principles and philosophy, which are the fruit of its historical heritage, .....this is why we must not import educational philosophies which are the product of their own age and environment and unsuitable for any other time or place. I do not mean by this that we should isolate ourselves, for it is the duty of the universities to study every idea, with provision that we evaluate it and do not lose our intellectual independence(3).**



As Saudi Arabian education is based on Islamic education, and the core of this study is concerned with Islamic education, readers generally, particularly non-Arab readers, need some understanding of this kind of education. Accordingly, this chapter provides an introduction to the history and philosophy of Islamic education, including its relationship with the Arabic language, and brief accounts of some notable Muslim educators are given. It should be pointed out that the purpose of this chapter is largely descriptive. Its subject matter will inevitably give rise to questions and issues for criticism and debate, with regard to the impact of Islam on syllabus, textbooks and teaching methods. Such issues will be acknowledged briefly in this chapter; however, a more detailed and critical examination of the issues raised will be presented in later chapters.

### **3.2. A Brief History of Islamic Education**

In any country, the development of education is shaped by historical factors, and by cultural aspects such as religion. To view Saudi Arabian education in perspective, it is necessary above all to consider the impact of Islam. Before the rise of Islam in the early seventh century, ignorance was widespread throughout Arabia, which followed the forms of religion common to non-monotheistic peoples. Thus, people were engulfed in the worship of idols. In his book, The Life of the Prophet, Ahmud Marza commented that:

**At the time of the Prophet's birth the *Kaaba* (the holy house) in *Mecca* (the birthplace of Islam and the place of Muslim pilgrimage), housed no fewer than 360 small idols(4).**

In his work, 'Islamic Education: its History in the Arab World', the Arab writer, Mohammed Mercuy described the situation of Arab people at that time:

**In the pre-Islamic period, ignorance was very common. Very few people could read or write. The only distinctive feature of the pre-Islamic period is the magnificent Arabic poetry of the pre-Islamic age, the heights of which were regarded as unattainable by Muslims in later centuries(5).**

At that time, Arabic culture was still behind its Egyptian, Persian and Babylonian counterparts. The aim of Arab education was to meet the needs of the desert economy, providing a dimension which gave a spiritual context to a life otherwise dominated by herd grazing, animal protection and defence issues. Children were trained to develop a good command of spoken Arabic and loyalty to the tribe (6). Historians call this period *Al-Jahili*, which is an Arabic word derived from the word *Jahal*, which implies ignorance. The real start of Islamic education is regarded as being when the Prophet Mohammed received the first message from *Allah* (God):

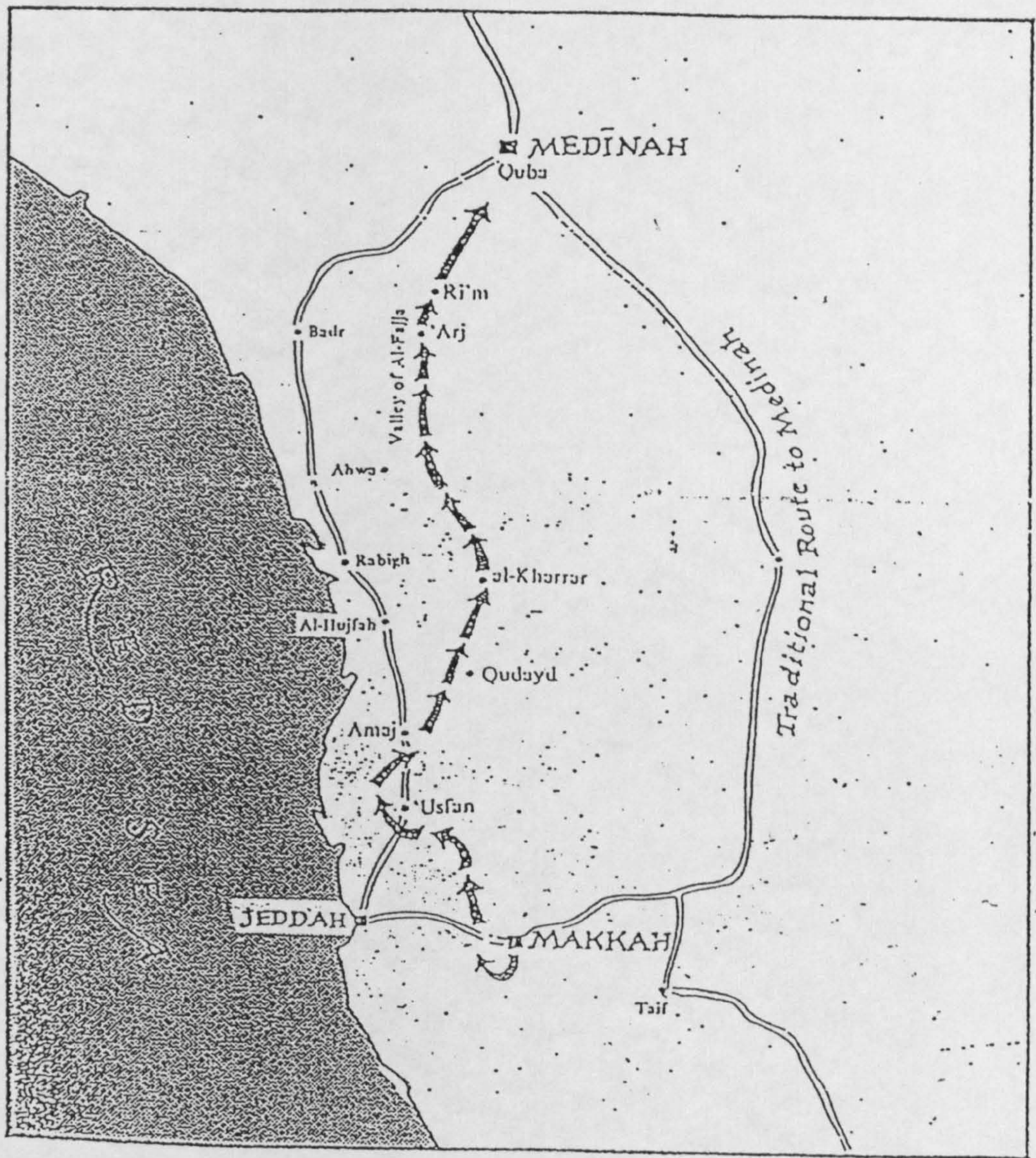
**Read in the name of the lord who created (all that exists)(7).**

As soon as he received the first *Quranic* verses, he began to preach the teachings known as Islam. The sort of teaching he engaged in could best be called adult education. Al-Quardhawi pointed out we are told that the Prophet used to teach his Companions, as children are taught in the primary schools(8). The Prophet and his followers soon underwent bitter persecution from the Makkhanians. As a result, they emigrated some 260 miles northwards, to Medina, which thus became the second holy city of Islam. This event is called the *Higra* (see Figure 3). Later, when Islam became established, Mohammed's *Higra* (migration) to Medina, which took place on the 15th of July 622 AD was selected to mark the beginning of the Islamic calendar(9).

Muhammad was greeted with joy by the people of Medina and Mohammed Husein reports, in his book, On the Life of Mohammed, that he was invited to stay in their houses in comfort and security(10).



**Figure 3: The Route of the *Hegria***



Nasseef, A & Badawi, M. Encyclopaedia of Seerah. The Muslim School Trust, London, p 15, Undated.



### **3.2.1. Informal Education**

#### **3.2.1.1. Mosque**

Mohammed's first act after arriving at Medina was to build a mosque for prayer. The mosque was to serve as a community centre for all believers(11). In his book, Islamic Moral Education: An Introduction, Hajaltom observed that because the mosque was the essential meeting place for prayer five times a day, it also became a centre where all important matters relating to the welfare of the Muslim community were discussed(12), and a natural focus for educational efforts. This perception has been emphasised by Al-Zubaidy in his article, 'Child Education in an Islamic Perspective: with special Reference to Iraq'. He wrote:

**The mosque was, from the earliest days, the hub of the community and, in addition to its religious and social role, it soon acquired an educational function. The mosque became the earliest school in Islam. Here, scholars would meet to discuss the *Quran*. ..... mosques served a most important socialising and unifying function for the emerging state and society(13).**

The system of education in the mosque was established by the prophet (peace be upon him) and expanded by his companions. It was organised on a purely voluntary basis and given entirely free of charge(14). After the death of the prophet, his companions continued the practices he had begun, and taught both in the prophet's mosque

in Medina, and in Mecca mosque. With the expansion of Islam, mosques were built in every important place and classes were opened in them(15).

### 3.2.2. Kuttabs

*Kuttab* is an Arabic word derived from *kitab* meaning book. So *kuttab* means that which is to do with books, i.e. reading and learning. Hence, a *kuttab* is a place of teaching and learning. It could be a house or a room beside the mosque or in a camp; the exact location or nature of the premises does not matter(16). This kind of education emerged after the time of the prophet, and was, in effect, a kind of elementary school. Classes for private tuition were held by agreement between parents; Umar Ibn Khattab is remembered for his injunction to Muslim parents, that they should teach their sons specific knowledge and skills(17).

From the time that a child began school at six or seven years of age, his main preoccupation was to memorise the Quran as perfectly as possible in the three or four years that he attended school. When learning to write, children usually copied passages from secular books(18). Al-Ghazzali (a Persian Islamic scholar of the sixth century) recommended that the child in the *kuttab* should first learn the Quran, then history, based on accounts and chronicles of

saintly people and their ways. Then he should be taught some rules of religion(19). To this curriculum Ibn Misqaveh (scholar and translator during the eighth century) added elements of arithmetic and some principles of Arabic grammar(20). Ibn Khaldun (a scholar of the eighth century, and author of *Muqaddimah*, or 'Prolegomena'), criticised the methods of teaching which were adopted in the *kuttab*. He did not like the traditional approach of rote learning, allowing no discussion or argument, an approach for which Islamic education has often been fiercely condemned by western critics. He pointed out that many teachers did not understand teaching methods and asked pupils difficult questions that could not be answered easily, even by a trainee scholar(21). The number of students in the *kuttab* varied from one *kuttab* to another. For example *Al-Bulkhi* (a scholar in the eighth century whose main interest was in the Prophet tradition) had a *kuttab* of 3000 pupils. Because of this huge number of pupils, *Al-Bulkhi* had to ride a donkey to be able to look after them and supervise their progress(22).

It is clear from the above, that there were some differences between educational practice in the mosque and *kuttab*. Regarding the level of students, mosque education served all levels of the community, whether adults or children, while *kuttab* education concentrated on children's education. A second difference, is with

regard to the study scheme. Mosque education was more religious than *kuttab* education, which taught some secular knowledge in addition to religious subjects. The third difference is in the place of study. Mosque education was provided in the mosque itself, while *kuttab* education could be provided wherever a group of students could be gathered together.

In both the mosque and *kuttab*, facilities were simple. For example there was only one teacher with an assistant, pupils had no chair to sit on and there was no textbook. Academically, the focus was on memorising lines from the Quran. Importance was also attached to attitude and behaviour. Pupils had a great respect for their teacher, and were expected to work hard. Also, the level of competition was very high and anyone who failed would be in trouble with his parents, as parents were very keen for knowledge and good behaviour to be instilled into their children. In short, discipline in both *kuttabs* and mosques was very strict. The extent to which this early focus on rote-learning and discipline may have affected Islamic education will be considered elsewhere in this thesis.



### **3.2.2. Formal Education**

This kind of education takes place in schools. School, or *Madrash* in Arabic, constitutes the formal education element in Islamic education. The majority of historians record that the first formal school was established by *Nizamul Mulk* (the Persian Muslim Ministry for the Islamic State in the 11th century) in Baghdad in 1067, and was called *Al-Madrasah alnazamyyah*(23). In his article, 'Islam and Modern Education' Ausaf described it as a great seat of learning, with huge endowments which enabled the disbursement of handsome salaries, thereby attracting highly talented scholars(24). Bilgrami and Asharaf stated that the curriculum of this school included the following subjects:

#### **A. The Linguistic and Revealed Sciences:**

**The Arabic Language**

**Grammar**

**Rhetoric**

**Literature**

**Reading (Quranic Verses)**

**Exegesis (Commentary)**

**Tradition (of the prophet).**

**Law**

**Sources of Principles of Law**

**Theology**

#### **B. The Rational Sciences:**

**Mathematics**

**Division of Inheritance**

**Logic(25).**

The number of schools increased very rapidly. Numerous schools were established in Baghdad, Nisapur, Cairo and other Muslim cities. Not only theological subjects were taught but in

addition, faculties such as Medicine, Philology and Applied Sciences were established(26).

Shalaby, a modern writer on Islamic education, posed the question:

**Why did education transfer from the mosques to the schools(27)?**

Imam Mailik (an Islamic scholar during the eighth century) when asked about this issue(28), pointed out the noise made by large numbers of students and the desire to increase the number of learners. Mosques generally did not have enough facilities, in terms of lecture rooms, seating and accommodation, for serious educational provision. Nonetheless, despite the movement towards education outside the mosque, in some states today, like Saudi Arabia, the mosque still fulfils a traditional role and houses lectures and social activities.

### **3.3. The Concept of Islamic Education:**

*Islamic* education as a concept integrates the two concepts of Islam and education. Thus, in order to explain it, we need to know, what we mean by Islam and what we mean by education.

### **3.3.1. Islam**

The word *Islam* has often been used by historians to denote the whole rich civilisation which grew up under the Muslim empires(29). However, Lewis and colleagues indicated that the word *Islam* has several meanings. In its traditional use by Muslims, it indicates the one true divine religion, taught to mankind by a series of prophets, each of whom brought a revealed book(30). It is the religious faith of the Muslim who professes *Allah* (God) as the sole deity and Mohammed as his prophet(31). Lunde and Sabial, in defining Islam, remarked that Islam means submission to the will of God(32). Ahmad explained Islam as an Arabic word which denotes submission and obedience to Allah(33). Indeed, it is clear to every Arabic speaker that the word Islam is derived from the Arabic root, SLM, which means among other things, peace, purity, submission and obedience. Thus, in the religious sense, the word Islam means submission to the will of Allah(34).

### **3.3.2. Education**

To complete our perception, it is needful also to look at the word education and to ask what this means. Peters has described education as being concerned with initiating young people into what is worthwhile. His viewpoint considers what is worthwhile as being the models of thought and awareness which are implicit in the disciplines of history, mathematics and aesthetics, together with initiation into



moral, prudential and technical forms of thought(35). Rowntree has similarly described education as the process of successful learning. From this viewpoint knowledge, skills and attitudes are considered to be achieved when the learner can express his own individuality through what he has learned and is able to apply it, adapting it flexibly to situations and problems other than those of learning(36).

Muslim scholars agree with these western scholars, that education complements and completes the growth of personality. In the first world conference on education organised by King Abdulaziz University and held in 1977 in Mecca, education was defined as:

**A process that should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of man, through the training of man's spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should therefore cater for the growth of man in all his aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively, and motivate all these aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection(37).**

These interpretations should be seen in the light of the many meanings attached to the word *Tarbyyah* (education) in the Arabic language. Al-Taftazani observed that the Arabic word is derived from the root *raba, yarbu*, meaning to grow or increase; thus, *Tarbia* means the gradual bringing of something to completeness (to perfection, or maturity). The use of the word *tarbia* is a modern



development. Formerly, Arabs used the word *tadib* (refinement, discipline), and they called a teacher or educator *muaddib* (one who refines, or teaches manners, one who disciplines)(38).

### **3.4. Definition of Islamic Education**

Some writers distinguish between Islamic education and Islamic Religious education. In a recent thesis on the major problems in Islamic teaching, Al-Mofda distinguished between general Islamic education, defined as:

**the teaching of Islamic principles and way of the life in the home, the school, and the society(39).**

and Islamic Religious education described as:

**the teaching of religion in the school, in the classroom, and in classroom activities as part of the formal educational curriculum(40).**

We may also notice in this connection that the book, Islamic Principles of Education, published by the Imam University in 1985, notes that in some Muslim countries, Islamic education implies only a school syllabus which includes some verses and the Prophetic traditions(41). However, in an article, 'The Role of Religion in Education' a notable writer on Islamic education, Mohammed Qutb, said that:

**When we talk about *Islamic* education, the formal and the traditional lessons on religion**

come to mind. And even if our imagination flew beyond the normal limits of the rigid religious lesson, it would seize on a sermon or a religious speech, not more, and there it would come to a halt. ....We ought to consider, however, that a formal and traditional lesson on religion will not be sufficient to meet the desired human requirements, particularly in contemporary life(42).

The secondary school curriculum handbook of the Saudi Ministry of Education(1973) states that:

The concept of Islamic Educational Research does not simply apply to the syllabus of schools, or the curriculum. It means rather the study of a comprehensive process based on the Muslim religion(43).

This inclusive approach is now general in many parts of the Arab world, and Al-Taftazani has made it plain when identifying Islamic Education thus:

When we say "*Islamic* education" we mean the nurture of the various gifts and abilities of the individual so that he may attain his full stature, both psychologically and intellectually, as well as the development, by various means, of the capabilities of society, with the similar aim of bringing about a better form of progress and sounder social development in accordance with the values of Islam(44).

This formulation reflects the view of education taken by Muslims in the 1977 Mecca conference. They epitomised Islamic education as a term conveying the mutual relationship among men, their society and environment, and *Allah* (God). All these dimensions are encompassed in Islamic education, whether formal or non-formal(45). Some writers prefer to use the term *Islamic* education as distinct from *Muslim* education. In his thesis, 'Principles of Environmental Engineering Systems Planning In Islamic Culture' Husaini stated that:

**This philosophy is called “Islamic” rather than merely “Muslim” to distinguish its ideal and ideological character from its actual Muslim character in the sociological-anthropological sense(46).**

The actual Muslim character may sometimes differ from the ideal of Islamic philosophy. For the purposes of this work , however, 'Islamic Education' 'Muslim Education', and 'Islamic Religious Education' are taken to mean 'Education about Islam'.

### **3.5. Foundation**

The *Quran* and *Hadith* are considered as the two main sources of Islamic education, according to Al-Nahalawy in his book, The Principles of Islamic Education and Its Method(47). The *Quran* is the

first source and basis for *Islamic* education. In his article, 'Conceptually Based Problems Within *Madrasah* (school) Education in South Africa', Waghid observed that:

**The *Quran* provides us with certain educational principles or guiding principles. What this means, is that one cannot discuss Islamic education without taking the *Quran* as one's starting point(48).**

The *sunnah* is the second source of Islamic education. It is a major guide to interpreting and putting into practice the content of the *Quran*. Of the prophet Mohammed, the *Quran* says:

**And whatsoever the messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids, abstain from it(49).**

In this regard, Alwan points out the universal relevance of the Muslim message, across the generations; every age regards the prophet's instructions as the ideal model in faith, morals, courage, and solidarity(50). Muslims believe that *Sunnah* can benefit education in three ways:

1. by exemplifying the Islamic approach to life in general and to education in particular, as given in the *Quran*,
2. by giving the details not mentioned in the *Quran*,



3. by implying an educational approach based on the prophet Mohammed's behaviour and conduct as he dealt with his companions and children and as he implanted faith in their hearts(51).

### **3.6. Components of Islamic Education**

The philosophy of education in *Islam* is based on certain components, of which the main ones are discussed below:

#### **3.6.1. Orthodox Education**

The main concern of this component is the introduction of children into the process of believing in *Allah* (God) as the creator of one's self and the universe and as the controller of our lives, and believing in the prophet Mohammed as his messenger(52). These are considered the major elements in the orthodox component of *Islamic* education. Muslim educators and parents are responsible for establishing and developing these beliefs in the souls of children.

#### **3.6.2. Moral Education**

Applying Islamic law and following the prophet's instructions are the major elements of this component; which is concerned with how to behave toward one's self, toward others, starting with the family and moving toward the society as a whole. Hajaltom observed that:

**Moral education is to be achieved through the whole conduct of education in the school, family and society at large(53).**

Raising children to tell the truth, for example, is an important part of *Islamic* education, because a true Muslim is not a liar. In the *Quran Allah* (God) says:

**It is only those who believe not in the proofs of Allah(God), who fabricate falsehood, and they only are liars(54).**

The Prophet Mohammed said in this regard that, it is obligatory for people to tell the truth, for truth leads to virtue and virtue leads to paradise. The man who continues to tell and endeavours to tell the truth is eventually recorded as truthful with Allah(55). Parents hold the largest responsibility for teaching children moral attitudes, in the following ways:

1. by explaining to them the benefits and the virtue of telling the truth and the consequences of dishonesty;
2. by practising truth-telling with their children and in their presence.(56).

### **3.6.3. Physical Education**

Physical health and fitness are highly regarded in Islam, because they facilitate performance of one's duties towards *Allah* (God) and fulfilment of one's personal, familial and social obligations(57). The prophet Mohammed said, *Allah* (God) likes a strong believer more than a weak one (58). Umar Ibn Al-Khattab recommended that

Muslims should teach their sons to swim and to handle bows and arrows(59). In fact, parents are regarded in Islam as having the responsibility to bring up healthy children by providing them with such necessities as a nutritious diet, by encouraging them in any useful habit that contributes to their health, like exercising, and by discouraging debilitating habits that adversely affect their health, such as smoking(60).

### **3.6.4. Cognitive Learning**

In his article, 'Muslim Education and the Impact of The Western Mass Media', Ahmed writes:

**Education and learning are at the core of Islam. The holy *Quran* underlines both in numerous verses. The sayings of the holy prophet also emphasise them(61).**

The *Quran* declares:

**Say: Are those who know equal to those know not?(62).**

Looking specifically at the words and deeds of the prophet Mohammed, we find that knowledge appeared to him as a categorical imperative. He declared education to be mandatory for every Muslim, male and female(63). In practice, girls have been educationally disadvantaged in some Islamic countries until very recently and even

today, the Taliban in Afghanistan is seeing to deny education to girls in the name of Islam. However, such attitudes stem from deeply rooted cultural values which pre-date Islam, or from a misunderstanding or distortion of Islamic teaching. According to the prophet, no obstacle, however difficult and insurmountable it might seem, should deter or discourage a Muslim from the pursuit of knowledge. He said that , whoever follows a path to seek knowledge therein, *Allah* (God) will make the way to paradise easy for him.(64). Al-Khateny, in his book on Prayer, drew attention to the attitude of the Prophet to education, especially to the way in which he would say: ‘My Lord, educate me’(65), a prayer which shows his humility and readiness to acquire more knowledge and education, despite the superiority of his endowment with God's grace. The first five verses in the Quran which were revealed to the Prophet Mohammed when he was worshipping Allah in Mecca, refer to the two major components of schooling: reading and writing. The words ‘read’ and ‘pen’ are mentioned as the major means of gaining knowledge. The Quran says:

**Read in the name of your lord who created (all that exists).**  
**He has created man from a clot.**  
**Read and Your lord is the most generous,**  
**who taught by the pen;**  
**he has taught man that which he knew not(66).**



In his article, 'Towards Effective Teaching and Learning of Islamic Studies in Secondary Schools in The Oyo State of Nigeria: A Case Study', Aderinoye explained the justification for the high regard in which education and knowledge are held, when he wrote:

**True and full understanding of Islam depends essentially on knowledge without which *Allah's* (God) commands can never be understood in their true sense(67).**

### **3.6.6. Social Education**

Islam recognises the importance of social solidarity in creating a good society. Parents and educators have the responsibility of teaching children the meaning of brotherhood and of practising it in their presence. *Allah* (God) says:

**The believers are nothing else than brothers. So make reconciliation between your brothers and fear *Allah* (God) that you may receive mercy(68).**

Godliness is considered an important aspect of solidarity. This means keeping the presence of *Allah* (God) in one's self, every moment of life, and acting in the way *Allah* (God) and his prophet prescribed. In this regard, it is assured that an individual will act properly and will not harm himself or any other individuals, but rather will benefit them(69). Islam demands brotherhood. To live a good life, we must love one another, as the prophet Mohammed said:

**None of you becomes truly a believer until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself(70).**

Alnawai offers another example of the Prophet's sayings:

**The bonds of brotherhood between two Muslims are like the walls of a house: one part strengthens and holds the other(71).**

A Muslim is expected to show kindness towards other members of society, to reinforce their solidarity and mutual dependence. In this regard, the prophet said:

**Muslims in their mutual love, kindness and compassion are like the human body. When one of its parts is ill, the entire body feels the result(72)**

All of these moral qualities must be practised by children when they begin to interact with the others, to ensure their application of such morals when they mature.

### **3.7. Aims and Objectives**

The aim of education, in any society, influences the whole process of education and consequently determines the nature of education in school as well as in society at large. Hajaltom has argued that the aim of Islamic education is to:

**initiate the people into worthwhile activities but these worthwhile activities are defined by the Islamic moral code. In other words, the aim of education in Islamic society is to strengthen**

**belief in *Allah* (God) by carrying out his *sharia* (the totality of the religious and moral laws of Islam) consciously and intelligently(73)**

This formulation is extended by Al-Shafee, who has conveniently listed the objectives of Islamic education as:

- . To set out a basic scientific theory of the Islamic creed, in which pupils can learn at school;**
- . To provide the learner with the religious knowledge which is suitable to them;**
- . To correct wrong religious concepts;**
- . To demolish bad thoughts;**
- . To develop new values and spiritual sentiments in the pupils.**

Al-Shafee has also suggested that Islamic religious education should reinforce the desired habits of thought and behaviour, by helping pupils to develop good habits and behaviour. To memorise by heart a chapter or more of the Holy *Quran*, helps the individual to prepare for the hereafter by developing a deeper religious knowledge. In his view, religious education enables the learner to distinguish between good and bad, and enables him to become capable of assisting others in religious matters(74).

Al-Fandy has categorised the objectives of Islamic education into what he called 'individual' and 'social education'. Both are clearly religious objectives. His category of 'individual education' aims at familiarising the pupil with his relationship with other creatures, individual responsibilities in life, social relations, and his relationship

with the universe and his need to explore nature's laws in order to utilise and exploit them. All this is intended to give the pupil an appreciation of his Maker's creative wisdom which is manifested in creation(75). Al-Fandy's categories of social education have the following complementary objectives of:

□. building a society of good, pious and God-fearing individuals in which social justice, toleration, brotherhood, love, mercy, goodness and righteousness prevail;

□. building a society based on mutual consolation in which there is maximum exploitation of an individual's ability to enjoy freedom of thought, and competence to take responsibility;

□. building a society where the individual can live an ideal, pure and happy life(76).

Muslim educators emphasise that the purpose of education is not merely to fill students' minds with knowledge, but to refine their morals, educate their spirit and propagate the truth(77). It does not only impart information, but also teaches its students both to learn and to practise. Al-Ghazzali (a Persian Islamic scholar of the sixth century) emphasised this when he wrote **if man should read a hundred thousand scientific books and learned them all, they would be of no benefit to him if he failed to apply them and they were not used(78).**



In short, the sum of Islamic Education is based on the realisation of complete submission to Allah at all levels whether of the individual, of the community or of humanity as a whole, and on the reflection of this submission by applying Godly principles in every area of life.

### **3.8. The Relationship Between Arabic Language and Islamic Education**

In his article, 'The Method of Teaching Arabic for The Comprehension of The Source of Al-Sharah', Surty observed that:

**Arabic language is one of the leading languages of the world. It is one of the six official languages of the United Nations, and 21 independent nations have accepted it as their official language. More than three-quarters of a billion multilingual Muslims throughout the world have deep veneration for it, as the medium through which they can reach the principal source of Islam, the integral part of their life(79).**

He goes on to say, that since the Muslim world was discovered, vigorous attempts have been made to learn the Arabic language for various reasons, such as its use in trade and commerce, industrial establishments, technological development, job opportunities and news media. This has resulted in the publication of a large number of books in different languages, all aimed at teaching the Arabic language(80). As the Arabic language is the language of

revelation, it is considered a vitally important part of Islamic education. Scholars have often emphasised the necessity of learning Arabic in order to fulfil Islamic education, as knowledge of this language is necessary to understand both the *Quran*, and the Prophet's tradition(81).

*Ibn-Taymiyyah* (a 13th century scholar, who is a well known writer on Islamic matters) observed that the Arabic language is integral with religion. It is necessary to learn it because it is not possible to understand the *Quran* and the Prophet's tradition without it(82). This view was elaborated by Surty when he said:

**The sources of *Al-Sharia* are preserved in the Arabic language. The contributions of the jurists to *Al-Sharia*, during the last fourteen centuries, have been in Arabic. Of all branches of Islamic literature the contributions of *Al-Tafsir* (the interpretation of the *Quran*), the *Quranic* exegesis, and *Al-Sharia* are perhaps the richest, and this appears to be evident from the fact that the process of discoveries and acquisition of manuscripts in this field in the Arabic language is still in progress. Hence, a sound knowledge of Arabic is essential to comprehend the inherent values of *al-sharia* and its extremely rich literature(83).**

This crucial relationship between language and religion was emphasised when the foundations of the modern education system of Saudi Arabia were established in 1926. The Arabic language was

then determined as a distinct subject so as to simplify its study, and the emphasis on its importance remains strong. It was further strengthened in 1990, when the Ministry of Education decided that Islamic Religious Education teachers, who could be expected to have a particularly good background in Arabic language as a result of their preparation in college, should be designated as teachers of Arabic in all schools(84). It is this decision which lies behind the strong linking of the teaching of Arabic and Religious Education in the project which lies at the core of the present thesis.

### **3.9. Some Notable Muslim Educators**

After the preceding brief discussion of the key elements of Islamic education, it seems appropriate to provide a short introduction to some of the earliest Muslim educators and some of their views about education and learning. The researcher will introduce and focus on two renowned Muslim scholars, Al-Ghazzali and Ibn Khaldun, because they lived during the age of enlightenment of Islam and are considered by many writers as distinguished educators in Islamic education. Regarding them, Jan pointed out:

**The two scholars, who lived during the middle ages, are considered the most influential thinkers during the golden age of Islam(85).**

### 3.10.1. Al-Ghazzali, Abu Hamid (1058-1111)

Abu Hamid Mohammed Al-Ghazzali, born in *Meshhed*, near modern Iran, was one of the most distinguished scholars of his time. He was a writer and professor in the *nizamiyya* (the first formal school established by *Nizamul Mulk* in Baghdad in 1067). He is considered by Arabs to have had one of the most original and encyclopaedic minds and to have been one of the most influential thinkers in the world. The works of Al-Ghazzali were among the principal sources of diffusion of Islamic culture in the medieval west. Many of his works had been translated into Latin, less than forty years after his death(86).

This mystic scholar believed that learning is a form of worship which should be pursued to the glory of *Allah* (God), and for his pleasure. In this regard, he said:

**He who pursues learning in order to make money, so as to attain a social position or reduce his taxes and evade his obligations toward the *sultan* (king), he who studies for the sake of any ambitions, save that of *Allah* (God), exposes himself to dire consequences(87)**

The ultimate aim of education to Al-Ghazzali, therefore, is a religious one, which he believed might be firmly achieved through the following:

1. acquisition of a sound knowledge and experience of *Allah* (God) and the Islamic principle which will lead to total submission to the



will of God and thus will result in a happy life in this world and in the hereafter;

2. moral education which will help the individual to know and assimilate the divine attributes of *Allah* (God);

3. physical education which will help the individual to build a healthy body with a minimum of bad habits;

4. scientific education which will provide the individual with the knowledge, experience, and skills of subject matter(88).

Al-Ghazali also discussed the teacher's responsibility and function. Among his pronouncements were that:

**the teacher should be compassionate with pupils; that he should not ask for money for teaching; and that he should be ready to advise the student in all things(89).**

Al-Barjs, discussing Al-Gazali's book, disagrees with the second point, which he argues is too idealistic. It does not accord with the view that teaching is a professional job, the same as any other(90). However, it should be remembered that Al-Gazali was speaking as a religious thinker, whose aim was to make teaching available to all, to bring people close to Allah. In his day, it was

customary for teaching to be done on a voluntary basis. This position has changed in Muslim countries and teachers now specialise in many subjects, most of them working full time so they have no other opportunity to earn money other than through their teaching. Nonetheless, a modern interpretation of Al-Gazli's view might be that teachers should not be motivated solely or primarily by financial gain, but should teach out of respect and love of knowledge.

Many of Al-Ghazali's views were similar to those espoused by educators today. For example he introduced the concept of pupil teacher relationship advised by educational psychologists today. Al-Ghazali also emphasised teaching by personal experience. Regarding the methods of effective teaching, he recommended that:

1. lessons should be conducted in an interesting way;
2. students should participate in the lesson;
3. audio-visual aids should be used;
4. the class atmosphere should be congenial;
5. teaching should include lecture, participation of students in discussion, and tutorials;
6. students should take notes(91).

This raises the question whether these methods are reflected in practice in Saudi schools. In fact, as will be revealed in greater detail

in later chapters, often, they are not. In many schools, Islamic Religious Education is taught by lecture only, and students do not participate. Audio-visual aids are lacking. The teaching curriculum is designed around the lecture method which is traditionally very popular, requires little equipment and is easily implemented.

### **3.9.2. Ibn Khaldun, Abd-al-Rahman (1332-1406)**

Abd-al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun was born in *Tunis*. He is known as a historian and a sociologist of politics, economics, urban life and knowledge. His fame as the father of philosophy of history and of sociology in a modern sense, rests on the voluminous *Mugaddimah* (Prolegomena), his universal history written during a temporary retirement. It is considered to be one of the greatest works of its kind(92).

Gulick observed that Ibn Khaldun was deemed by some historians to have been the greatest intellect of his century. He was considered the chief of historian of his time and alleged to be the originator of the philosophical conception of the stream of history(93). According to Ibn Khaldun, education is a sociological phenomenon. He thought that every human being is endowed with a natural capacity to learn, and so the need for a proper education is inevitable(94). Ibn Khaldun's theory of education was based on two doctrines: man's individual nature and the sociological temper of

civilisation. He recognised the importance of both individual and society in education. Although Ibn Khaldun stressed the sociological factor, he did not ignore the characteristics of the individual child(95). Ibn Khaldun saw the aims of education as encompassing two intentions. The first is the religious intention, which leads to total submission to the will of *Allah* (God) and to work which will result in a blessed life. The second is the worldly intention, or the utilitarian intention which leads to success and happiness in this life(96).

Teaching, in his view, should be conducted in this manner:

1. A brief introduction should be given, encompassing the broad outlines of the subject matter.
2. A detailed discussion and development of the lesson should be carried on.
3. The lesson should be revised again for the third time.

He also said let teachers proceed from the simple to the complex, from the known to the unknown and from the concrete to the abstract. He opposed antagonistic, harsh and corporal punishment, arguing that these do not bring any good. He believed that the student teacher relationship should be based upon understanding and love(97).

When we talk about the views of some notable Muslim educators such as Al-Gazilia and Ibn Khaldun we must bear in mind



that their methods were effective and influential in the 11th century. We of the 20th century, can respect these methods, and may agree on their moral content, but it might, however, be feasible to find teaching methods which faithfully respect the way and the message of Islam, but also reflect the character of communication in our current age. It seems likely that, if these teachers were alive today, they would have taken advantage of modern methods and facilities. Thus, each teacher must be free to find his own method of communication.

### **3.10. Significance and Problems**

The importance of Islamic education comes from the religion, and hence, the emphasis is on religion. There is no doubt that religion is unlike other subjects such as mathematics or physics, as religion deals with the soul as well as the body. Islamic education is a kind of Religious Education, and its significance is that of religious education in general. In fact, Religious Education is a pillar of the national educational system in many societies, and a western scholar has described it as an effective regulator of children's behaviour, and a channel through which the moral demands of society can be conveyed to the next generation(98). Hall asserts that the moral domain is clearly related to the religious, as religious people perceive that their fundamental beliefs are the source of their understanding of

values and of their ethical principles(99). According to Holly, Religious Education is the process of helping students enrich their general experience, their community life, and appreciation of the significance of God, as they establish their own values, attitudes and co-operation within life(100).

Religious educators in Muslim countries would agree fundamentally with these Christian writers. In his article, 'Audio-visual aids on Islam', Ashraf explained that:

**All scholars, teachers and education authorities, however secularist some may be, acknowledge that religious consciousness is an undeniable fact, and that to ignore it is to ignore a dominant aspect of human personality(101).**

In this regard Eben Jamaah advised one of his students as follows:

**My son, if you learn one section of knowledge, learn education and ethics. I love it more than seventy sections of science(102)**

Muslims are expected to practice Islam in every area of life, since Allah gives a stern warning in the Quran about inconsistencies between words and actions. In this regard Allah says:

**O you who believe! why do you say that which you do not do! (103)**

Unfortunately, despite this commitment and vital importance of Religious Education, a gap has been found to exist between writings, speeches, policies and what is actually happening in many Muslim countries. Sarwar observed that present day Muslims seem keen to talk and write about the beauty and efficacy of Islam but are noticeably slack in practising it(104). For this reason, the importance of Islamic education is unclear, with some people placing it first in importance whilst some others place it last. The dean of the Faculty of Islamic Law in Kuwait clearly placed it first, pointing out:

**In the name of liberalism, nationalism and socialism we in the Arab and Islamic countries are disappointed that we cannot live better at all levels, economically, politically, and morally. Islam invites us to follow this path(105).**

In contrast, Qutb, discussing the situation in many Arab countries, said it must be admitted openly and unequivocally that religion is now utterly isolated and alienated from the lives and feelings of many Muslims because they do not practise it in reality. Many concepts and approaches, feelings and thoughts, morals and modes of behaviour are not derived from Islam, but from parts of the world where Islam is unheeded. Qutb sees Muslim education as being isolated rather than representing the integration of religion into daily life. He stated that religion as now felt and approached has dwindled

from the integrated inclusiveness known to early Muslim generations, namely, an emotional relationship between lord and servant outside the sphere of actual life(106)

The lack of direction and consistency between theory and practice which some critics have seen in the educational system in many Arab countries can, at least in the part, be attributed to historical factors. Many of the countries in question were placed under French or British mandate after world war and the break up of the Ottoman Empire, so their educational development was heavily influenced by the west. Even today, the shortage of indigenous teachers forces many Arab states to rely heavily on expatriate expertise. Moreover, there is the problem of reconciling Islamic principles with the need and desire to embrace modern scientific developments and socio-economic goals, influenced by western models.

Saudi Arabia has never been under the mandate or colonial rule of any western nation, and to that extent has perhaps been less touched by secular influences than some Arab states. Nonetheless, like them, Saudi Arabia faces the dilemma as to whether, or to what extent, new knowledge, ideas and methods can be incorporated into an education system focused on Islamic education. In this situation,



Al-Sharaf identifies three possibilities. The first is to ignore Islamic theory in education and think it is not suitable for the present time; instead, to insist on following western educational theories. The second is to ignore the western theories completely and refuse to follow them. The third is the position taken by those who believe in Islamic educational theory and philosophy as passed down from early Muslim thinkers, but are also prepared to accept ideas about education and teaching methods from other places, as long as they are not against Islamic principles. He argues that copying everything from advanced countries without recognition of its context, needs and suitability is not the right solution, because planners in the advanced countries built their educational reforms in the light of their own culture and historical development(107). Nassier observed that there is a lack of educational philosophy in Arab countries and reached the conclusion that:

**the Arab countries need educational planning based on the academic research curricula, as at present it lacks special educational philosophy derived from the culture(108).**

Supporting this view, a study conducted by the Gulf Arab states educational research centre entitled Present Evaluation of the Curriculum in the Light of its Aims in the Gulf States Islamic Religious Education identified the following needs:

To clarify the concept of Islamic religion as the foundation of Muslim society;

To identify the function of Islamic religious education and its role in the light of an the understanding of Islam and its aims;

To reformulate the general and special aims of Islamic religious education in ways that can be translated into behavioural performance;

To reformulate the style of teaching in order to make it comparable with other curricular, or better(109).

Five years later The Gulf Arab States Educational Research Centre held a seminar, in which 14 experts and representatives from the Gulf region (except Saudi Arabia, who sent their apologies) participated. Four members from two other organisations, UNESCO, and the Arab Organisation for Science, Culture and Education, were also involved. The seminar aimed to provide a form for educationalists to consider three major issues, namely:

what aspects should be added in order to contribute in developing Islamic education in the Gulf state;

what difficulties and obstructions confront the development of Islamic religious education, and how they should be dealt with;

what relevant issues can be identified and what later studies are needed to serve Islamic religious education(110).

In short, a need is felt for ministries of education and educated persons in the Arab World to explore the role of Islamic teachings, both inside and outside the school. The education of the next generation will be determined by today's intellectuals and leaders, who are being called upon to engage in massive reform, not simply to incorporate new trends in the social sciences, but also radically to revise all textbooks to reflect Islamic teaching.

### **3.11. Conclusion:**

This chapter has attempted to place the present study in context by providing brief background information on the history and philosophy of Islamic education. It has been seen that Islamic education has its roots in the mosque and kuttab, which focused on rote-learning, discipline and socialisation. In theory, all education in the Arab world should reflect Islamic principles. It seeks to develop the individual's potential, within the context of his familial and social obligations, and of submission to the will of Allah. Islam has produced some notable educators, whose views on teaching methods and the nature of the teacher-pupil relationship appear relatively enlightened and in line with modern educational thinking; though whether these ideas are actually implemented in modern Islamic education remains to be seen.

The chapter has also shown that Islamic education today faces certain dilemmas. It is often criticised by the west for its conservatism, yet accused by some Islamic educationlaists of having lost its way. Political, socio-economic and scientific developments have brought new ideas and influences into Arab education. The question is, how does its Islamic foundation affect education in Saudi Arabia and to what extent is it possible and desirable to modernise curricula and methods, without sacrificing Islamic principles? These issues will be explored further, with particular reference to Arabic and Islamic studies, in the chapters which follow.



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# Chapter Four

## Pre-service Teacher Education

### 4.1. Introduction

The issue of teacher education has gone beyond local or national boundaries to be an international problem which dominates the thinking of many scholars and policy makers. This global feeling has been recognised by researchers who have studied teacher education in different countries. Moreover, international organisations like UNESCO have discussed this widely in their reports about education, mainly in the third world. In this chapter some aspects of pre-service teacher education in general and professional preparation of prospective elementary school Arabic and Islamic teachers in particular will be examined by way of the literature produced by a variety of organisations and individuals and from several countries. Leavitt observed that:

**Despite the large differences between countries, issues and problems of teacher education are remarkably similar. An examination of other countries' issues brings an international perspective to decision and policy making in one's own country. This is likely to produce a broader, more detached viewpoint toward one's own problems. An international awareness can reveal that the problems faced in one country are shared by others, even though their resolution may differ(1).**

Thus, it is hoped in this chapter to contribute to the development and organisation of Arabic and Islamic pre-service teachers' education in Saudi Arabia. This study cannot hope to cover fully the vast amount of literature available. However, some pertinent studies will be reviewed, covering the following areas:

1. Definition of pre-service teacher education
2. The importance of teacher preparation
3. Selection of student teachers
4. Duration of course
5. The content of professional preparation
6. Time allocation
7. Training of primary classroom teachers or Islamic and Arabic Teachers.
8. Teaching and training methods
9. Teaching practice.

#### **4.2. Definition of Pre-service Teacher Education**

In modern Saudi Arabia, as in most parts of the world today, the training of teachers is a pre-service activity, successful completion of which is normally a compulsory requirement of entry to the teaching profession and is organised by institutes and colleges of education.

Page and Thomas define pre-service training as:



**A term used for the education and training provided at a university or at colleges of Education to prepare students for a career in teaching(2).**

Similarly, Rowntree sees pre-service training as:

**A term used in teacher education for the professional training (obtained at college or university) prior to employment as a teacher(3).**

Pre-service training, therefore, enables the new teacher to begin his or her career with an awareness of the situation into which he or she is entering and with sufficient techniques to avoid the most obvious pitfalls. As Stevens points out:

**A pre-service teacher training and education course implicitly or explicitly assumes that there is a relationship between educational theory and practice. Theory is learnt in textbooks and lectures, while its practice is learnt by experience(4)**

The pre-service training may be defined in terms of preparing the novice to participate in his country's educational system effectively, by enabling him to acquire the necessary academic competence, classroom skills and attitudes to education and educating. In this regard, Al-Marasafy stated that:

**The pre-service training is the first part of a continuing process in teacher education. It provides and equips the student with a basic set**

of knowledge, skills and attitudes, so that he can work effectively with the community(5).

In a recent book published in 1995, 'Educating Teachers in the Twenty-First Century', Shok and Sayed criticised the training of elementary school teachers in Saudi Arabia for neglecting this concept of continuity. Pre-service training for elementary school teachers is not just the first, but the final part in the process of teacher education. The relationship of the elementary school teacher with any education institute finishes as soon as he obtains a graduation certificate from his college(6). The writers went on to say that in reality, it is unlikely that student teachers will learn everything they need to know, including the latest teaching developments, from pre-service training. They pointed out that pre-service preparation should be considered the first step in the teaching profession, and that it is the responsibility of educational authorities to design more effective training courses, not just at the pre-service level but also for in-service training to enhance the quality of teachers(7).

In sum, the concept of pre-service teacher training education is to provide the student teacher with the basic knowledge (theoretical and practical) he needs to begin a career in teaching, usually in primary or secondary schools; but ideally, it is only one stage of an on-going process.

### **4.3. The Importance of Teacher Preparation**

Although they may differ in their views as to the length, intensity, and substance of teacher preparation, most countries view teachers as the backbone of the whole social system. Their education has become a focal point of public concern(8). This public focus on the preparation of teachers is stimulated by a general concern for competent teachers and more meaningful schooling.

In order to make the learning experience as rich and significant as possible for the ever-developing life, the need for good teacher preparation is imperative. Child's potential can be stimulated if elementary school teachers are trained in competencies and skills related to these potentialities(9). Several studies have examined the effects of teacher preparation on teaching skills. It has been concluded that preparation can, indeed, modify both the instructional and non-instructional behaviours of prospective teachers(10). In Australia, surveys inquiring into teacher education indicated that through pre-service teacher education, teachers are helped in the following areas:

1. organising and managing effective learning situations for pupils;
2. participating as a responsible member of the school staff, the teaching profession and the community;

3. identifying and relating significant theoretical knowledge and understanding to the kinds of practical situations which will typically be met;
4. detecting and, to a limited extent, diagnosing characteristic learning difficulties in a student and with guidance, selecting appropriate learning materials and strategies to remedy the problem;
5. helping student teachers to enter the teaching profession able and willing to sustain their own continuing professional growth and development; and
6. relating teaching and education to other dimensions of contemporary national and international life.(11)

In December, 1988, PGCE students at the Institute of Education, London University were asked about the value of the PGCE. Swanwick found that students valued the PGCE because it provided for:

1. the support of highly professional, skilled tutors;
2. the sharing of ideas, experience and expertise with other students;
3. an overview of the curriculum, and a useful introduction to the whole area of assessment and testing;
4. discussions of key issues in education, such as class, race, gender, and special needs;



5. reading lists and access to an excellent library and media resources;
6. the opportunity to reflect, evaluate, re-evaluate, and analyse.
7. the ability to place the job of the teacher within a clear framework;
8. help with lesson preparation;
9. systematic help with teaching skills and classroom control;
10. professional contacts with teachers in various schools;
11. discussion of recent work in child development.(12).

At the Department of Education in the University of Hull, the secondary PGCE course aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. to provide initial training in knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to be an effective teacher in school;
2. to establish professional habits which will underpin a career in teaching;
3. to develop a reflective attitude to teaching and learning;
4. to foster the pursuit of scholarship among teachers(13).

In fact, the education of teachers is a very important part in the development of any educational system. Beeby has said that there are two factors by which any development in an education system can be judged: the level of general education of its teachers, and the amount of training they have received(14). Ifode, in a study of Comparative

## Analysis of Pattern and Trends of Teacher Education in Nigeria,

claimed that good teacher preparation programmes are often the key to the achievement of educational goals. He emphasised that the supply and training of teachers lies at the very heart of the educational process(15).

In the United Kingdom, one of the advanced countries in the world, the focus on teacher education reform as a successful means by which educational reform could be achieved is a subject of debate among scholars. Judge, in 1990, wrote about the British case and pointed to the important role of teacher education in educational reform.

**The education and training of teachers are at the very heart of the current reform of British education and exemplify the paradoxes and tension contained within reform. It is an international truism that successful change in education depends on the active co-operation of talented and committed teachers. For this plain reason, unless able people become teachers and commit themselves wholeheartedly to the improvement of schooling, the Education Act of England and Wales of 1988 will remain a piece of aspirational legislation and nothing more.....**

**The critical task for the rest of this century will be to match the output of the teacher education system to the needs of these schools, as well as to retain the teachers already working in them(16).**

In the United States, 'Nation at Risk' made a linkage between some educational problems and teacher education. The strong attack on teacher education came from different directions, as Little observed:

**Within a few months of the release of the Commission's report, little doubt remained that teacher training was to become a major target of educational reform. Teachers and educators were challenged as never before in every aspect of teacher training. Criticism came from parents, public school and educators, state departments of education, university colleagues and administrators, national critics of teacher education, and state and national legislators(17).**

Like the Western countries, many developing countries have expressed their concern about the level of education in their societies and launched calls for educational reform. It is well understood by many scholars who have written about education in third world countries, that teacher education is a key factor for better quality of education. Dove, in 1986, wrote about teachers and teacher education in developing countries and concluded that:

**Research evidence suggests that teacher training in developing countries has tremendous potential for improving the contribution of teachers to educational quality(18).**

Compared to many Western countries, a huge challenge and high risk is faced by most Third World countries, which often lack the political will for change, and certainly lack the necessary economic resources. It is extremely difficult to achieve improvement in any educational system in the developing world without enough knowledge and understanding of the amount and location of resources, and the type of changes that are required. Studies attempting to suggest improvement for teacher education in the less developed societies have admitted this crucial fact. Rust and Dalin pointed out that :

**We have been concerned with the improvement of teachers and teaching in the developing world. We have noted that the situation of teachers is far from ideal, and any efforts towards improvement are fraught with enormous challenges. The resources are simply not available for what our best understanding of teaching requires. Even with resources, our knowledge base is presently such that we must be very tentative about what to do. However, we do know that improvement is not impossible, though it will be difficult(19).**

Saudi Arabia, like many developed and developing countries, has acknowledged the importance of teacher preparation in generating effective development for both the society and the economy. In April 1992, King Fahad called for educational development and asked specialists to participate in a debate on the



subject. The major concern among scholars, intellectuals, educators, and policy makers was the improvement of teacher preparation(20). The reaction to this concern was translated into intensive debates and discussions among educators and policy makers. On September 30, 1992, seven educators from different universities in Saudi Arabia were interviewed by Al-Yamamah to discuss the issue of curriculum development. Also, they questioned the quality of teacher preparation programmes and their relevance for new development. The emphasis on the important role of the teacher in any innovation process was a focal point for all participants(21).

At the same time, King Saud University organised a seminar on the theme, 'Strategy of Preparing Female and Male Teachers. Educators from specialised institutions of teacher preparation, in addition to scholars and policy makers from government agencies and research centres, attended this meeting. The seminar covered a variety of issues and focused on the contemporary direction in teacher education, theories and practice in teacher preparation programmes, and future function of Teachers' Colleges and Colleges of Education. The participants concluded by making numerous recommendations, including the establishment of a national centre for educational research to produce enough knowledge about teacher preparation programmes in the kingdom, and to carry out general

studies which will examine and evaluate the whole system. They urged scholars, researchers and educators to conduct studies to evaluate teacher preparation in the kingdom. It was asserted that the content of the programme and the admission criteria were irrelevant and required much improvement(22). However, calls for reform could not be made and responded to without an in-depth understanding of the problem, and in this respect, the presenters recognised the lack of serious studies about the whole system of teacher preparation. Therefore, they emphasised the need for more knowledge about the function of teacher preparation, as a basis for formulating new strategies to meet the demand for better teachers and higher quality education.

A few months after the seminar was held, between the 13th and the 15th of April, 1993, the Second National Conference on teacher preparation for public education was organised in Umm Ul-Qura University based on royal decree No. 5/5/1110(1-23-1413, Islamic calendar). In their final report, the participants demanded very specific changes, particularly the redefinition and updating of the objectives and the curriculum in teacher preparation programmes. The admission and selection criterion in teacher preparation programmes were considered unsuitable and it was recommended

that they be improved to recruit a higher calibre of trainee. On the theme of quality of teacher preparation, emphasis was placed on:

**the necessity for integrated efforts by teacher preparation institutions to conduct a comprehensive study evaluation for the quality of teacher preparation programme in the kingdom, and develop these programmes according to the evaluation results and the needs of the Saudi society(23)**

In sum, the researcher believes that one of the keys to quality of education is the quality of training teachers and such a high quality can be assured only through effective training. There is a high demand for qualified teachers, particularly in third world countries (including Saudi Arabia), where the introduction of education, science and technology, is relatively recent and educational systems are undergoing unprecedented expansion.

#### **4.4. Selection of Student Teachers**

Selection is the process by which applicants for admission to teacher training programmes are chosen or rejected. In a UNESCO publication, the importance of the selection process has been emphasised as follows:

**The identification and recruitment of trainees who are both 'suitable' and 'committed' is one of the essential prerequisites for developing schools with adequate teaching staff. The**



**quality of teacher training has to be regulated as the second prerequisite(24).**

Since teaching is an art which involves specific skills and unique personal qualities, students who seek admission to teacher preparation programmes should meet appropriate selection criteria(25). Setting appropriate criteria for selecting and preparing prospective teachers is the only sure basis for guaranteeing both adequate quality of teaching, and adequate quantity of teachers(26). A significant conference on Teacher Education was held in the Arab Gulf States in Qatar in 1984, and defined policies which are broadly followed in all these states. The conference recommended that centres of teacher education must attract and select the most suitable candidates for the teaching profession(27)

It seems that the criteria which are considered to be essential in the selection of teacher training students vary from one country to another. However, a comprehensive study conducted by Pires, revealed that school subjects and general knowledge tests, interviews, school records, language and scholastic achievement tests are the most frequently used means of selection in 18 Asian countries(28). The most widely adopted procedure in many countries is to focus on academic criteria, though there is some effort to employ additional



criteria such as those based upon psychological tests and non-academic activities(29). According to the common-wealth secretariat applicants seek to be accepted to the profession for various reasons:

**Some have a deep sense of vocation, others hope to use teaching as a bridge to another occupation, others come as a last resort(30).**

Today, educators everywhere are expressing concern about the decrease in the number of suitable students who wish to be admitted to teacher training courses. They are also concerned about the practice of accepting students at teacher training institutions with low academic standards, compared with their fellows at other colleges(31).

In many Arab States it is the policy of universities to assign students to courses on the basis of availability of places or of, for example, the student's grade point average in high school, irrespective of the student's own inclinations and preference. In such institutions, it is often the case that students with higher GPA are assigned to courses such as medicine or science, while the education department is allocated students with comparatively poor GPA(32).

In his study, *The Arab Teacher: His Level of Professional Preparation, Description of the Situation and Future Prospects*, Al-

Jallal found that 70% of student teachers in education colleges in the Arab world had no real desire to enter teacher training programmes, and had done so only as a last resort(33). Supporting this result, the former Minister of Education in Kuwait, Al-Ebraheem, criticised the case of teachers in developing countries, in his book, Kuwait and Future Educational Development Face to Face, in which he stated that no one came into the teaching profession, except those who had lost the opportunity to become doctors, engineers, accountants or businessmen. When parents are asked what they want for their children's future, it is unusual for them to say they want them to become teachers(34). Al-Ebraheem goes on to say that a major reason why teaching does not attract high quality candidates is the low level of salaries compared with other jobs. This is the case not only in Kuwait but in all developing countries(35). This undervaluing of teachers is dangerous to the community and has been sharply condemned by Mohammed Qutb, Professor of Islamic Education, who has strongly affirmed the Islamic necessity of a strong teaching profession(36). At the conference in Cairo in 1972, 'The Organisation of Training Teachers in the Arab World', participants discussed selection and identified the following problems:

(A). Colleges of education in the Arab world do not pay enough attention to some important characteristics in the admission criteria, such as:

1. The applicant must be a good Muslim, which means he practices Islam in all aspects of his life.
2. He should be able to speak Arabic language fluently and clearly.
3. He should have the right attitudes towards a teaching career.
4. He should be competent in discussion.

(B). The teaching profession as a career has less status in the society when we compare it with other jobs(37).

The researcher believes that in order to encourage the best students to enter teacher training programmes, better conditions of service need to be offered to make the teaching profession more attractive. Only then, will we be able to recruit future teachers who possess the required academic qualifications, the interest, and the right attitudes to teaching.

#### **4.5. Duration**

UNESCO, at the beginning of the 1980s drew up global guidelines for national systems which indicated that all teachers should undertake a period of initial professional preparation of an appropriate duration, before being appointed to teach(38). Teacher training institutions in some countries have been recently criticised



by the public and by the rest of the academic community. In addition to concerns being expressed regarding the low academic standards, the quality of academic preparation, and the relevance of such preparation to the present and future practical needs of schools, doubts have been expressed as to whether the duration of preparation is adequate(39).

However, during the last decade the period allocated to teacher training programmes (including Arabic and Islamic subjects) has been increased in many countries. The trend towards increasing the period of initial training programme might be attributed to some factors such as: the development of the role of the teacher in modern society which in turn necessitates an extended period of training, to prepare the qualified graduate to carry out effectively the new functions and duties, which he will perform in the school and society. Teacher educators also have found that if teaching is to be recognised as a profession comparable to the other professions, such as law, medicine, and the like, a more acceptable period of professional preparation has to be provided. Moreover, at present teachers of elementary education have to be specialised in one branch of study, rather than to have the broad base that the primary teacher was traditionally required to acquire(40). Again, this sort of specialisation for elementary school teachers requires an appropriate



period of teacher training in order to achieve it. Also, the stock of knowledge is continually expanding, and the desired level of pupils' general education keeps rising. Consequently, teachers need to be provided with more training to cope with the new generation(41).

In fact, the length of pre-service programmes varies from one country to another. Some developed countries have advanced programmes which take into consideration both qualitative and quantitative standards. These countries have taken advantage of supportive factors(socio-economic, level of education, the high demand for a better education system, and so on..). Among these factors are the level of socio-economic development of the country, and the grade level which will be taught by the candidates after their completion of their programmes(42).

Indeed, the development of pre-service education depends on the country's ability to expand the educational system and the capability to finance more programmes of teacher education. This is true in countries like the Gulf States which have spent considerable money on education and have created many programmes for teacher education in order to meet the rapid expansion in numbers of schools

and to replace the expatriates who were imported during the last decade(43).

The second factor is the grade level and how much preparation is needed for each level. Nursery school and kindergarten teachers need less training than those who will teach at the elementary schools(44). In countries like Indonesia, Nicaragua and Tanzania, elementary teachers are trained in secondary schools (normal school) for three years(45). Ghani wrote about teacher education in the third world countries and explained the variation among nations with respect to the training level of elementary teachers as follows:

**Suffice to observe that all countries require at least a primary education, lasting usually for six years. In addition, almost all countries require completion of the lower secondary school. All the countries in the Asian regions except Indonesia, even require completion of the second stage of secondary schooling. In other words, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore all require approximately eleven years of general study prior to entrance into primary teacher education(46).**

Some countries have an advanced level of preparation for primary school teachers, whereby trainees undertake a two-year course after obtaining the secondary certificate. This kind of programme is called Junior College for Teacher Education. It is

known in many countries like Argentina, Colombia, Guyana, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, and Tanzania. Another advanced programme consists of a three year course at the college level to prepare teachers to teach at the elementary school level. This kind of programme is popular in countries like Canada, Chile, Cyprus, France, and the Federal Republic of Germany(47).

There are four-year college level programmes for elementary school teaching in many countries like Cuba, Peru, the Philippines, the United States, and the United Kingdom(48). The Netherlands has two programmes for elementary teacher preparation. One is organised to provide education for students who will teach pupils in the age group of 4-6 and the other for those who will teach school pupils aged 6-12. Over 140 training institutes for primary education provide courses for four years in which educational theory and methods are emphasised. Practical training is offered in the institutions and by teaching in the elementary schools(49).

In Saudi Arabia (as will be explained further in Chapter Six) elementary school teachers (including Arabic and Islamic teachers) used to be prepared through a two-year Junior Colleges course after the secondary certificate. However, the Junior Colleges came under pressure to improve the quality of their programmes, and many



educators suggested the extension of the teacher education programme into a four year programme(50), so that the teacher would be provided with more than the traditional academic and professional components, by including for example, field experience, internships and advanced theoretical studies and pedagogic skills(51). In 1989, the Ministry of Education responded to this suggestion. Accordingly, a new decree was issued to replace the Junior Colleges with Teachers Colleges, in which the study would be for four years(52).

In sum, the literature review reveals that there is no full agreement among educationlaists in different countries about the appropriate duration of teacher training programmes. It varies from one from country to another. However, there is a widespread tendency among many countries for the period of teacher training to be extended.

#### **4.6. The Content of Professional Preparation**

Professional preparation is part of the teacher training programme which includes many subjects, such as professional course work, theories and methods of instruction, and practical experience-student teaching(53). Mohammed Qutb, Professor of Islamic Education, has strongly affirmed the Islamic necessity of a strong preparation for



Islamic studies and Arabic teachers. He said that the educator must have definite strengths to enable him to undertake this difficult task. His listing of these strengths outlines the basis for successful professional practice, i.e. first, the students must know that teachers are more learned than themselves (as it is their place to receive knowledge). Second, the teachers must know that they have sound knowledge to give (if they are to presume to teach). Third, the teachers must have learned the best ways of presenting knowledge (if they are to communicate)(54).

In fact, academic ability cannot any more be considered a substitute for technical competence in teaching, nor can it overcome the lack of communicative skills. The awareness of the damage that might be caused by professional incompetence and the need to ensure the best utilisation of national resources, to develop the innate capacities of human beings and to improve the professional status of teachers, all make most governments believe that their teachers should undergo appropriate professional training before they are entrusted with teaching(55). Kay observed that good teachers are knowledgeable about their subject fields and pedagogy....but the utilisation of knowledge in performing the tasks of teaching, is the essence of professionalism(56).

In order to identify the content of teacher preparation, the researcher will review some of the available literature from several countries.

The first document to be examined is the recommendation of the report at a meeting of international experts in teacher education which took place at the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg in 1969. This stated that the components and the subjects to be provided to future teachers throughout a pre-service training course should be: (a): General studies, (b): subject courses, (c): professional courses, and teaching practice. The professional courses should consist of: the philosophy, psychology and sociology of education, principles of education, history of educational ideas, school systems and school administration, teaching methods, comparative education, the economics of education and experimental education(57).

Al-Tumi, in an important discussion of the principles of Islamic Education, relates this professionalism to the practice of Religious Education. He says that the teacher of Religion must have a good relationship with his God, as well as with other people. He or she should have a good relationship with other teachers and all others in society(58). Of course, this kind of good relationship can only come from a sound professional grounding, appropriate scholarship

and profound understanding of pedagogy and it is this assumption which underlies the commitment of the present work to exploring the appreciation of the significance of professional preparation among teachers of religion and of the Arabic language.

At the international conference on education, in 1975, a recommendation was adopted on the changing role of the teacher and its implications for professional preparation and in-service training. Article 18 of the recommendation dealt with pre-service teacher education programmes, stating that they should:

1. relate closely to the roles and functions of teachers today and not be confined to the instructional role;
2. train future teachers how to use effectively all the facilities and resources available in the social and cultural environment;
3. develop the attitudes of student teachers towards life-long education and train them to develop the same aptitudes in their pupils;
4. include adequate provision for both general and specialised professional, theoretical and practical preparation;
5. include ample provision for professional development both theoretical and practical, and give the trainees clear ideas about educational research;



6. train student teachers in the effective use of educational technology;

7. provide student teachers with practical experience through participation in the administration of their training institutions as well as activities in the local community(59).

These recommendations have extended the scope of teacher training to prepare the teacher for new functions within and outside the school. They have extended the teaching profession to include many aspects, a perception supported by McClelland, who epitomises teaching as an open capacity exercise, its effectiveness ultimately resting, not solely upon the methodological skill a teacher has acquired, but on a thinking, reflective and compassionate professionalism(60).

It is very obvious that extending the scope of training will need in its turn an increase in the period of training, to prepare for the future adequately, and to allow the study of several disciplines such as sociology, environmental studies, social psychology, administration, methods of enquiry and research and educational technology, including the means of mass communication.



The Nairobi Conference on Teacher Education in a Changing Society, held in 1973, emerged with a number of recommendations concerning the programme of pre-service teacher education. The conference emphasised that initial teacher training should provide the future teacher with necessary knowledge in his specialised area, appropriate understanding and insight about his students, and also equip him with the required teaching skills and techniques. In addition to the practice of teaching, the teacher trainee should be exposed to practical experience in community activities. The conference emphasised that more emphasis should be placed on studies in child development and on the nature of the learning process(61).

It is important to note that the conference highlighted something which should be considered by all teacher educators in their course planning and evaluation, that is, that the future teacher should not be provided only with the subject matter (the what), and equipped with the required teaching techniques and strategies (the how), but also, and more importantly, with the necessary insights to the learner, the way he/she grows up and develops physically, mentally, intellectually, morally and socially, so that when appointed as a teacher he/she will be able to help the pupils to learn effectively. Supporting this view, the Commonwealth conference report not only

recommended that initial training should provide the basic knowledge and skills necessary for the new teacher to begin work "He must know enough about his subject to teach it" but also highlighted the need for the teacher to have a sound understanding of child development and of teaching techniques, so he can select effective means to motivate students and facilitate their learning(62).

In the mid 1970s, Gimeno and Ibanez conducted an international comparative study on the education of primary and secondary teachers. First they presented their own classification of professional subjects, which they then compared with the recommendations presented by the International Bureau of Education (IBE), the International Labour Organisation(ILO), UNESCO, and the American Bureau of Education(ABE). They found areas of correspondence between their classification and the recommendations of these agencies. Common elements were: school hygiene; psychology of education; sociology of education; philosophy of education; experimental education; comparative education; school organisation; legislation and administration; general teaching methods; guidance; principles of education; history of education and teaching practice(63).

In 1981, UNESCO suggested that teacher training programmes should include:

1. general studies;
2. the main elements of philosophy, psychology and sociology, as applied to education, advising that courses should also include the theory and history of education, and the study of comparative education, experimental pedagogy, school administration, and teaching methods of the various specialist subjects;
3. studies related to the students' intended field of teaching;
4. practice in teaching. and in conducting extra-curricular activity under the supervision and guidance of fully qualified teachers(64).

These recommendations give a comprehensive view of the different components which should comprise teacher education programmes, namely, general education, special education, professional education and practical training.

In the Arab world, Abdullah has proposed that professional education should include two kinds of subjects:

A. Educational studies: which provide the student teacher with the principles of education in different respects such as social, historical, philosophical. He suggested that the courses could be classified thus:

1. The principles of education.
2. The history of education.
3. The philosophy of education.



4. Teaching methods.
5. Teaching practice.

B. Sociological studies: which provide the student with an understanding of pupils' development and nature, to acquaint them with the use of various modern methods of assessment. Again, he suggested the courses which achieve this sort of discipline:

1. General sociology.
2. Educational sociology.
3. Assessment methods(65).

In practice, student teachers appreciate courses which are related to teaching skills rather than other topics of subject on professional content(66). Supporting this view, the results of a survey by Al-Kalizh about professional teacher preparation in Egypt, revealed that the majority of students believed that the most beneficial courses in their programme were: teaching methods, teaching practice, teaching aids, the organisation of curricula, and educational sociology(67).

In the light of the previous literature review, one can conclude that a sound initial teacher preparation should include, in addition to general education, and the specialised academic area, educational and professional studies. UNESCO stated that



it is accepted everywhere that teachers should possess a higher level of general education, know thoroughly the subjects they are to teach and through professional studies, be competent classroom teachers, administrators and advisors(68).

While general education and specialised academic areas are fundamental, it is the practical component (educational and professional studies and school experience) that changes the educated individual into a professional teacher. Here, the prospective teacher learns to draw from the other components those elements which have implications for teaching and learns how to teach effectively through the acquisition of knowledge and skills acquired from general and specialised studies. However, the principal factors of all components should be recognised to be integral, interactive and adaptable parts of an initial teacher preparation.

#### **4.7. Time Allocation:**

The suitable distribution of time among the different components which make up Arabic and Islamic teacher training is a significant factor. The literature review suggests that no agreement has been reached on the balance that should be achieved in the course of preparing teachers for elementary education. Abdullah observed that views regarding the appropriate distribution of time for different components of teacher training programmes vary from one country to

another. Sometimes, even in the same country, the distribution of time differs from one teacher training institute to another(69). Supporting this view, in Saudi Arabia for instance, Al-Othem in 1992 studied the requirements for preparing Arabic teachers in Saudi Arabia, and found a lack of consistency among Arabic teacher training programmes in the Saudi universities, regarding the appropriate distribution of time among different components of programme. He gave as an example of this controversy, that the Arabic teacher training programme in Imam University specified 7% for professional preparation, while in King Saud University, it was specified as 25.8%(70).

Similarly, for Islamic studies, in an investigative study about the teacher training programme for Islamic teachers in UM Al-Qura University, Al-Hukemy found that during the four year Islamic teacher training programme, the professional portion was 20%(71), while in Imam University, the professional portion was again 7%(72).

An international comparative study conducted by Gimeno and Ibanez revealed that around one-third of the total time was allocated to professional preparation and the rest for general education and specialised subjects: more specifically 70% of the time of training

courses for secondary teachers was assigned to general and specialised subjects, and 10% to teaching practice(73). Razik, in his proposed teacher training programme model for developing countries, stated that the professional programme should constitute about a third of the total teacher programme and that the remainder would be allocated to liberal and academic studies(74).

In England, HMI has proposed that all B.Ed students should spend half of their training course on the main area of specialised academic study. In the same paper, HMI expressed dissatisfaction with the proportion of time allocated for professional training in the three year B.Ed. and PGCE training courses:

**A disadvantage shared by the three year B.Ed and PGCE route is that the time for professional training is the equivalent of only one year, and is a very short period in which to train any teacher(75).**

Indeed, the professional components of educational studies, and teaching practice have recently witnessed a gradual upgrading in status and consequent redistribution of time in their favour. This might be attributed to several factors such as:

1. the general trend, world-wide, of extending the period of initial training programmes;

2. the changing role of teachers in the world, with a trend for the future teacher to be given not only the subject element and the required teaching methods and strategies, but also, and more importantly, with the necessary insights into the learner, the way he grows up as a whole and develops physically, mentally, intellectually, morally and socially(76);

3. the progress of educational research on training procedures, such as the use of micro-teaching and the use of new patterns in teaching practice(77);

4. as indicated earlier, a new trend in teacher training for elementary school teachers in many countries, is to offer a university degree rather than a teaching licence or certificate, a development requiring more time to be allocated for both the main subject and educational studies.

In short, the above literature review has shown that the professional component should constitute at least one-third of the primary training programme. Also, while the highest proportion of time is allocated to the specialised subjects, there is a growing demand to allocate more time to the professional aspects, in order to prepare competent teachers.



#### **4.8. Training Primary Classroom Teachers or Islamic and Arabic Teachers**

The general trend has grown towards preparing specialised primary teachers instead of preparing general teachers(78). Gough supported this view, saying that preparing primary subject teachers is the way to improve the quality of primary teachers(79). Furthermore, there are some considerations that support this view. Primary teachers, like other people, are competent in some areas and less competent in others. As a result of this, teachers cannot teach effectively what they have not mastered themselves. Specialisation solves this problem by providing the intending teachers with training in the areas that match their interests and abilities, so that pupils and teachers can benefit from specialisation.

HMI recommends that all potential primary teachers in England and Wales should study one major curriculum area in some depth. The reasons given for this are:

1. to allow the teacher to be able to make a strong contribution to the whole curriculum;
2. to establish a better understanding of the level of learning which can be achieved;
3. many teachers will then come to be used as subject consultants within primary schools(80).

Also, it is recommended that a distinction should be made between the training of teachers of early years (3-8) and the teachers of children in the middle years (7-12 or 13). The training of the teachers of early years should include all the main areas of the primary school curriculum, while the future middle years teachers will follow, in addition to substantial general studies, a more distinct specialist area(81).

Saudi Arabia has adopted this approach in preparing elementary school teachers, so that the teacher should study one major curriculum area in some depth, such as Arabic, Islamic studies, mathematics, or social studies. Accordingly, all elementary teachers are specialists. They graduate from Teacher Colleges, which were established especially to qualify teachers in these different subjects.

#### **4.9. Teaching and Training Methods**

If the teacher is looked upon as an artist, then, some of the skills required of an artist must be included in his professional training(82). These skills of how to teach and interact meaningfully with students, are the basis for effective teacher preparation(83). Accordingly, exposing prospective teachers to the theoretical principles that explain what they do, and allowing experimentation

with methods and theories related to these principles, are essential for their training(84).

Teacher training institutions are expected more than other institutions, to employ a varied and effective use of appropriate teaching and training methods. This is partly because the variety of components of initial teacher training programmes, i.e. curriculum content to be transmitted, professional knowledge to be provided and operational skills to be acquired, necessitate the use of more than one pedagogical technique. The same consideration suggests that pupils should learn in small groups with common interest and should be provided with the opportunity to be involved in the learning process to learn effectively, and it would be desirable to take this into account in pre-service programmes(85).

Recently, a number of instructional theories and methods, which are basic for teachers as fluent decision-makers, and which have practical support in teacher education literature, have been identified. Among those which are strongly advocated, are: micro teaching, group discussion, the questioning method and the lecture method.

One of the latest developments in instructional technique is the use of micro-teaching in teacher training programmes. This

appears to have several potential advantages over conventional training, for it provides a learning situation similar to the classroom but less complex, which in turn gives the student teacher the opportunity to practise specific skills. Micro-teaching enables the student to concentrate on his own teaching instead of coping with the needs and demands of the pupils. It gives the opportunity for the student to analyse teaching systematically, it allows the student to make his or her own evaluation of it and it allows for repeated practice, until a particular skill has been mastered(86). The promising results of micro teaching have encouraged more than 400 United States universities and nine teams of the comprehensive models to make basic provision for the utilisation of micro teaching(87).

Group discussion is another instructional technique beneficial for prospective teachers. It is said that group discussion promotes democratic relations, learning and quality education, problem-solving skill, and positive attitudes toward subject matter(88). In nine comprehensive models in United States universities, group discussion is the method most frequently utilised with student teachers(89).

The influence of the questioning method on classroom learning cannot be overlooked. It represents a vital part of instruction(90) and is an effective agent for setting the learning stage,



initiating the process, sustaining the activity, and giving directions and purpose to the learning(91).

The lecture is one of the most common teaching methods. It can be used to give the maximum amount of information in limited time, so clear arrangement of the lecturer's materials is vital to its success(92). However, the lecture involves the instructor talking, with little student involvement. It also develops in the students the habit of memorising lecture notes. It should, therefore, only be used to communicate to the future teachers something which cannot be given in any other way, such as explanation, interpretation and inspiration(93). Lectures should not be delivered too rapidly, be too complex, too abstract or too uniform. Moreover, lectures should be illustrated in one way or another(94). Olatian and Aguisibob recommended that this method is suitable mainly for mature students, especially in colleges and universities(95).

Indeed, this method is the main method used in teaching Arabic and Islamic subjects in Saudi Arabia, not just at university level, but also at general education level. Many studies(96)(97)(98) have emphasised that teachers of Arabic and Islamic subjects in Saudi schools, depend mostly on lecturing students without allowing them to participate in classroom discussion, and there is no attempt to

use attractive methods. This is because the method is traditionally very popular, it requires little equipment and is easily implemented.

In sum, the writer believes that when teachers teach well, students learn well, as a good method facilitates learning. However, it must be clearly stated that even when we recognise this fact it is still difficult to identify 'the one best method of teaching'. In fact, no one method of teaching will be suitable to all occasions. In terms of modern Western pedagogy, Davies has observed that the selection of appropriate instruction technique depends upon a number of factors such as the goal sought by the teacher; the students to be taught; their background and needs; the requirement of the task to be mastered and the immediate conditions under which the instruction is to be conducted(99).

## **4.10. Teaching Practice**

### **4.10.1. Its Concept**

Page and Thomas define teaching practice in their Dictionary of Education as

**A period spent by a student teacher in an actual classroom situation in order to practice teaching skills under the supervision of an experienced teacher(100).**

Gordon and Lawton agreed that:

**Teaching practice is a period of time during a student teacher's course is devoted to gaining classroom experience(101).**

Other similar concepts of teaching practice have been given by many writers such as Stones(102), Pedley(103), Hoste(104), Cope(105) and Olatian and Agusiobo. For example, Olatian and Agusiobo viewed teaching practice as

**The phase of the pre-service education of teachers in which the student teacher brings together educational theory and actual teaching practices and procedures under competent supervision(106).**

One may infer from these definitions that teaching practice should provide an opportunity for the student teacher to apply educational theory and to gain experience in teaching methods.

#### **4.10.2. The Importance of Teaching Practice**

Teaching practice is considered one of the most important components in the initial training programme. It is the vehicle which puts into practice the theoretical aspects of the course of professional preparation and during which teaching skills may be acquired and improved. Many publications on the teacher training programme have emphasised the importance and value of teaching practice. In the world of Arab Education, Farag, from Egypt, has emphasised that

teaching practice is extremely important, and is the backbone in teacher training(107).

This vital importance of teaching practice in the preparation of teachers derives from several factors. First, it is an educational enterprise which involves students, college staff, and school staff in direct collaboration(108). Thus, it could be considered as the only real learning experience in which all those who are involved in the preparation of student teachers co-operate to produce effective teachers. Secondly, it provides on-the-job training for student teachers. Al-Hukemy wrote:

**After some years of bookish study, the students have to stand up in front of a class to teach(109).**

Thirdly, because it usually comes near the end of the undergraduate programme for the professional and academic preparation of teachers, it gives a very important chance for the application of the concepts, values and skills which have been studied in a theoretical way throughout the previous course work.

In a British enquiry among head teachers, published in 1967 Griffiths and Moore found that in all the sixteen schools studied, teaching practice was regarded as essential in judging the students'



suitability for entry to the profession(110). The findings emphasise the generality of agreement that teaching practice is the essence of educational preparation. It offers a focus in teacher training in which instructional method can be practised by the trainee.

Teaching practice, also, is considered to be an effective means of linking teacher training institutions with schools. Contacts in teaching practice provide an opportunity for schools to benefit from the experience and knowledge of the supervisors in the teaching colleges and at the same time, to contribute to the preparation of prospective members of the profession. Further, through teaching practice, training colleges and practice schools can learn about each other's new practices and ideas(111).

It is clear from the above, that there is no argument among educationists about the value and importance of teaching practice. There may, however, well be differences with regard to its practical resolution, time allocation, the supervisory requirements and so on. It is an aspect of training which deserves to receive greater attention in the professional literature available in Arabic than has been the case hitherto.

### **4.10.3. The Objectives of Teaching Practice**

Morris and Stones observed that serious and detailed studies in Britain of the objectives of teaching practice came as a result of a group of factors which appeared in the field of teacher education around the early 1970s. The first factor was the expansion in the number of students being trained, and consequently, the increasing number of schools and teachers being involved in teaching practice in many countries, especially developing nations. The desire of some teachers to understand more clearly their role in teaching practice was another factor. The third factor, was the feeling of some college tutors that while they asked students clearly to state their lesson's objectives, they themselves were not making clear to the students and teachers the objectives of the whole exercise. The fourth factor, was the value of clearly stating the objectives of teaching practice to the students, since it is primarily for them that teaching practice is organised and their future depends on their satisfactory fulfilling of its objectives(112).

Stones and Morris at the University of Birmingham, conducted a survey of teacher training institutes in Britain. Each student was asked to report criteria used in assessment of teaching practice. From sixty responses a set of objectives for teaching

practice was devised. These objectives are arranged in order of importance as follows:

1. to provide opportunities for the student to acquire and improve teaching skills;
2. to enable the student effectively to plan and prepare lessons;
3. to help the student develop desirable traits, attitudes, and abilities;
4. to enable the student to acquire the characteristics of a teacher and display appropriate behaviour;
5. to allow the student to evaluate his own, and his pupils' progress;
6. to enable the student to bring about learning in children(113).

It is observable that some of these objectives are expressed in general terms, such as acquiring and improving teaching skills, while others are more specific, such as planning and preparation of lessons. However, attention was given to the objectives of carrying out self and pupil assessment.

One of the most important studies into the objectives of teaching practice was carried out at the University of Bristol by Cope. From interviews, questionnaires and written statements of a group of students, teachers and college tutors, she drew up a list of seventeen detailed objectives. Objectives one to nine were concerned



with the function of teaching practice. The nine primary objectives were stated as follows:

1. to provide the student with an opportunity of establishing an appropriate teacher-pupil relationship with children;
2. to provide the student with an opportunity for theory to be applied in the practical situation and to assist him, where necessary, to make the difficult discrimination between inappropriate theory and the inadequate implementation of sound theory;
3. to provide an opportunity for evaluating the student's potential as a teacher and suitability for the teaching profession;
4. to provide the student with an experience of success in the teaching situation so that he acquires confidence;
5. to provide an opportunity in a practical teaching situation for the extension and deepening of the student's self-knowledge;
6. to provide the student with the practical experience in schools which will reveal some of the problems of discipline and enable him to develop personal methods of control;
7. to provide the student with opportunities for developing powers of organisation.
8. to provide an opportunity for the student to develop and display qualities of adaptability and sensitivity appropriate to the school situation;



9. to provide the student with the opportunity of becoming part of the school community, familiarising himself with its practices and entering into appropriate professional relationships with adult members, the most significant of which is his relationship with the class/subject teacher(114).

From the above objectives, it is clear that the principal attention is directed on the student teachers and their development socially, mentally, morally, psychologically and practically in the classroom. The second concern is to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The previous exploration of the objectives introduced by researchers, writers and teacher training colleges show that there is some level of agreement and emphasis on a number of objectives of teaching practice as whole. These objectives might be identified as follows:

1. to observe experienced teachers teaching and to exchange ideas with them;
2. to make contacts with pupils and observe their behaviour in different situations and to understand their individual learning approach;

3. to apply and test teaching and learning theory in a practical situation;
4. to develop first-hand teaching skills;
5. to observe the school system in operation and to practise the range of more routine administrative tasks;
6. to assess the student's potential as a teacher and his suitability for the teaching profession(115).

The objectives, however, could be extended to include some other objectives derived from a literature review, such as linking teacher training institutions with the practice school, giving school teachers the opportunity to develop their own supervisory skills and to exchange ideas with college supervisors, and giving an opportunity for college supervisors to gain more experience and knowledge by contact with school staff and pupils.

In short, the main objectives of teaching practice are to develop the student's teaching skills to a stage where he/she is capable of teaching a class completely on his/her own, and to check the suitability of the student teacher for the teaching profession so that, as Morris suggests, he/she will shortly become as effective a teacher as possible(116).

#### **4.10.4. The Teaching Practice Components:**

Teaching practice is the first opportunity for the student teacher to participate in activities involved in teaching in actual situations(117). Actually, teaching practice can be seen as the process of transition from student to teacher, and many students view it with considerable anxiety, going into the schools with feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. As a result of this, the majority of teacher training institutions accept gradual induction into teaching practice as preferable to giving full responsibility from the beginning of teaching practice. A study conducted by Cowan revealed that the majority of students also welcomed the idea of a gradual introduction to teaching, beginning with observation. The reasons given were:

1. The students gained confidence and obtained an insight into teaching.
2. The students understood the level of the class.
3. The student got to know the children and their abilities.
4. They learned from the observation of experienced teachers.
5. The students ascertained the appropriate type of work/method/organisation(118).

##### **4.10.4.1. Observation**

Observing experts and experienced practitioners in a whole range of jobs and professions is an important part of a beginner's preparation and it is therefore not surprising that observing experienced teachers

often makes up an important part of a student's commitment in the course of school visits, school experience, and teaching practice(119). Supporting this view, in his book "The First Teaching Practice", Schofield observed that

**The observation period is also to some extent the bridge between theory and practice. In your lectures, you hear about individual differences of physique, intellect, emotion, attitudes, memory and so on. Now you see these differences in actual children. You also hear of the thought process of pupils of different ages and the kind of work they can be expected to produce, and now you see the result of their thinking, you hear them speaking and working in the classroom situation(120).**

Observation periods also acquaint students with the style of the teachers with whom they are working and give them the 'feel' of the classes they will be overseeing in the weeks ahead(121). Dover stated that student teachers think that the observation period is useful and helpful. It enables them to:

1. overcome the feelings of insecurity and fear which they might have felt toward teaching practice at the beginning of the course;
2. become familiar with the methods, the classes, and the teachers' style;



3. familiarise themselves with the routine of the daily schedule and gain a better understanding of teaching procedures before starting actual teaching;
4. approach actual teaching with some knowledge of pupils and their individual aptitudes and be acquainted with their names, attitudes and personalities(122).

In order to achieve these objectives, good planning on the part of both student teachers and their supervisors is required. Students might sit in the classroom watching, but not observing, if they have no guidelines to follow and no specific assignments to perform. In their Guide to Classroom Observation, Walker and Adelman stated that when we talk about observation we do not simply mean watching and describing what seems to be going on in a classroom(123). Cohen and Manion described this sort of observation which makes no attempt to analyse and explain what happens in the classroom as valueless at best and at worst detrimental. Detrimental because a student viewing a lesson in the manner described is simply continuing what he has been doing for the past twelve years or so, and will probably increase the likelihood that he in turn will teach as he himself was taught(124). The results of an investigation by Joyce and Harootunian supported this view. They inferred from their observation that students tended to borrow the practices of other

teachers whom they had observed, rather than think out an original approach of their own(125).

Indeed, asking student teachers to observe a lesson without specifying precisely the aspects to be watched does not make any sense to student teachers who have already spent many years watching their teachers at different schooling levels. Consequently, it is essential to make sure student teachers know precisely what to observe and train them how to observe, as well as the way in which to classify and analyse collected data.

There are a variety of aspects of classroom observation. Among these aspects are interaction between pupils and teachers; attitudes of pupils and their attention; teacher movement; motivation questioning technique; disciplinary techniques; the range of individual differences; and various aspects of classroom management. Also, the physical conditions of the classroom such as lighting; heating; ventilation and the like, which are considered to be operant variables in classroom organisation, should gain the student teacher's attention during observation(126).

A phase of observation and participation might be organised for the student teacher before he/she undertakes educational courses.

The events observed might be discussed later during the course at the college. Students might be offered lectures in education and teaching methods, then sent to schools with their attention directed to observing specific pupils' activities and their behaviour, with the aim of discussing them later with their tutors, and so relating theory to practice.

Mills suggested that a training programme should be organised for student teachers to develop their own recording skills and devices. Among these skills are: tallying, listing, coding, verbatim recording, anecdotal recording and timing(127). The data collected could be evaluated in discussion in class sessions with the education department. Ashton indicated that:

**The two processes of observation of classroom events and discussing them with the rest of the team had enabled [students] to make sense of their college courses to a much greater degree(128).**

Moreover, these discussions develop and improve the students' abilities to explain the gathered data in the light of their training courses and at the same time to identify those training areas that must be given further attention. The student teachers should be asked to observe and then to write an account about the various phases observed, and to interpret what took place. The student

teacher could also write about the observed aspects by answering a set of questions concerning specific features of the activities watched(129).

Regarding the number of days spent on observation activities, an inquiry into the operation of PGCE courses in England and Wales showed that student teachers had undertaken periods of observation in schools either before the course proper commenced, or during the period of the course. The number of days spent on observation both before the formal beginning of the course and during the period of the course differed from one college to another and within the departments. However, the mean was 12 days, 27% of student teachers spent fewer than five days, while 21% had 16 or more days observation(130).

#### **4.10.4.2. Participation**

Participation is considered to be a more complicated stage than observation because, at this stage of training, the student teacher is more than an onlooker. This stage has been defined by Olaitan and Agusiobo as that:

**Where the student teacher actually becomes part of the school and takes part in all its activities. He participates in school activities other than classroom teaching(131).**



Participation provides the student teacher with the opportunity to:

1. perform a wide range of duties which he will be called upon to perform in an actual teaching situation;
2. gain experience in all the routine activities related to the teaching situation;
3. communicate with pupils and become better acquainted with them;
4. provide valuable assistance to school staff members(132).

At this stage, the student teacher is expected to assist and work with the regular classroom teacher. There are many instructional and other activities which may be performed by student teachers. Among these activities are: the duplication of class materials, the arranging of instructional materials and registration and lateness procedure(133).

#### **4.10.4.3. Actual Teaching**

Actual teaching is considered to be the most important phase of the teaching practice programme, for it is only through this phase that the student teacher really learns to teach. In this stage, the student teacher should realise that he is the one responsible for planning and preparing the work of his class and seeing that everything is carried out(134). Devor pointed out that student teachers subsequently indicated in their responses to a questionnaire that the time spent in actual teaching, the organisation and planning of daily schedule and

the development of units and lessons, was found to be the most helpful phase of the teaching practice for them as beginning teachers(135).

Both daily lesson plans and long range unit plans must be carefully prepared ahead of time, and presented to the supervisor who will check them and make suggestions for their improvement, if necessary(136). Good lesson preparation is always a sound basis for a good lesson(137) The student teacher should prepare his lessons to suit the various groups of pupils he finds in his class. He must be well informed about the syllabus and the general scheme of work, if the school has one. Also, the objectives needed to be achieved in a particular lesson must be clearly stated. Finally, he should organise all his materials and equipment together to enable him to achieve those objectives(138).

During actual teaching, Schofield recommended that it is a great help for the student teacher to know the names of as many students as he can. It is a useful starting point in actual teaching to establish satisfactory personal relations. This may be a small point, but children are proud of their names, for they are the things which give them identity. He comments, "If a child is accustomed to being called Mary by the regular teacher and you snap your finger and end

by saying ‘the little girl in the blue dress at the back’, it does not establish good rapport”.(139). It is generally recommended that the teacher should always proceed from the known to unknown. The points they want to explain to the class must be sequential and relevant. Questions should be evenly distributed among the students.

It is very difficult task to say precisely what sort of activities are ideal for the class. It all depends on the teacher, the pupils and the lesson he is teaching. However, it is generally accepted that in each lesson, pupils must be actively involved in the affairs of the class, whether in the form of note writing, doing exercises or reading.

#### **4.10.5 The Organisation of Teaching Practice:**

Organising school experience is a complex task, as it involves communicating with all the participants in the teaching practice programme and taking into account the circumstances of each group, if not every individual, and making every effort to co-ordinate activities between the participants in order to achieve the desired objectives(140). The task of organisation also, involves an evaluation of the teaching practice programme as it is operated, and, at the same time, planning to try out new schemes and procedures in order to improve and develop this important component of teacher education.

The most widely followed procedures used by teacher training institutions in teaching practice are either (a): appointing a person called 'director' or 'organiser' of the teaching practice course or (b): establishing a committee or a division attached to the department of education to carry out the task. The responsibilities allocated to the organiser of teaching practice might vary from one institute to another. However, certain responsibilities of the organiser which appeared from the literature review will be discussed in the following pages.

#### **4.10.5.1 The Selection of Co-operating Schools:**

Student teachers should not be sent to a school merely because it indicates a willingness to co-operate. The selected practice schools should be among those which are well-equipped, staffed with qualified teachers to serve as professionally competent co-operating teachers and above all, interested in providing training for student teachers.

Indeed, the organiser sometimes may be faced with some schools which may not be willing to participate, for two reasons; firstly, owing to inability to adjust their programme to accommodate the practice teaching. Secondly, some schools may not be willing to participate because of inability of the principal and the members of



staff to appreciate the importance of teaching practice to the professional development of the student teacher and the improvement of the teaching profession. In this case, the college co-ordinator or supervisor should visit them and try to enlighten them about the importance of teaching practice to the professional development of the staff and the schools. Persuasion is a key element in making more schools participate in practice teaching(141).

Although it is desirable, that all student teachers should have some experience of working in efficient schools, it will be impossible for them all to be in equally good schools. However, Olaitan and Agusiobo suggested that a group may be placed in poorly equipped schools at least for one of the periods of teaching practice, and later transferred to well-equipped schools in other periods of practice. This procedure will enable the student teacher, as well as the college supervisor, to experience working at different schools, and give student teachers an idea about the kind of schools they will work in after their graduation(142).

#### **4.10.5.2 The Selection of Co-operating Teacher:**

Olaitan and Agusiobo described the co-operating teacher as the most important companion to the student teacher in his professional preparation. He is also recognised by other participants in practice

teaching as the key person in the professional growth of the prospective teacher(143). Accordingly, not every teacher can be allowed to supervise a student teacher. Brodbelt observed that:

**It has been found that more than 20 percent of all unsuccessful student teaching experience occurred because of the role played by the supervising teacher(144).**

Realising the important role played by the co-operating teacher in training student teachers, Brodbelt pointed out that:

**If we wish future teachers to be imaginative, venturesome and creative in teaching, we must ensure that their student teaching experience is with a model or models who promote that example(145).**

Therefore, it is very important to select the better qualified teachers through examination of academic and professional records as well as teaching performance. They should be among those who are positively interested in participating in teaching practice, willing to work with the college tutors in planning activities for student teachers, well known for their good relationships with pupils, colleagues and the community and have the desire to develop experience in supervision(146). In a subject area or class where there is no qualified teacher, it is the responsibility of the headmaster or principle to inform the college supervisor of the problems of

providing a qualified teacher to meet the demands of student teaching experience, so that the principal and the co-ordinator may find a solution on how to supervise the student teacher effectively(147).

Brodbelt has suggested the following criteria for selecting teachers to supervise trainees:

(A). Background Qualification:

1. Master's degree(in the field and subject being taught);
2. Tenured (two or three years of teaching experience) with above average, good or superior ratings by the principal;
3. Recommended by department chairperson, principal, supervisor;
4. Request made for a student teacher after having taken a course on supervision of student teachers.

(B). Classroom related Skills:

1. Keeps up-to-date professionally;
2. Likes pupils and has good rapport with them;
3. Is efficient in classroom management skills;
4. Uses a variety of teaching techniques covering recent subject and teaching trends;
5. Is actively involved with extra curricular programme;

C. Personal:

1. Appearance pleasant
2. Possesses good health and stamina.

3. Professional attitudes(punctual, dedicated, well organised).
4. Flexible personality (meaning one is imaginative, warm, and friendly, empathetic to pupils, endowed with a sense of humour and sincere in relationship with others).(148).

Securing a sufficient number of co-operating qualified teachers with the criteria which have just been outlined is not an easy task, even in developed countries. One of the largest studies conducted into pre-service teacher education in the United States concluded that skill or competence in subject matter and the willingness to assume the supervision role were the most important factors in the process of selection of co-operation teachers, while the qualification as supervisor or an advanced degree were not frequently regarded to be as important(149). Supporting this view, Olaitan and Agusiobo pointed that:

**The main contribution which the co-operating teacher can make to the development of the student arises from his professional experience rather than his academic qualification. This is one quality which he has and the student teacher has not, whatever his academic qualification; hence, students should be advised against considering themselves superior to teachers who have lower qualifications or knowledge but greater professional experience(150).**



#### **4.10.5.3 The Orientation of Participants:**

Once the appropriate number of schools and co-operating teachers has been secured, there follows the placement of the student teacher and college supervisor to these schools, taking into account the wishes of student teachers and their supervisors, whenever possible. Following the announcement of an individual student's posting to a school, all the participants should be given 'orientation' to their tasks in order to become fully aware of responsibilities. Olaitan and Agusiobo observed that orientation of the student teacher during teaching practice is important to enable him to become familiar with the school environment and its organisation and also to become acquainted with the class teacher with whom he will be working for most of the time(151).

Generally, the teacher training institutions provide information and guidance about different aspects of the teacher training programme by preparing handbooks and by conducting a number of seminars. Among the matters that should be fully understood by those involved in teaching practice are: training policies, clearly defined objectives for teaching practice, roles of the various participants, the type of records to be kept and assessment procedures. This sort of orientation programme is considered very important in that it provides participants with a frame of reference

and makes them aware of each other's responsibilities. It also serves as an initial step towards building confidence and enhancing motivation among all the individuals concerned(152).

#### **4.10.6 Timing and Duration of Teaching Practice:**

One of the unique characteristics of teaching practice is its limited duration. However, this period should be long enough for considerable development to take place in the student teacher's competence and confidence in doing the job, and for him to develop increasing interest in the task of teaching.(153).

Generally speaking, teaching practice is often divided into two periods. The first period is usually designed merely for observation, while the other is devoted to actual teaching. Again, preliminary visits are usually organised for student teachers to meet the principal and members of staff in a given school. Indeed, the literature review suggests that teacher training institutions differ in the amount of time allocated to teaching practice, as well as in the number of practical periods. In the United States, the duration of teaching practice ranges from six weeks to one semester(154). A survey of teaching practice at 67 teacher training institutions England and Wales shows that the

average length of the teaching practice programme over a three-year teacher training course is 86 working days(155).

The National Union of Students (NUS) in conjunction with the Union of Women Teachers (UWT) and the National Association of school are used masters (NAS) in a recent publication pointed out the incongruity that B.Ed students are required to complete at least 75 days, while PGCE students are expected to undergo a practical period of not less than 50 days (156). In Singapore, the teachers' training college allocated 12 weeks for the teaching practice component.(157).

The picture in Arab countries looks quite different, as reported by Massials and Jarrar. For example, in Iraq, intending secondary teachers are offered teaching practice which consists of 36 days. Similarly, their counterparts in Egypt are engaged in a full teaching period which amounts to 36 days, in addition to an observation period(158). In Saudi Arabia (as will be explained in more detail in Chapter Six) the planners for education have recognised the vital role of professional preparation in general and teaching practice in particular for the student teacher, so that in 1989, the period of teaching practice for intending primary teachers was extended to 15

weeks, occupying the whole of the last semester of the programme(159).

With regard to the number of lessons which should be given by each student per week, it can be said that again teacher training institutions differ concerning the minimum and maximum requirements. The NUS in 1985 indicated that the timetable of the student teacher should not include more than 70% class contact time(160). Postgraduate students at the Department of Education in Hull University, are expected to teach about 50% for much of the main teaching practice(161). However, apart from actual teaching, students can be involved in other school activities. They also need time to prepare lessons and to mark the assignments of the pupils under their care during the period of attachment. Further, they need some time to discuss their performance and daily teaching with supervisors. Taking all these points into consideration, it can be suggested that 50% of teaching for the main teaching practice may be considered a reasonable proportion of time.

#### **4.10.7. Follow Up of Teaching Practice**

During the period of teaching practice, the organiser should visit the practice schools to observe the implementation of the teaching practice programme and at the same time be in contact with the



school's principal teachers, the student teachers and their supervisors. This follow-up will enable him/her to collect information, i.e. comments, criticism and suggestions related to the teaching practice programme, from these different people. Feedback might be obtained by such means as interviews, group discussion, seminars and supervisors' reports, as well as by conducting a questionnaire survey(162). The suggestions and recommendations received will also give clear indications as to what aspects and procedures of teaching practice need to be improved, developed, or replaced by new ones, in the following year(163).

#### **4.10.8. Supervision:**

The term supervision, *vide* The Oxford Dictionary, has three meanings. The first is the exercise of general direction of a business undertaking. The second is inspection and direction of the work of others. The third is reading through the work of another, especially for the purpose of correction(164). In Guide to Pedagogue, Lesure defined the supervisor as one who is directly responsible for helping to improve the performance of the teacher in the classroom, and often for evaluating it (165).

Supervision is considered to be a complex process. This complexity derives from the variety of overlapping and

interdependent roles which are required of the supervisor. Among these roles are: manager, counsellor, instructor, observer and assessor. Each of these roles has its own distinctive objectives and subsumes a number of specific skills(166). The complexity arises from the difficulty which may be faced by the supervisor in playing conflicting roles, as a helper on the one hand and assessor on the other, and of establishing a relationship of trust and respect between him and the supervisee. Without such a relationship the process of supervising is unlikely to achieve much(167). However, school supervision of students in training and of teachers new to the profession is an area that has received little attention. Very few research studies describe and compare arrangements for supervision in schools or evaluate the effectiveness of such arrangements(168).

The co-operating teacher is considered to play an important part in the teaching practice period. Olaitan and Agusiobo pointed out that the co-operating teacher has two advantages, in that he is present throughout the period of practice teaching, and that he knows the school and pupils well(169). Indeed, research findings support the idea of appointing school teachers as supervisors of student teachers in teaching practice. In a survey of B.Ed and certificate students by Yates, it was found that about three-quarters of them believed that teachers in school had been of greater help and made more valid

evaluations than their college supervisors.(170). Similarly, Andrews and Protherough stated that many students they interviewed found the supervision offered within the schools most helpful(171). Supporting these results, a survey at 67 teacher training institutes in England and Wales showed that:

1. The student teachers felt that the co-operating teacher was of more help to the student teacher than the college supervisor;
2. The co-operating teacher was able to spend more time in observation and discussion than the college supervisor;
3. The assessment of co-operating teachers was seen by student teacher as being more valid than that of the college supervisors;
4. The students as well as the teachers saw the college supervisors as being more concerned with assessment than support(172).

In the co-operating teacher scheme, Zimpher et al. found that the major activities of the college supervisor during the teaching practice appeared to be:

1. defining and communicating the purpose and expectations to be fulfilled by both the student teacher and the co-operating teacher;
2. inducting the student teacher into the classroom's on-going instructional activities;
3. assessing the student teacher and providing him/her with constructive feedback;

4. acting as a personal confidant to the co-operating teacher and the student teacher(173).

It is clear from the above discussion that many educators advocate the idea of appointing school teachers as supervisors in teaching practice. However, some suggest that a major function of the college supervisors should be to train the co-operating teachers for the supervision of student teachers. Among these are Morrison and McIntyre, who advocated that experienced practising teachers should be selected and:

**Trained in observing students in the classroom, in advising them about their teaching and in helping students to benefit from observing, criticising and discussing with them their own teaching(174).**

The college supervisor has an important role in the implementation of teaching practice. This role cannot be fulfilled by anyone else. Olaitan and Agusiobo observed that without this co-operation student teachers will be confronted with many problems which might affect adversely the success of the experience(175). Accordingly, the post of a college supervisor requires somebody who is competent, hard working, dedicated, and interested in assisting others(176). Stones has criticised the situation in some teacher



training programmes, in that they select supervisors who are recruited from staff who have not undertaken a study of any of the foundation disciplines of education and who have no intellectual understanding about the theory and practice of supervision.(177).

Supervisors should be selected from among those staff members who are skilled in the art of teaching and who have specialised in the subject which they will supervise, who are familiar with current trends and issues in the process of education, and who are aware of the psychology of learning, are experienced in dealing with students, skilful in evaluation and capable in establishing human relationships(178).

In short, college supervisors are to act as liaison between the college and the practice school as well as other participants in the teaching practice programme. At the same time, the co-operating teacher is present throughout the period of practice teaching, and knows the school and pupils well. So the researcher believes that both of them have a very important role in implementation of the teaching process and the role of each one of them should be complemented by the other and not duplicate it.

#### **4.10.8.1. Supervisory Activities**

The college supervisor is supposed to carry out several types of supervisory activities during the teaching practice period. One of them is the observation of the student teacher so that he will be provided with a clear picture of his teaching in the light of accurate data collected in actual teaching situation, where the student teacher is working directly with pupils and his supervisor is present as witness. Since student teachers differ individually in needs and abilities, the number of supervisory visits to the student teacher may differ accordingly. The availability of appropriate co-operating teachers might reduce the number of visits to be made by college supervisors to the student teacher, to two or three times within the teaching practice period. Where such teachers are not available the college supervisors must be expected to make more visits(179). A survey of teaching practice at 67 teacher training institutions in England and Wales showed that the number of visits expected under the one supervisor model during the whole period of teaching practice is 12.2 for each student, while under the two supervisors model, the average number of visits expected is 16.3 for each student(180).

There are many types of recording devices, by which the supervisor can record the trainee's performance. Among these are:

video and audio records, symbols, diagrams, checklist, schedules, charts, structured report forms and descriptive comments(181). The supervisor is also required to hold a series of individual meetings with each student during the teaching practice period. Such meetings may be held for planning, guidance and assessment purposes. This type of supervisory contact has been found to be the most effective technique in supervising students(182).

For meetings to be successful, student teachers should be clear as to their purpose. Through this meeting, the supervisor and student teacher discuss together the lesson plan to be presented, the teaching strategies, instructional materials, and audio-visual aids to be used. They also should agree about the teaching aspects to be observed and the observation techniques or recording system to be used by the supervisor in his visit(183). With reference to the length of time required for the individual supervisory meeting, Turney suggest that every meeting requires at least as much time as was spent in observation(184).

Moreover, the supervisor is expected to organise several group meetings with different participants to discuss topics such as college policy on teaching practice, the effectiveness of the teaching practice programme, the relationship between student teachers and schools.



the problems of student teachers and possible solutions, and suggestions for improving the teaching practice programme(185).

#### **4.10.9. The Assessment of Teaching Practice:**

Assessment is an essential element in the professional preparation of teachers and is regarded by many experts as the most important aspect of the teacher training process. It is the evaluation which reveals the potential for success or perhaps failure of a student in becoming an effective teacher. Although considerable research has been carried out on the subject of teaching practice, there is as yet no method of assessment which is universally accepted in the teaching practice exercise. Yockney stated that:

**Attempts to establish means of evaluating students' teaching are faced with two basic problems. These are, firstly the lack of universally agreed criteria ...and secondly, the lottery effect of practice places (186)**

According to Webster, the assessment of teaching practice can either be impressionistic or analytical. In the impressionistic approach, the student is placed into a five point scale as a result of the assessor's global impression. In the analytical approach, a prepared schedule of criteria is used(187). Research conducted by Stones and Morris concerned with the assessment of teaching practice, showed that sixty nine teacher training colleges in England and Wales and Northern



Ireland, used “impressionistic” methods of assessment, seventeen used a combination of impression and analytic methods and seventeen used analytic methods alone.(188) The point is made that most colleges base their teaching mark on the subjective impression of an individual supervisor or a group of supervisors, so that universally reliable results are unlikely to be attained.

Saunders and Saunders drew attention to several factors of teaching practice which prevent the conducting of a valid assessment. The main factors are that, firstly, there is considerable disagreement between supervisors about the meaning and evaluation of effective teaching. This discrepancy is particularly evident between educational studies and main subject tutors, where the aims of these two groups may differ remarkably. All these factors may confuse student teachers, who are confronted with different models, interpretations and expectations of teaching behaviour. Secondly, college supervisors are able to observe each student teacher practising only on set occasions and for short periods. Thirdly, the limited number of visits creates pressure on the student teacher, knowing that the lessons observed have a direct bearing on his/ her assessment and are especially designed with this in mind. Fourthly, the personalities of both supervisors and student teachers are likely to influence the assessment of teaching ability. Fifthly, student teachers

give considerably differing reports on the amount of help and guidance received from class/subject teachers. Sixthly, the circumstances of co-operating schools differ markedly, yet the college supervisors seldom take this into account. Finally, the extent to which student teachers are prepared in their subject matter, exerts influence on their teaching performance(189).

There should be continued efforts devoted to find ways to establish reliable and valid assessment methods, or at least to improve the existing assessment techniques. These assessment techniques should be developed and discussed by college supervisors, the administrators of schools and co-operating teachers to obviate disparities and an inevitable subjective approach by reason of the personality and background of the supervisors.

In short, the literature review suggests that there is no full agreement about forms of appraisal. They differ considerably in detail in Western publications, though as Stone has observed, essentially they focus on the personal characteristics of the preparing teacher (such as appearance, manner, punctuality, effectiveness of voice and speech, emotional poise etc.) and the forming of skills, i.e. knowledge of subject matter, lesson planning abilities, classroom management and disciplinary control, teaching techniques and

instructional skills(190). It is the proposal of this thesis that this listing should be accepted in the context of Saudi teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies, with the key areas of Islamic Education (see Chapter Three) added to the list, so that the appraisal of a teacher will also include the extent to which the teacher is successful in the communication, by pedagogic method, of a true comprehension of Islam itself.

#### **4.11. Conclusion:**

This chapter has reviewed literature on the importance and nature of pre-service teacher training, both world-wide, and with special reference to the Saudi context.

Teacher training has been seen as lying at the heart of educational reform efforts in many countries, and Saudi Arabia is no exception. Preparation of good teachers begins with selection of academically able, motivated individuals. However, there is evidence that in many Arab states, weakness in the selection criteria and procedure lead to an intake of low calibre trainees who lack commitment.

There is a tendency, world-wide, to extend the duration of teacher training, to reflect an expanding knowledge base, to meet



changes in the demands on teachers, and to enhance recognition of teaching as a profession. Saudi Arabia is following this trend. It also broadly in line with general trends regarding the content of training, which encompasses general courses, subject courses, professional courses and teaching practice. Opinions differ as to the proper balance between these elements. While there is a widespread belief that professional preparation should account for at least one-third of the training programme, it has been reported that in some institutions, it may be as little as 7%. A common theme in the literature is the importance of teaching practice, in helping trainees to translate theory into practice and to acquire professional attitudes and values. It also provides valuable contact between practising teachers, and college supervisors which can facilitate exchange of ideas and contribute in professional development. A number of aspects of the teaching practice programme have been reviewed here, from a general theoretical prospective.

Thus, this chapter has highlighted a number of trends and theories on aspects of teacher preparation, against which the Saudi practice can be viewed. Before considering the training of Saudi Islamic and Arabic teachers, however, we examine in the next chapter, the school context for which they are being trained.



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**Part III:**  
**Status of Arabic and Islamic**  
**Education in Saudi Arabia**

# Chapter Five

## Islamic and Arabic Education in Saudi schools

### 5.1. Introduction

Every system of education basically consist of a set of certain ideals, norms, and values and is based on a specific view of life and culture(1). Religious education is a pillar of the national educational system in many societies. Scholars from different parts of the world have emphasised its vital role. Some researchers suggest that an educational curriculum that ignores religious education is incomplete, while education that includes religious training will provide a balance between intellectual and moral development. According to Hall, the moral domain is related to religion since many people perceive that religious beliefs are the source of other value commitments and ethical principles(2). Alwan pointed out that psychologists at a high level in western countries as well as the Arab world, advised that both mature and young people should return to religion because in religion there is a potential energy which can help one to lead a settled life(3). In short, religious education is appropriate to all stages of life.

Saudi Arabia recognises this crucial fact and accords to Islamic subjects a high status in the curriculum. Indeed, only a few

decades ago, the educational system was wholly and solely based on the teaching of Islamic subjects such as the holy Quran, the traditions of the prophet, Arabic language and other religious sciences. Al-Bawardi emphasised that:

**Saudi Arabia follows the Islamic philosophy of education, and the principles and goals of its educational system are founded in Islam. The primary purpose of education in Saudi Arabia is to develop good citizens, capable of contributing to social progress, believing deeply in God, and accepting faithfully the Islamic concepts of universal and ideal civilisation that bring spiritual and material matters together in perfect harmony, both in their attitudes towards life in religious observance and in many other ways(4).**

This view is also firmly set out in the general aim of Saudi educational policy:

**To have students learn to understand in a correct and comprehensive manner. This determination involves that the Islamic creed is planted and spread, and that students are furnished with Muslim values, teachings and ideals. The student is to be equipped with the skills and knowledge which enable him to contribute constructively to the development of the Saudi Arabian society economically, socially and culturally, having been fully prepared to become a useful member in the building of his community(5).**

This high position for Islamic subjects in Saudi education is justified by the presence of the holy cities of Makkah and Medina,



which have been the religious focus of the whole Muslim world since the time of the Prophet Mohammed. In this regard, it must be recalled that the Saudi state, governed by the Saud family, was established on the principle of protecting Islam, a loyal determination which had its historical background in 1747 when the Arab peninsula was a society of scattered villages. At that time the society suffered what were from a religious perspective, many bad habits, expressed in forms of *shirk* (false belief) which had become rooted in the society. There was a profound lack of education, and ignorance was a common fact of life. As a result of this situation many people were, although nominally adherents of Islam, largely ignorant of its true teachings and practices. Around 1747, a Muslim scholar Mohammed Bin Abd Alwahab, the founder of the Wahabian movement, was looking for someone with power to help him in his cause of religious reform. While his appeal was refused by many princes, he was welcomed by Mohammed Bin Saud, the prince of Dareya (now a suburban area of Riyadh). The Saudi Ministry of Information explains that:

**in these deteriorating religious circumstances, the imam Mohammed Bin Abdul Wahab launched his religious and reformatory movement in his hometown 'Al Uyainah, near Riyadh moving to Al Saudi's emirate where he gained the support and assistance of prince Mohamed Bin Saud in 1747. His son AbdulAziz followed in his footsteps and raised the banner of Islam, monotheism, and return to the basic Islamic principles. Having waged an unrelenting struggle for the period of thirty**

**years, he eventually succeed in establishing his authority over large parts of the Arabian Peninsula, thus laying the foundations of the Saudi state(6)**

These events secured the position of Islam in Saudi Arabia and ensured that the planners of education in the kingdom have placed Islamic and Arabic subjects as the first priority in all curriculum design.

## **5.2. The Aims of Teaching Islamic and Arabic Subjects in Saudi School:**

The Ministry of Education has described the aims in the teaching of Arabic studies in Saudi schools as follows:

1. to enable students to read and write correctly;
2. to enhance their knowledge of the language by studying the different examples and different language patterns;
3. to train them to judge, observe, think, and enhance their comprehension ability(7)

The aims laid down by the Ministry for the teaching of Islamic studies are as follows:

1. to educate pupils in Islamic religious education, teaching them to know their creator, to fear him and obey him;
2. to educate their conscience and give them spiritual instruction to protect them from error;

3. to induct in pupils, from an early age, high moral standards, and direct their behaviour toward good and the avoidance of depravity;
4. to show pupils that religious commandments, doctrines and prohibitions are for their own benefit and that of society, and they should be guided by them;
5. to instruct pupils in religious terms and observance as revealed in the Quran and *Sunnah*, as well as the prophet's life;
6. to make them love the Quran and appreciate it; also to learn the correct recitation and skills of reading;
7. to teach them about the Prophet's *Hadith* so they can enjoy and apply it;
8. to take as a model the Prophet and his followers and instil pride be proud in it;
9. to draw pupils' attention to *Allah's* (God's) greatness, give glory to him and develop their understanding of the creation of the universe;
10. to maintain the Islamic principles and foundations(8).

The above aims are very broad, and need translating into specific terms, so that teachers may see and understand what is required of them in detail. Al-Sharaf suggested that the aims need to be more open for discussion, alteration or change by teachers at

annual meetings. This would clarify for teachers the approach they should follow and improve their performance(9).

### **5.3. The Place of Arabic and Islamic Subjects in Saudi School:**

As has already been mentioned, the Islamic religion is the dominant force in Saudi Arabian culture, and Saudi values are primarily based on Islam. Thus, the education system gives Arabic and Islamic subjects first priority in all curriculum design. Al-Saloom's History of the Saudi educational Movement observes that Islamic and Arabic subjects occupy not less than 27 percent of school time in all stage of education. At the university level, Islamic and Arabic subjects are compulsory.(10). Brief details of the position of Arabic and Islamic studies in every stage of education are given below.

#### **5.3.1. Primary School**

Arabic and Islamic subjects are the most important subjects taught in the six grades of primary school. Every year, 33% of pupils' schooling is taken up by Islamic studies, while Arabic studies accounts for not less than, 32%. Table 10 shows the weekly timetable in Saudi primary schools, while Figure 4 indicates the percentage of the timetable allocated to each subject.



**Table 10: The Weekly Time -Table of Saudi Primary Schools**

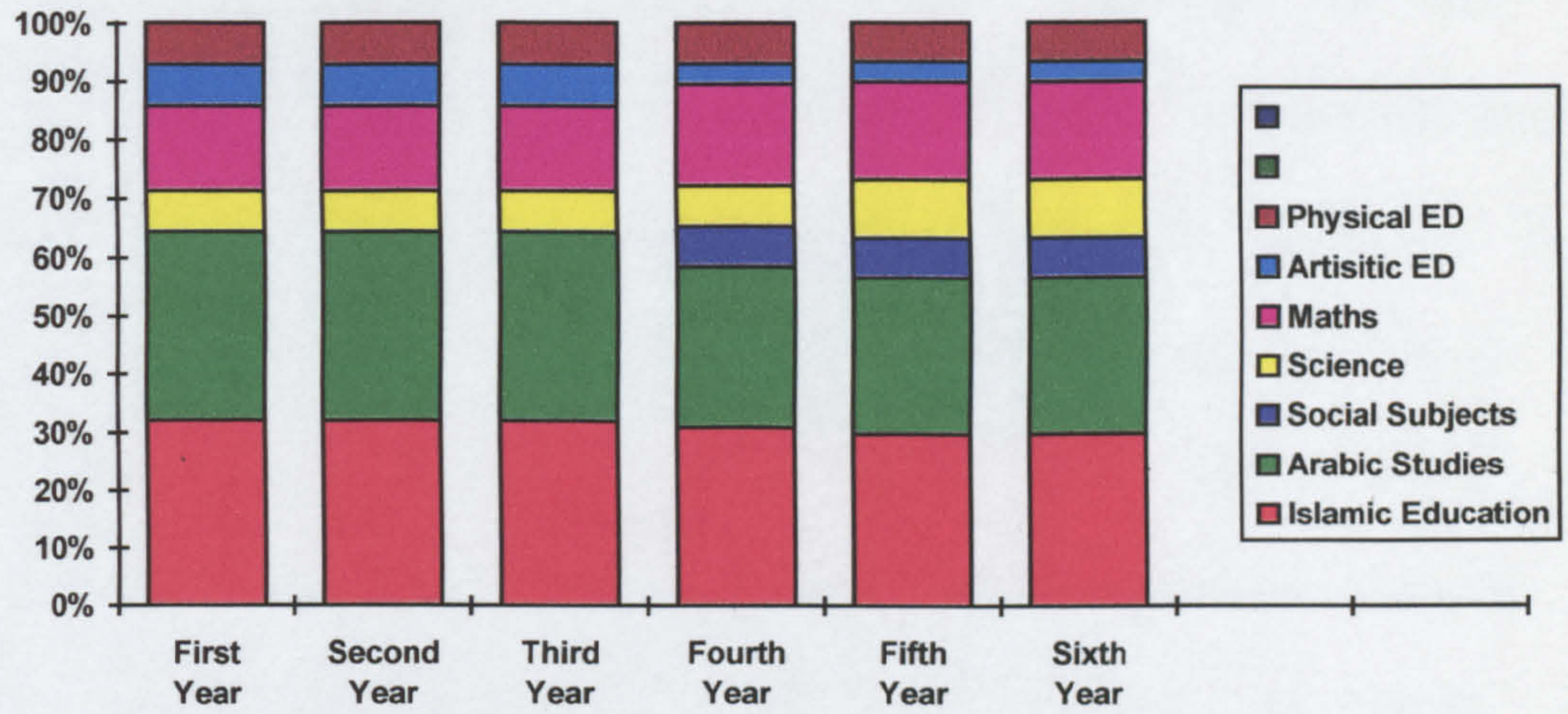
Subjects	No. of lesson for each Grade					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Islamic Studies	9	9	9	9	9	9
Arabic Studies	9	9	9	8	8	8
Social Studies	-	-	-	2	2	2
Science	2	2	2	2	3	3
Mathematics	4	4	4	5	5	5
Artistic Education	2	2	2	1	1	1
Physical Education	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total hours per week	28	28	28	30	30	30

\*Each lesson is 45 minutes.

The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in USA. Education in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Cultural Mission, Washington D.C., 1991, p 28.



**Figure 4: The Percentage of Weekly Periods Allocated to Each Subject in Primary Schools**





### **5.3.2. Intermediate School:**

This level of education does not call for specialisation in one particular area; rather, it focuses on general education, as does the primary school, with the aim of preparing pupils for specialisation at the secondary level. From the intermediate timetable given in Table 11 and the percentage breakdown in Figure 5, it will be noticed that again, Arabic and Islamic subjects have first status among the subjects taught in the three grades of intermediate schools. In comparison with primary school, the time devoted to Islamic and Arabic subjects is a little less, 25% for Islamic subjects and 21% for Arabic subjects.

**Table 11: The Weekly Time - Table of Saudi Intermediate Schools**

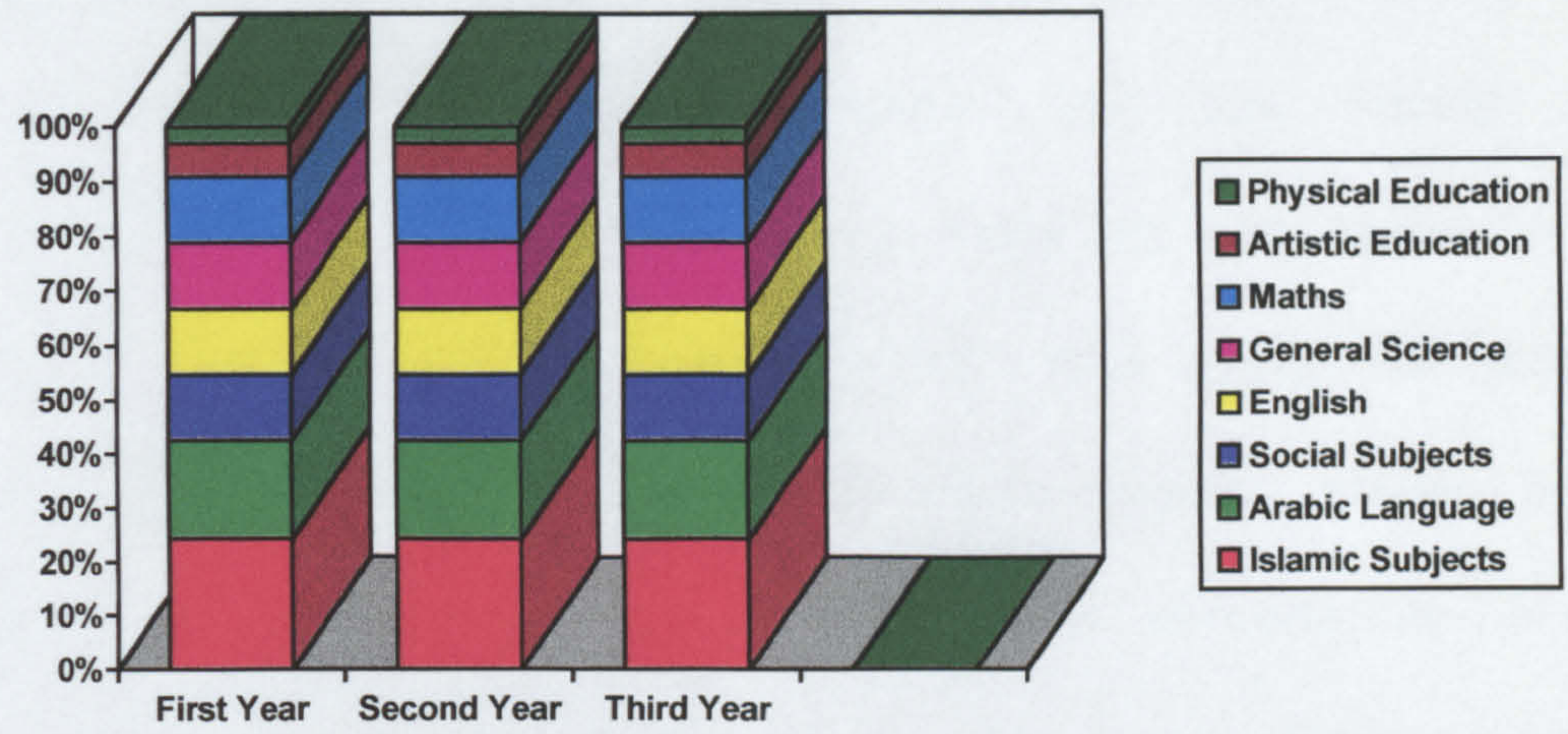
Subjects	No. of lesson for each Grade		
	1	2	3
Islamic Studies	8	8	8
Arabic Studies	6	6	6
Social Studies	4	4	4
English Language	4	4	4
General Science	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	4
Artistic Education	2	2	2
Physical Education	1	1	1
Total hours per week	33	33	33

\*Each lesson is 45 minutes.

The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in USA. Education in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Cultural Mission, Washington D.C., 1991, p 30.



**Figure 5: The Percentage of Weekly Periods Allocated to Each Subjects in Intermediate Schools**





### **5.3.3. Secondary school:**

Saudi secondary education, after the first year, calls for specialisation in one particular area. Starting from the second year, students are required to specialise in Arts or Sciences, and they receive their certificate in that area. It can be seen from Table 12 and Figure 6 that in the first year, Arabic studies has the first status among the subjects taught, accounting for 23 % of lessons, while Islamic studies comes fourth with 12%. In the second year, the time allocated to Islamic studies is 14 %, in the Arts section and 12.5% in the Science section, while the Arabic language accounts for 45 % of the total timetable in the Arts section, and just 12% of the total timetable in the Science section.

In the third year, the time devoted to Islamic studies drops again to reach 11 % of the total timetable for the Arts section and 12.5 for the Science section. Arabic studies is given the first status in the Arts section, representing 46% of the total timetable, while the time allocated to Arabic subjects in the Science section is 11% of the total timetable.

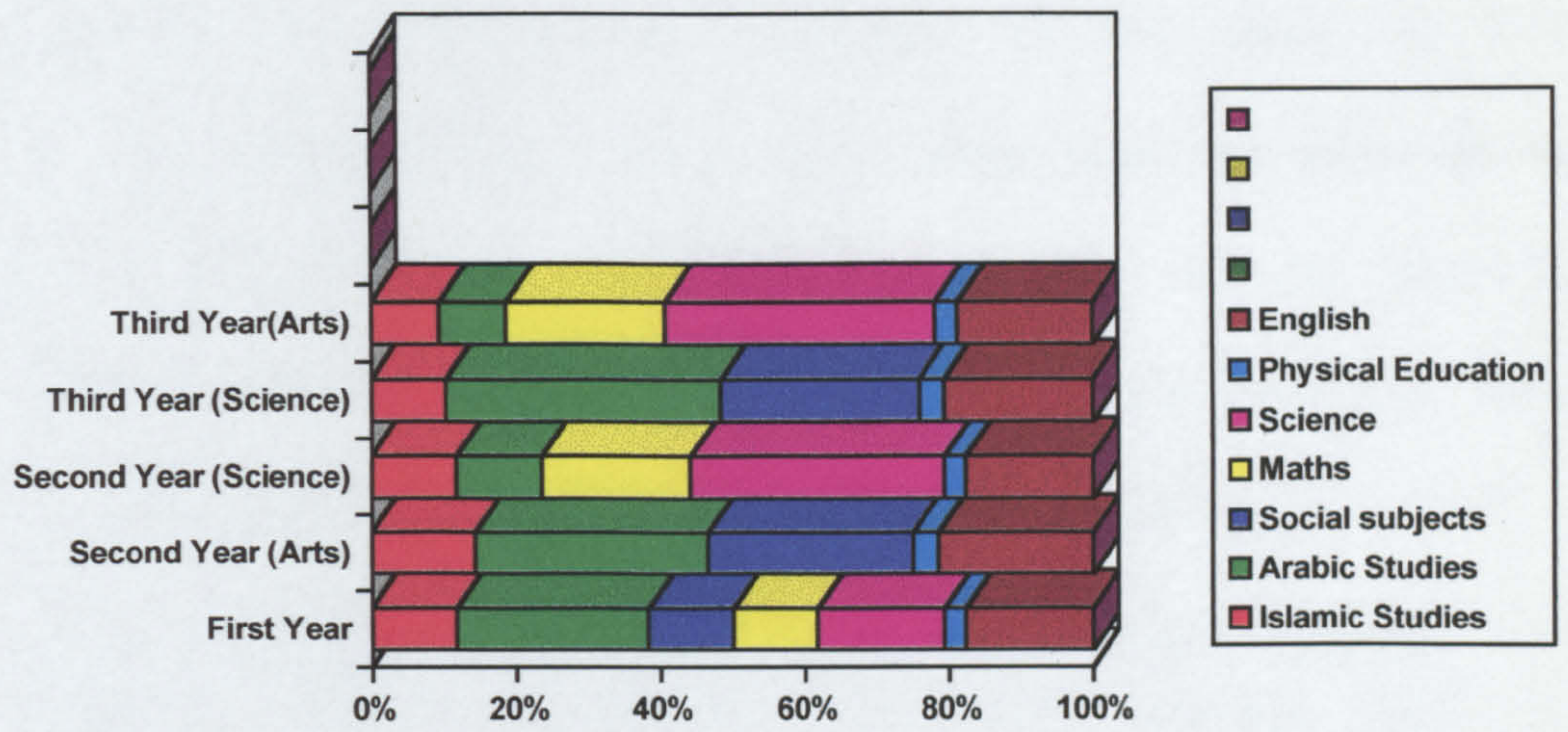
**Table 12: The Weekly Time -Table of Saudi Secondary Schools**

Subject	Arts Section			Science Section	
	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade
Islamic Studies	4	4	3	4	3
Arabic Studies	9	11	11	4	3
Social Studies	4	8	8	-	-
English Language	6	6	6	6	6
General Science	6	-	-	4	4
Mathematics	4	-	-	7	7
Physical Education	1	1	1	1	1
Total hours per week	34	30	29	34	32

Al-Saloom, H. History of the Education Movement in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia, 1987, p 33



**Figure 6: The Percentage of Weekly Periods Allocated to Each Subject in Secondary Schools**





#### **5.3.4. General Comments**

Al-Shafee in his book, The Method of Teaching Religious Subjects has commented on the gradual reduction in the status of Islamic studies in the Saudi school which has taken place in when the time devoted to teaching Islamic Education is reduced. On the other hand, modern subjects have gained in quantity and quality, so that students develop their general knowledge and ability. He asks:

**why should this be at the cost of Islamic subjects alone? Why do we not prolong the study period, or divide the subjects into optional and supplementary?(11)**

Al-Shafee's contention was that religious subjects must not be ignored. He argued that 'modern subjects' should not be allowed a creeping advantage in the teaching of youngsters. On the contrary, he insisted, religion must figure in the curriculum as a means of introducing young people to society's moral requirements. Supporting this view, in his article, "Christian Education and the Denominational schools" Professor McClelland observed that:

**Religious education not only has a significant role to perform but, indeed, a central one in the unifying of the school curriculum and the adding of understanding and meaning to its apparently disparate elements(12).**

#### **5.4. Arabic and Islamic Syllabus and Textbooks in Saudi Schools**

Al-Ajroush takes the position that schools should prepare students to adapt to and understand the changes in their society, and in the world at large. A curriculum should be developed based on the actual conditions, environment, and available potential of the country(13).

Massialas and Jarrar discuss the problems of the curriculum in Arab countries. They note that curricular development is central and academically oriented, with no electives or flexibility for teachers to develop the curriculum. They state:

**In the absence of attractive textbooks and materials, teachers in many countries of the world normally improvise and develop their own materials. Very little of that is done in the Arab schools, however, since the rigidity of the official curriculum and the perceived sanctions associated with its violation discourage the actual development of teacher-made materials and use of local resources. Furthermore, teachers are not trained in materials development techniques and thus consider this task to be beyond their capability and responsibility.(14)**

Al-Ajroush, discussing the process of curriculum reform in Saudi Arabia, observes that it involves several steps:

**specifying the problems, developing the syllabus, and creating the textbook(15).**

According to the Ministry of Education, this process should be conducted by an *ad hoc* committee set up for the purpose. Al-Ajroush, however, argues that although the curriculum for all levels is prepared by the committee, it is not adapted to current needs for economic and social development on account of the non-involvement of those concerned (teachers, parents, and students) in the decision-making process. The primary job of the district educational authorities is only to transmit regulations from the Ministry of Education to schools.(16)

The content of all pre-university stages of Saudi education is laid down in the Ministry of Education's ordinances. The primary, intermediate and secondary schools throughout the country have to share an identical approach to the study of Arabic and Islamic studies in term of syllabus, schemes of work, textbooks, numbers of lessons per week, evaluation and testing. Textbooks are developed, written and published by the Ministry of Education, and are issued free to all pupils each year. The normal procedure is that the Ministry of Education prescribes one Islamic and Arabic textbook for each grade, and this is applicable to all schools over the kingdom. Teachers are required to adhere to the textbook very closely(17). One consequence of this one-book system is that the school textbook becomes the sole reference for the teacher as well as for the pupils. Therefore,

adherence to a single textbook is strongly criticised for its tendency to ignore differences in pupil need and pupil abilities.

In fact, a major weakness in curriculum provision in Saudi education is that the decision-making is not informed by contact with current daily activities or practices in schools and the lack of participation of teachers, principles, parents and students. The role of teachers in curriculum affairs is to teach the prescribed syllabus to the learners without involvement in curriculum development(18)

Rutter *et al*, reported that schools performed better when teachers worked with a group-planned curriculum. This gave the teachers a greater sense of belonging and involvement in the work they were doing. They reported that importantly, where teachers had this sense of involvement with the curriculum they were delivering, more favourable pupil outcomes were seen. Involvement in curriculum decision-making was found to correlate positively with better pupil performance(19).

In case of Arabic and Islamic subjects, it is worth noting that Al-Majel has found that students regard Islamic studies as a school subject, as having little or no relevance to their daily needs(20). Similarly for Arabic language. In his book, The Aims and Objectives



of Teaching Arabic Language, Al-Hakel observed that Arabic textbooks in Saudi school need to be revised as the current textbooks lack the important requirement of textbooks good examples and clear language(21). Compared with other subjects in the public school curriculum, such as Mathematics, Social and Natural Science and Art, Religious Education has remained virtually unchanged(22)(23) Al-Shafee investigated the reasons for students' disregard of Islamic subjects and found that 40% of the student sample complained that the present Islamic textbooks are old-fashioned and unattractive(24).

In short, if Islamic and Arabic subjects are to be taught well in Saudi schools, one of the critical factors is the suitability of textbooks. To achieve this reform, like any successful curriculum reform, teachers should be active participants in the process, rather than passive recipients, as happens in Saudi schools.

### **5.5. The Arabic and Islamic Teaching Situation in Saudi Arabia**

It is widely accepted that teaching methods play an important part in making the educational system more effective and powerful. Before considering the situation of teaching Arabic and Islamic subjects, it is worth considering recent advice on the need for using more than one method of teaching:

**An imaginative choice of teaching methods and their efficient implementation and management will allow students to participate in the range of appropriate activities, listening, looking, talking, doing and this will facilitate their learning(25).**

The methods of teaching Arabic and Islamic subjects which are commonly used in Saudi schools are traditional. The teachers explain and the pupils listen. In general, teachers use the same teaching method as those by which they were taught. Direct teaching is the method used most in classrooms, with an emphasis on memorisation of facts. Many writers have emphasised, during the last decade, the poor quality of teaching methods. Their work has sharply criticised many schools where Islamic and Arabic education are taught by lecture only and where students do not participate. Their reports make it plain that educational media are not used to attract learners. The story-telling style is absent, and teachers do not make effective use of instrumental aids.(26). Nyrop *et al* assert that, despite progress in the development and provision of curricula in general, Saudi education has been criticised for the quality and style of instruction, which observers believe adversely influences the pupils. Instruction at all levels of education emphasises rote learning, memorisation of lectures and assigned reading(27) Al-Ajrourh indicates that the method of instruction in Saudi Arabia concentrates on transmitting facts from the textbook with teachers dominating the

classroom, an approach that does not help pupils to develop their own thinking skills(28). He concludes that the methods of instruction are heavily classroom lecture-book learning by rote memorisation of facts instead of methods aimed at developing the learner's critical and creative abilities by encouraging him to think for himself(29). Teachers are only concerned with helping students to complete the syllabus within the prescribed time and pass prescribed examinations. Indeed, methods of teaching must be improved if higher quality learning is to be achieved. In this regard, Lord Judd in his opening speech in the House of the Lords on 14 March 1994, quoted by Professor McClelland, emphasised that

**teaching is not just a mechanical process by which curriculum is delivered to pupils. It is absolutely essential that the teacher is reflective and creative; that he or she is master of the subject being taught and preferably with a passion for it. That will become even more essential with the pressure of the century ahead(30)**

Another problem from which Islamic and Arabic subjects has suffered is that no attention is given to the range of students' abilities or understanding of subject matter. It is the practice in almost all Saudi school for students to be placed in various classes in alphabetical order. Students with different backgrounds and different capabilities are grouped together and are expected to learn and

progress almost at the same place. In this way even the most successful and able teacher can hardly plan lessons to suit the various abilities of all the students

### **5.6. The Use of Audio-Visual Aids in Arabic and Islamic Lessons:**

One of the features of modern teaching is the use of audio-visual aids as a means of motivating students and of stimulating learning. A broad definition of audio-visual aids offered by Dale, Finn and Hobban, takes the term to encompass:

**a wide range of instructional materials and devices that are less symbolic than printed words(31)**

Media technology and educational technology particularly, continue to develop and offer further opportunities for the teaching learning situation in advanced countries such as the USA and the UK, but such progress is not yet evident in Saudi schools. as reports and correspondence in a local newspaper, the Al-Riyadh Daily, indicate for example, Al-Anizy reported complaints about the lack of equipment in schools. He was quoted as saying that many schools suffer from a shortage of equipment and some teachers have even supplied the necessary equipment at their own expense(32).



The researcher encountered such problems during his work as a supervisor for Islamic and Arabic teachers during their teacher training programme at the Imam University in Riyadh, over a period of three years. Al-Shafee, similarly, reported that the use of audio-visual aids in the teaching of Islamic subjects was sometimes non-existent and he pointed out that one of the reasons was the shortage of audio-visual materials for Islamic subjects(33). Therefore, it is the responsibility of educational authorities such as the Ministry of Education to provide a variety of audio visual equipment for their schools. At the same time, teachers and new entrants to the profession should be adequately trained in the use of audio-visual equipment and particularly in the preparation of materials suitable for teaching Arabic and Islamic subjects.

### **5.7. Examination System:**

The process of measurement and evaluation of learning influences educational aims, methods, teaching materials, and classroom management skills. They also affect individual learning which takes place as a result of the interaction between student and teaching situation. Accordingly, it is widely accepted that evaluation and assessment are vital parts of the teaching learning programme.

In Saudi Arabia, promotion from grade to grade is decided by an internal examination in each grade, one at the end of the first term of the year and the second at the end of the second term. The examination in every grade is set by the school, until the second term in the final year of the secondary school, when the examination is set by the Ministry of Education and is common to all schools in Saudi Arabia. The educational policy of Saudi Arabia, with regard to assessment is as follows:

1. The year is divided into two terms.
2. The total mark is divided between the two terms, 50% for each term.
2. 30% of the total mark is given to continuous assessment during the term (usually by periodic test).
3. 70% of the total mark is given for a written examination at the end of each term.
4. In elementary and intermediate schools, the minimum pass mark is 40% of the total mark in arts subjects, and 50% in science subjects, on condition that the overall score is at least 50% of the total obtainable mark.
5. In secondary school the minimum pass mark is 50% of the total mark in all subjects(34).

Al-Saif, on the basis of his investigation of the current experience of Islamic education in Saudi Arabia, pointed out that:

**the fieldwork evidence suggested that although student assessment took place regularly, it was very limited in character, being largely confined to the use of written and oral tests...(35).**

Against this emphasis on examination assessment in Saudi Arabia, many writers argue the need and the importance of employing a variety of styles of assessment of students. Al-Saif quotes Walkiln as saying that:

**assessment procedures should be introduced in co-operation with the candidate who will be assessed. Where possible, they should incorporate written, practical and oral techniques that enable an adequate and fair profile of competence to be established.(36)**

Also, Daines *et al* urged teachers to:

**identify and use a range of techniques appropriate to your subject, which will tell you and your students about their achievements without putting them on the spot(37)**

Labeeb and others stressed that student assessment should be conducted using sound instruments if useful information is to be obtained about the student. The assessment process, they went on to say, should be concerned with the student as a whole, including his

learning, his aptitude and his personality, not only his learning progress(38). In Saudi Arabia, as yet, education is controlled by examinations and as a result of this, both students and teachers in the Saudi schools pay little attention to other aspects of learning.

### **5.8. The Training and Supply of Arabic and Islamic Teachers for Saudi Schools**

No doubt teaching is a critical factor for effective learning and preparing learners with intellectual skills and knowledge. Al-Bazaz reports that the role of the teachers according to most researchers in education include the following the responsibilities:

- (1) The teacher is responsible for forming students' thinking abilities and for eliminating the practice of rote memorisation.
- (2) The teacher should provide guidance for his or her student scientifically, psychologically, socially intellectually and behaviourally.
- (3) The teacher must connect school with the environment or life outside school.
- (4) The teacher is responsible for developing and improving his/her teaching profession, culture and knowledge(39).

Al-Dayal remarks that the most important role of Saudi teachers is to prompt student understanding of scientific ways of



thought and of scientific and technological developments in society(40). Any attempt to improve the efficiency of a teacher's role in the school must take into consideration the teacher's preparation.

In Saudi Arabia, Arabic and Islamic teachers are prepared in Colleges of Education in a pre-service training programme, after which it is assumed that they are properly prepared to carry out the responsibilities of the teaching profession. As has already been mentioned, in Saudi Arabia several colleges for men are under the authority of the Ministry of Education, while others for women are under the authority of the General Presidency of Girls' Education. Graduates are prepared to teach at the elementary level. A junior college for teachers was established in 1975 to provide a two year course for those who had graduated from Teachers' Institutes and those who held secondary school Certificates. In 1989 a new decree was issued that Teachers' Colleges offering four year programmes of study would replace the Junior Colleges. For intending intermediate and secondary school teachers, training is provided by five Colleges of Education, which are under the authority of Higher Education(41). Calls to improve the provision of teacher preparation for teachers of Arabic and Islamic subjects have been heard from many writers, whose work is full of urgent demands for the remedy of the perceived professional weakness of Arabic and Islamic teachers. In a survey by

the Arab Organisation for Education and Science, a sample of educationalists and experts in the Arab world were asked about the level of competence of Arabic teachers in the region. 80% of the respondents claimed the view that Arabic teachers fall below the quality needed and expected of them. It was explained that the main reason for this problem was the deficiency of teacher training programmes(42).

Similarly, in his study about ways of developing methods of teaching Islamic studies, Al-Sane observed that the efforts which are expended on developing Islamic teaching methods do not fulfil the required objectives. He recommended that in order to fulfil the required objectives, attention must be paid towards the pre-service training of Islamic teachers(43).

The present writer believes that the defects outlined in Arabic and Islamic teacher training are among the most serious problems in the educational system in Saudi Arabia, and he considers they are the key to quality in education. The weaknesses of the teaching profession in Saudi Arabia need to be remedied. It is essential to start with teachers before changing school syllabuses or introducing new methods of teaching. This could be done by providing Arabic

and Islamic teachers with effective pre-service and in-service training courses in order to help them to understand recent developments.

In 1973, Watkins expressed his belief in the absolute necessity of in-service teacher training programme, as knowledge changes:

**I took a degree in chemistry in 1930. If I look at the papers set in the same examination today I cannot do them: that would not be expected. But the real point is that I never could have done them, because two-thirds of the knowledge required actually did not exist at that time. And some of that knowledge is now part of the school curriculum(44)**

In his study of the professional development of in-service teachers in Saudi Arabia, Al-Ghamidi recommends that all Saudi teachers need continues training in order to be able to fulfil their responsibilities. He asserts:

**On the basis of the information presented in this study it seems that Saudi teachers are in great need of in-service training in almost all teaching skills and competencies. The study contended that in-service education practices in Saudi Arabia at the present time are not compatible with the challenging role that a teacher has to encounter.(45)**

In short, the responsibility for developing the quality of Arabic and Islamic teaching is obviously that of the people concerned with the teacher education curriculum as well as of those concerned with

both the initial and in-service training of teachers of Arabic and Islamic subjects. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to take action on this important issue, in order to improve the professional competence of Arabic and Islamic teachers.

## **5.9. Conclusion**

As this chapter has shown, Arabic and Islamic studies occupy a prominent position in the Saudi school curriculum at all levels, but especially at elementary level. It was revealed that the curriculum as a whole is centrally prescribed. Indeed, centralisation characterises all aspects of education: textbook preparation, teaching methods and assessment.

A number of deficiencies have been identified in the teaching in Saudi schools. Traditional teaching methods are prevalent, and little use is made of audio-visual aids. Teaching is very much oriented towards the requirements of the examination. Students are passive recipients of information, rather than active participants in learning, and insufficient account is taken of differences in student ability.

A number of reasons may be suggested for these deficiencies. They may in part be a legacy of the focus on rote-learning and



discipline in the kingdom's earliest educational efforts (see chapter three) and they may also be attributed to the rigidity of a centrally prescribed system which is not informed by contact with daily practice in schools. However, in the view of many educationalists, the problem stems in large part from inadequacy in teacher preparation programmes. A detailed consideration of such programmes, with particular reference to the training of Arabic and Islamic studies elementary teachers, follows in chapter six.

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# **Chapter Six**

## **Professional Preparation Programme of Arabic and Islamic Teachers at Teachers' Colleges**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Arabic and Islamic studies teachers in the elementary stage are all specialists who have graduated from the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme at Teachers' Colleges. These colleges were established especially with the purpose of producing qualified teachers of various subjects for elementary schools. Inevitably, therefore, the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme at Teachers' Colleges will contribute to and influence the quantity and quality of Arabic and Islamic studies teachers in elementary schools. In the light of the available official publications and reports, this chapter explains how the colleges prepare students for their careers as Arabic and Islamic teachers.

### **6.2. Historical Notes about the Development of Elementary School Teacher Preparation**

In order to understand the present situation of preparation of elementary stage Arabic and Islamic studies teachers, it is thought appropriate to outline some of the main developments in elementary school teacher preparation. Since the kingdom's establishment, in 1932, the government has encouraged the spread of education

throughout the country, in spite of a critical shortage of teachers. To begin with, the government operated such schools as existed by contracting teachers from neighbouring Arabic speaking countries such as Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Sudan(1). In fact, the available studies and official reports indicate that public formal teacher training in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia began in the early 1950s(2). The establishment of the Ministry of Education marked the beginning of a bright era in the history of education in general and teacher education in particular. Nyrop and others stated that the modern period of Saudi education began with the establishment of this Ministry in 1953(3). Among many objectives which were set for the Ministry, one was to prepare male teachers to teach in the public schools(4).

Preparation of elementary school teachers has taken different forms and has gone through numerous changes. These developments may be presented in four stages as follows:

1. Elementary Teachers' Institutes
2. Teacher preparation at secondary level
3. Junior Colleges
4. Teachers' Colleges.



### **6.2.1. Elementary Teachers' Institutes**

As soon as the Ministry of Education was established in 1953, priority was accorded to teacher preparation, to enable the educational system to reach most of the big cities. The new policy recommended the establishment of teacher preparation programmes in which the required study would be three years after the elementary stage. The applicant was required to (1) submit the elementary certificate; (2) be between 15 and 20 years old; (3) submit a written reference regarding his personality and behaviour; (4) be free of disabilities that would prevent him from practising teaching and (5) agree in writing to teach for at least three years after graduation. The Ministry was concerned about the risk of students dropping out and, in order to encourage attendance, a monthly allowance which varied from 60 to 150 Saudi Riyals was awarded to attract students(5). These institutes provided elementary school graduates with an alternative to intermediate general education, lasting for the same number of years. Graduates of the institutes would be qualified to teach at the elementary stage.

The Ministry had to follow a gradual policy in the improvement and development of the education system, within the limits of available resources(6), and this was reflected in the early

developments in teacher training. The Ministry began with the establishment of three Elementary Teachers' Institutes, but as a result of a policy of steady quantitative expansion, the number grew to reach 37 institutes by 1961(7). However, in 1965, the institutes were abolished, because of the decision to introduce new, more advanced programmes. The Ministry felt that the training provided in the Elementary Teachers' Institutes was not enough to produce teachers capable of practising teaching at the level required by the educational developments of the period. The Institutes' curricula ignored the needs of the elementary schools(8). Above all, there was an urgent demand to raise the level of study. The students were young and they lacked experience and knowledge(9).

### **6.2.2. Teacher Preparation at Secondary Level**

In 1965 the Ministry of Education began a process of evaluation of the quality and quantity of teacher preparation programmes. It was found that the number of teachers from the old programme was sufficient, but their professional skills, general education, and even knowledge of subject matter, were deficient(10). Based on these considerations, new institutes were established providing a higher level of education and training for intending teachers. These institutes ran parallel with the secondary stage in terms of duration, and admitted students who had completed intermediate school(11).

The objectives of the new institutes were to raise the educational level of elementary teachers by offering them academic preparation of a standard not less than the level of study in the secondary school; to provide them with the necessary professional skills and social education studies, and to admit mature students to enable them to further their education and acquire professional qualifications(12)

For admission to this programme, the applicant had to meet certain conditions: (a) to be a Saudi citizen; (b) to have obtained the intermediate certificate; (c) to have a letter of recommendation; (d) to be 15 years old or older, yet not more than 20 years old; (e) to pass a medical examination; and (f) to agree in writing to teach at least three years after graduation(13).

The Ministry started with seven teacher preparation institutes in seven cities. Quantitative expansion continued and to reach 47 institutes in 1976. However, in 1985, the Ministry of Education formulated a new policy which aimed to improve the quality of the teacher preparation for elementary schools, professionally and educationally, by replacing the Secondary Institutes with Junior Colleges. Accordingly, the Ministry reduced the number of these institutes by abolishing 15 of them. The remaining institutes were



closed during the course of the fourth five year plan, which ran from 1986-1990(14).

### **6.2.3. Junior Colleges**

The objective of the Ministry of Education in establishing these colleges was to prepare elementary teachers through a four year post-secondary training programme(15). It had been difficult to do this previously, on account of the small number of graduates from secondary schools, the shortage of teaching staff and the urgent demand in elementary schools. The new Junior Colleges for elementary teachers aimed both to admit new secondary school graduates, and to re-train unqualified teachers, in order to keep abreast of the development and improvement of the elementary school curricula. Admission requirements varied according to students' background. Teachers who had been educated in the old Teacher Institutes had to meet special requirements compared to secondary school certificate holders who had no teaching experience. Secondary school certificate holders had to meet these conditions:

1. to be a Saudi citizen;
2. to hold the secondary certificate or its equivalent;
3. to have a letter of recommendation;
4. to pass the personal interview;
5. to pass a medical examination;



6. to write a letter promising to teach for three years after graduation.(16).

Those teachers who had graduated from various obsolete programmes, had also, in addition to the previous conditions, to meet these other conditions:

7. the teacher must have taught for at least two years;

8. he must have received an assessment of “very good” during the last two years(17).

The colleges followed the semester system, whereby the students studied for four semesters to complete two academic years. Each semester continued for 17 weeks. Students were given the choice of specialising in one of these majors: mathematics, social studies, Arabic language, art education, physical education, and religious studies. Junior Colleges have played a major role in preparing teachers for the elementary stage. For about thirteen years, this type of institution went through various stages of development. The Ministry began with the establishment of the first two Junior Colleges in Makkah and Riyadh in 1985(18) and quantitative expansion continued until, by 1989, there were 17 institutes distributed all over the kingdom(19). However, in that year a new decree was issued, stipulating that in future, elementary school teachers would be required to have a bachelor’s degree. To this end,

the Junior Colleges were to be replaced by Teachers' Colleges, in which the period of study would be for four years(20).

#### **6.2.4. Teachers' Colleges**

Teachers' Colleges were established to satisfy the aspirations of policy-makers in the Ministry of Education and even teachers who demanded more advanced preparation and training. In 1989 a new decree was issued that Teachers' Colleges would replace the Junior Colleges. Among the many objectives set for Teachers' Colleges are:

1. qualifying teachers educationally, and academically, according to Islamic values;
2. participation with specialised agencies in the Ministry in practical and educational research which might lead to the improvement of curricula and textbooks for the elementary stage;
3. cooperation with the educational directorates in addressing educational issues, based on scientific and educational research and other means;
4. cooperation with educational agencies, inside and outside the kingdom, to develop education by participating in educational and scientific research and attending conferences and seminars to exchange experience and knowledge(21).

Table. 13 shows that there are 17 Teachers' Colleges distributed in seventeen cities of Saudi Arabia. Regarding the

academic specialisms available in Teachers' Colleges, because in the elementary school curriculum, Quranic and Islamic studies, and Arabic language courses followed by maths and sciences courses, constitute the largest part of the study plan, Teachers' Colleges meet the needs of this stage by focusing on the same subjects. Accordingly, each Teachers' College has thirteen departments as follows:

1. Department of Quranic Studies
2. Department of Islamic Studies
3. Department of Arabic Language
4. Department of Social Studies
5. Department of Mathematics
6. Department of Chemistry
8. Department of Biology
9. Department of Instructional Technologies

**Table 13: The Number and Location of Teachers' Colleges Over the Kingdom**

Cities	No. of Teacher College
Riyadh	1
Mecca	1
Medanh	1
Abah	1
Dammam	1
Al-Raus	1
Al-Taif	1
Al-Jouf	1
Jizan	1
Hael	1
Al-Hasi	1
Bishah	1
Tabok	1
Kunfetha	1
Jeddah	1
Arqr	1
Al-Biah	1
Total	17

Teachers' College in Riyadh. Documentary Report about the Teachers' Colleges. Teacher College, 1994, p 10.



7. Department of Physics
10. Department of Art Education
11. Department of Physical Education
12. Department of Psychology and Education
13. Department of Teaching Practice and Teaching Methods(22).

### **6.3. Arabic and Islamic Teacher Training Programmes at Teachers' Colleges:**

With this background in mind, we turn now to explain the different issues of the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme in the Teachers' Colleges. There are several major elements upon which the quality of teacher training programmes could be judged. Among these elements are:

- (i). Student teachers: their quality at the time of intake, progress throughout the training course, and their academic performance as measured by examinations, course work and projects, and as monitored by external examiners.
- (ii). training courses: their structure and content, as well as the level of success in meeting their aims;
- (iii). teacher educators: their professional qualifications and teaching experience;

(iv). school experience: its relevance and quality and the considered opinions of the variety of bodies involved in teacher education, such as the student teachers themselves, the school headmasters, the co-operating teachers and the external examiners(23).

(v). to the list might be added the elements of management and its quality controls, which include conditions of admission and examination standards(24)

However, all the elements of each training system interact, and any changes in one element may require or compel changes in other training programme components(25). The elements of any teacher training programme are so many that no one can claim that he is able to investigate them adequately in one study. The procedure usually followed by individual researchers is that of selecting one or a few aspects of the training course. This technique will be applied also in this study.

### **6.3.1. Entrance requirements:**

Admission to Arabic and Islamic teacher training programmes is the same as for any other teacher training programme at Teachers' Colleges. A candidate who is accepted into the Teachers' College registers at the beginning of each semester, to pursue courses of study for B.A(Ed) and B.Sc. programmes as prescribed by the college.

According to the prospectus of the Teachers' College, to register for the first time for a Bachelor's Degree, a student must satisfy the following conditions:

1. be a Saudi citizen;
2. hold the secondary certificate or its equivalent;
3. have a letter of recommendation;
4. pass a written examination and personal interviews;
5. pass a medical examination;
6. have attained the minimum grade requirement.

Those teachers who graduated from various old programmes, must, in addition to the previous conditions, also meet these other conditions:

7. the teacher must have taught for at least two years;
8. the result of his assessment during these last two years must be "very good"(26).

Thus it can be seen that the entrance requirements are the same as those which applied in the old Junior College.

### **6.3.2. Benefits for Students**

All students in the Teachers' Colleges (including Arabic and Islamic students) enjoy several benefits during their period of study. These can be summarised as follows:

1. free tuition;

2. free accommodation for those whose normal place of residence is outside the city where the college to which they have been allocated is situated;
3. free health services;
4. a monthly allowance of SR 850 (equivalent to 150 pounds).
5. three meals daily, for which students pay less than 25% of the cost;
6. subsidised text books and reference books (students pay only 25% of the price);
7. a free return ticket for students whose families live outside the city where the college to which they have been allocated is situated;
8. in the case of students who on graduation have a high grade point average, the chance of being appointed as teaching assistants who will then be sponsored to continue their graduate studies inside or outside the kingdom(27).

### **6.3.3. Duration of the programme:**

The course is of four years' duration. The academic year usually starts in September and ends in June of the following year. There is a mid-year holiday of two weeks. Classes are held on five days per week and each class lasts for forty-five minutes.

The study system follows the semester model where the academic year is divided into two semesters, each one of sixteen weeks



duration, with one week reserved for the final examination. The programme of study is based on four levels, requiring attendance for a minimum of eight semesters. However, the maximum duration of study is twelve semesters(28). In fact, extending the period of pre-service training to four years is considered to be a significant development in teacher education in Saudi Arabia and this alone might improve its quality. Again, this extension corresponds with the current trend in teacher education elsewhere in the world

#### **6.3.4. Requirements:**

To complete the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme, students have to fulfil all the requirements of graduation. The total number of credit-hours required in the Arabic teacher training programme is 149 and the total number of credit-hours required in the Islamic teacher training programme is 154.

In detail, these requirements are distributed between three elements which include (see Table 14):

- (A) General preparation
- (B) The specialisation
- (C) professional education(29)

All courses are followed for seven semesters, with the purpose of preparing the student teacher for teaching practice, which takes

place in the final (eighth) semester. This semester is devoted entirely to the practical application of the educational and psychological theories, teaching methods and all other academic knowledge taught to the student teachers during their period of study, in a real teaching situation

#### **6.3.4.1 General Preparation Courses:**

The general preparation courses are applicable in the first two years for all students at Teachers' Colleges, regardless of their specialist subjects. This element includes courses in Quranic studies, Islamic studies, Arabic language, social studies, and biology. By providing such courses, the intention is to improve the general educational background of the trainees and simultaneously prepare them as class teachers at primary level. 67 hours are allocated to cover this element of the teacher training programme, which constitutes more than 43% of the study plan(30).

#### **6.3.4.2 Specialisation Courses**

The specialisation courses or major courses applicable for students in Arabic and Islamic teacher training programmes, are conducted by teaching staff in the Department of Arabic and Department of Islamic Studies. Again, all courses are compulsory for all students. In Arabic studies, students undertake 40 hours, which constitute almost 26% of

the Arabic teacher training programme, while in Islamic studies, students undertake 45 hours, which constitute just over 29% of the Islamic teacher training programme(31).

**Table 14: The Allocation of Hours and Percentage Among the Different Elements in the Arabic and Islamic Teacher Training Programme**

Requirement	Arabic Studies	Islamic Studies
General preparation	67	67
Specialisation	40	45
Educational Preparation	42	42
Total	149	154

Ministry of Education. Statistical Indicators About the Development of Male Education. Documents, Ministry of Education, Riyadh, 1993, p 8.

#### **6.3.4.3 Professional Education**

Professional studies are conceptually related to the teacher's preparation for actual teaching as a professional in theory and practice. As a rule, professional components of teacher education courses include both the theoretical study of education and preparation of the student-teacher for teaching practice. It is essential also that students have a strong academic background in their specialist subjects.

The professional preparation of Arabic and Islamic student teachers is expected to contribute much to both their learning and their teaching. An effective training course is one which makes sure that the knowledge, theoretical or practical, provided to student

teachers can be effectively communicated to pupils at school.

Gajadher, cited in Nur, stated:

**Prospective teachers must know their subject matter well, but if they are to become effective teachers, they must also know how to teach the subject matter imaginatively and effectively(32)**

Arabic and Islamic student teachers in the Teachers' College study educational subjects as a preparation for teaching practice and for future teaching. The majority of professional education courses are compulsory for all student teachers, irrespective of their particular specialisation. Forty-two hours are allocated to the educational preparation element in the teacher training programme, which constitutes 28% of the study plan for Arabic specialists, and 27% for Islamic studies. The subjects taught under this component are listed in Table 15, and brief details of course content are given below



**Table 15: Professional Education Courses**

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Weekly Hours</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
1. Principles of Education	1	1
2. Islamic Education	2	2
3. Educational Psychology	3	3
4. Psychology of Development	3	3
5. General Teaching Methods	2	2
6. Curriculum in Elementary Stage	2	2
7. Educational Assessment	2	2
8. Counselling and Guidance	3	3
9. Teaching Aids	2	2
10. Aids production	2	1
11. Aids using	2	2
12. Educational Technology	1	1
13. Educational Administration and School Organisation	2	2
14. The Educational System in Saudi Arabia.	2	2
15. Educational Research	2	2
16. One of the following: (A). Special Needs (B). Adult Education (c). Educational Problems	2	2
17. Special Teaching Method (Arabic, Islamic subjects)	2	2
18. Teaching Practice	10	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>42</b>

Teachers' College. Scheme of Study in the Arabic and Islamic Teacher Training Programme at Teachers' College. Teachers' College, Riyadh, Documents, 1995, pp 1-5

a. Islamic Education Course

This course is provided by the education department for all students, not just Arabic and Islamic student teachers and is scheduled for two hours per week for one semester. In this course, student teachers are given a knowledge of Islamic educational philosophy, history, sociology, aims and objectives(33).

However, the emphasis is placed on historical development rather than critical analysis. What is lacking is consideration of how to relate the content of the “Islamic Education” course to the modern teaching profession. Further, the course is theoretical, and unrelated to the present problems and situations faced by Islamic and Arabic teachers.

b. Educational Psychology Courses:

These courses include a general introduction to educational psychology, Developmental Psychology, and Counselling and Guidance. Arabic and Islamic student teachers, through educational psychology courses, are expected to acquire a basic understanding of human growth and development, of the nature of learning and the transfer of learning, and of measurement and evaluation.

The Introduction to Educational Psychology course is a basic introductory course to help students understand how to relate theories in psychology to education and to their day-to-day practical tasks in schools. The course focuses mainly on theories of learning and their applications. The underlying factors in learning like readiness to learn, individual differences, motivation and transfer of learning are outlined in general terms without specific reference to the student teacher's teaching subject(34).

The Developmental Psychology course is provided with the aim of acquainting students with knowledge of the stages of children's growth and the impact of environment, socially, psychologically, physically and emotionally(35). Such knowledge will help the student teacher to understand the characteristics of his students and to choose appropriate methods of teaching for his pupils. Breckenridge and Vincent indicated that the study of developmental psychology should help the teacher to understand not only the different stages of child development, but also to understand the influences each child encountered: what has made him? what is he? how does he compare with other children? and what direction should his development take?(36)

The Counselling and Guidance course provides a very basic introduction to the concepts of counselling and guidance, and there is no attempt to analyse the characteristics, strengths and weakness of different counselling models(37). It should be pointed out that counselling and guidance as practised in an Islamic society differs somewhat from the western concept of counselling. Western societies tend to be very individualist in orientation, and this is reflected in the proliferation of client centred models of counselling. Islamic society is more collectivist in nature, with individual wishes subordinated to the requirements of family and community, and with behaviour, norms and values prescribed by Islam. In such a context, counselling is concerned less with self-actualisation than with guiding and encouraging individuals to conform with religious and societal demands. Therefore, counselling courses present only those theories and principles which are considered compatible with Islamic teaching(38).

(c). Principles of Education Courses:

These courses include the Principles of Education, Curriculum in the Elementary Stage, Educational Assessment, Educational Research, and an optional course



In the Principles of Education course, student teachers are given a knowledge of historical process, philosophy, sociology and their relationship to education. Students study the educational ideas of the Greeks and Romans through to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, through the medium of lectures(39). In the course on the curriculum in the elementary stage, student teachers are taught the concepts underlying the curriculum, the philosophical foundations of curriculum design and ways to improve the curriculum of the primary education stage(40). The Educational Assessment course gives a definition of educational assessment and an overview of various patterns of educational assessment(41).

The Educational Research course acquaints the student teacher with the basic principles of conducting educational research(42). In the optional course, the student teacher is given the chance to pursue an interest in special needs, adult education, or educational problems(43).

#### (d). Administration of Education Courses

These courses include the Educational Administration and School Organisation, and Educational System in Saudi Arabia. Regarding Educational Administration and School Organisation, this course is provided with the aim of acquainting students with the fundamental principles of planning, administration and supervision in

education(44). The course on the Educational System in Saudi Arabia covers the development of education in Saudi Arabia, quantitatively and qualitatively, the general principles and trends of the Saudi educational policy as well as the procedures followed to put it into action(45).

(e). Methodology Courses:

The purpose of methodology courses is to enable trainees to learn new methods and techniques that they can adopt and put into practice in their classrooms. However, how to translate this aim into effective practical steps is more important. Clearly, both the methodology course staff and the Arabic and Islamic student teachers are required to produce good teaching. Thus, it is the responsibility of the methodology staff, who usually supervise the student teachers during their teaching practice, to make sure that the course objectives are correctly and effectively achieved in the classroom.

In fact, the methodology of teaching Arabic and Islamic studies is not simply a matter of acquiring the different principles underlying different methods; rather it is the acquisition of the teaching skills through practical work, reflecting the principles behind them. Moorwood suggested a step-by step transition from aims and principles (in lecture form) to methods (via demonstration

and discussion) to techniques (at the time of practising a method) which will lead to a far more realistic discussion of methods and will make further discussion or lectures on aims and principles a more relevant and meaningful(46).

In Teachers' Colleges, there are six courses on teaching methods and teaching aids given to Arabic and Islamic student teachers. The first, covering general teaching methods, is a basic course which provides students with some background about how teaching methods in schools operate, along with the administrative process and management of classes. This course is taken by all students, irrespective of their specialisation(47).

The second course on teaching methods is subject-specific. This course is taught in the seventh semester, in other words, immediately before the semester in which teaching practice is carried out. The course covers the objectives of teaching the specialised subject (in this case Arabic or Islamic studies), basic principles of teaching the specialised subject, principles of lesson planning, survey of different methods of teaching specialised subjects, presentation in the classroom, teaching aids and examination methods(48).

The remaining four courses are: Teaching Aids, Aid Production, Aid Using, and Educational Technology. These generally focus on the use and production of teaching aids including the blackboard, felt board, cards, maps, graphs, specimens, wall charts, models and study trips(49).

### **6.3.5. Examination:**

At the end of each semester, students take a final examination including written and oral components (the latter being a test of Quranic recitation). Each student has to sit one three-hour examination paper in each subject of his study. According to the examination regulations of the Teachers' College, the highest mark awarded for any course is 100 points and to pass the course, the student must obtain at least 60 points. For each individual course, 60 points are allocated to the final examination, and the remaining 40 points are assigned to classroom activities and other requirements. The programme uses a grade-point system whereby the grade for each course is determined by the average mark gained by the student on the course. The grading system used by all teacher training programmes at Teachers' Colleges, including Arabic and Islamic teacher training programmes, is shown in Table (16):



**Table 16:Grade system**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Numerical Average</b>	<b>points</b>
A	90-100	5.0
B+	85- less than 90	4.5
B	80- less than 85	4.0
C+	75- less than 80	3.5
C	70- less than 75	3.0
D+	65- less than 70	2.5
D	60- less than 65	2.0
F	Below 60	1.0

Teachers' College in Riyadh. Guide to the Teachers' College  
Teachers' College, Riyadh, 1994, p 13

For example, if a student obtains Grade A, representing an average mark of between 90-100, in a course of three-credit hours, the number of points will be calculated by multiplying 5.0 x 3.15. The average number of points (GPA) is then determined by dividing the cumulative point value of all the courses attempted by the number of course hours in the student's semester schedule.

The student should maintain an average of at least 2.0 in order to stay in the programme. Students who maintain a GPA of 4.25 and over and fulfil certain other conditions are eligible to appear on the university honours list. Students who by the time of graduation have not failed any course, have completed at least 75% of the requirement, and have completed within the average time of matriculation, are eligible for an award of one of the two levels of honours; they are awarded first class honours if they maintain a GPA

of 4.75-5.0, and second class honours if they maintain a GPA of 4.25-4.75(47).

Regarding the element of continuous assessment, it should be noted that there is no prescription within the regulations of the Teacher College as to how such evaluation is to be made. Therefore, methods of assessment vary from lecturer to lecturer, the most commonly favoured by educational lecturers being the essay. An examination of the regulations and procedures of assessment reveals that there is an absence of individual or group work by students. Apart from mid-term tests, student teachers are not obliged to present long essays, reports or projects. Thus, students are not exposed to learning situations in which they can experience the planning and conduct of research projects. Moreover, as the written examinations are based on the contents of the prescribed textbooks and memoranda, students tend to focus exclusively on these and are deprived of the potential benefits of wider reading on Arabic and Islamic studies, or on education more generally. Thus, it would appear that assessment methods in the teacher training programmes may not be conducive to encouraging a range of work which would form students' minds effectively.

### **6.3.6. Teaching Practice:**

Teaching practice is defined in the teaching practice guide issued by the Teacher College as the period in which the prospective teacher spends one term practising teaching in one of the public schools. It takes place in the final year of the course(48). Teaching practice is worth eight credit hours, and occupies the whole final semester (semester eight). A student teacher is allowed to register for teaching practice, when he has successfully completed all requirements of the previous semesters(49).

According to the scheme of study in Teachers' College, teaching practice is considered to be a practical application of educational and psychological theories, teaching methods and all other academic knowledge taught to the student teachers during their period of study(the previous seven semesters), in a real teaching situation under well-organised technical supervision. The main objectives of teaching practice are parallel to the main goal of the Teachers' College, which is to prepare qualified teachers in line with educational developments, capable of teaching in elementary school(50).

#### 6.3.6.1. Orientation Stage:

According to the study scheme in the Teachers' College, by the time the student teacher has successfully completed the seven semesters, he is assumed to be acquainted with the theoretical background underlying education and its relation to the objectives of the basic education stage, with the conditions for and the general principles of effective teaching and with the types of teaching aids that may be used in the elementary school. It is also assumed by the college that students are aware of the responsibilities of teachers and of the desirable moral characteristics of the professional teacher. They will also have been advised on the preparation of lessons, the relevance of various teaching methods, and the techniques of assessment of teaching in the classroom.

At the beginning of semester eight, student teachers are split into groups and visit the practice schools that have been chosen for them by the institutes. Teachers' Colleges have no cooperative and comprehensive plan in written form communicated to all who are concerned with teaching practice. The sole directive is a letter sent annually to headmasters of the schools where the student teachers are to be trained. In this letter, the headmaster is asked to allow the student teachers to participate in the teaching of their specialist subject. The teaching practice co-ordinator in the department of



Arabic and Islamic studies in the Teacher College usually makes the following arrangements:

1. the distribution of student teachers among teaching staff, for supervisory purposes;
2. the distribution of an evaluation form to all supervising staff;
3. placing Arabic and Islamic student teachers in the schools(51)

#### 6.3.6.2. Teaching practice school:

The teaching practice school is expected to play an important role in the process of teaching practice, as it provides a place for student teachers to practise teaching over a period of time (usually a term) and makes all its facilities available to the student teacher, so that the teaching practice objective can be achieved. Placement in teaching practice schools is arranged by the supervising tutor who chooses the schools in which he would prefer his students to practice. Students are usually placed in schools as close to their places of residence as possible, and the number of student teachers sent to each school is determined in order not to upset the school timetable. Thus, suitability and geographical location of the school, and the supervisor's preference, are primary considerations(52).

#### 6.3.6.3. Observation:

The observation of the professional practice of others is clearly an important aspect of professional training. It is a practical technique which is carried out by the student teachers, both inside and outside the classroom, in teaching practice schools. As has already been mentioned, the first two weeks of teaching practice are given to this task. The Guide to Teaching Practice prepared by Riyadh Teachers' College suggests that observation can be done using video recordings of Arabic and Islamic studies lessons in public schools. The student is asked to record these lessons, and analysis of the recordings is undertaken through group discussion. However, the teaching practice regulations of Teachers' Colleges also give supervisors freedom to decide on a suitable method for fulfilling the observation component(53).

#### 6.3.6.4. Actual Teaching

During the whole final semester, students are required to attend the teaching practice schools five days a week. The teaching practice generally starts at the beginning of term and ends on the last day of term. The first two to three weeks are spent in observation. Students are required to return to college a week before the final examination. The teaching load required of student teachers is usually eight

periods per week, though in some cases, the supervisor may suggest additional periods(54).

#### 6.3.6.3. Supervision:

The guide to teaching practice at Teachers' Colleges defines supervision as the process of guiding, advising and evaluating student teachers during their teaching practice period(55). Among the major elements that determine the quality of any teacher training programme is the quality of the staff member of that programme, in terms of their academic and professional qualifications and their teaching experience. According to the regulations in Teachers' Colleges, the supervisor should hold a PhD, or at least a Master's degree, in the student teacher's major subject, in this case, Arabic or Islamic studies. The supervisor's responsibilities, as summarised by the teaching practice guide are:

- (1). to be a link between the student teacher and the teaching practice school;
- (2). to assist the student teacher in preparing lesson plans, selecting teaching methods and selecting teaching aids to use in his teaching;
- (3). to elucidate the kind of relationship that should exist between the student teacher and other teaching staff;
- (4). to follow up systematically the student teacher's lesson preparation book so as to be able to offer advice and evaluation;.

(5). to visit the student teacher during the teaching practice and observe his teaching and subsequently discuss with him the strengths and weaknesses observed;

(6). to hold a weekly meeting with his student teachers at school or the college, to discuss problems experienced by them during the teaching practice(56).

Careful consideration of these regulations suggests the following:

First of all it seems that although the regulations stipulate the academic qualification to be possessed by the supervisor, there is no such stipulation regarding professional training or experience.

Secondly, the regulations neglect the importance of the school co-operating teacher, giving him no specific role at all in the teaching practice process.

Even the best training plan, designed to raise the standards of the graduates of any teacher training course, will remain a dead letter unless one has the necessary staff to translate it into reality. An HMI paper in the UK has emphasised this point, thus:

**The most carefully planned course of training is still only as good as the people who teach it and the way it is taught. The main teaching**



subjects.....should be taught by people of high ability, who themselves understand how to stimulate curiosity and enjoyment of learning in their students...The professional element in the students' preparation should be taught by people who are successful and experienced members of the teaching profession, up to date in their knowledge of schools and of society, and able to help their students to develop and informed empirical approach to their teaching tasks(57).

An important duty of the Teachers' College is to guarantee as far as possible that student teachers are not only supervised by specialist persons but, even more important, that the process of supervision is effectively carried out. Wroblewski points out that supervisors must have desirable personal characteristics and a sound of philosophy of life, strong human qualities, ability to meet the needs of student teachers, and skill in working effectively with others interested in the progress of student teachers. Above all, they should be genuine educationalists(58). The fundamental value of teaching practice as a component part of any teacher training course lies in the fact that it gives the student teachers the opportunity to apply what has been learnt in theory to the actual class situation. In doing so, the student teacher should be guided by the tutor and get help and advice from the staff of the school to which he/she is attached. School teachers can play a great role in the professional preparation of student teachers. The Scottish department mentioned that:

**If teaching practice is to provide the opportunity for the confirmation and development of work done previously in the college then students require the sympathetic guidance and assistance of practising teachers in the classrooms(59).**

This does not mean that supervision of student teachers on teaching practice need depend entirely on school teachers, but they should play the key role. Unfortunately, the role of the school teacher is one of the elements which today's teaching practice in Teachers' Colleges is lacking. In Teachers' Colleges, the supervisor's workload varies from six to twelve credit-hours, calculated on the basis of two hours for each three student teachers. However, supervision must not exceed more than 75% of his timetable, which means that a supervisor should have a maximum of 7 student teachers in the case of his working six hours and 13 student teachers in the case of working the full twelve credit hours. The supervision process, in general, follows the procedures outlined below:

I. The preliminary week

- (a). The supervisor familiarises student teachers with the teaching practice school.
- (b). Student teachers are provided with the opportunity to observe the class teacher or to view Arabic and Islamic studies lessons, before they start teaching.

## (ii). The weekly meeting

Meetings lasting two hours are to be held at the end of each week, to be attended by the supervisor and his students. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the previous week's teaching experience(60).

### 6.3.6.4. Assessment

Assessment of student teachers, as stated by the college teaching practice guide, means evaluating the student teachers' level of skills and professional behaviour, objectively and in an organised way. The minimum mark for success in the teaching practice course by a student teacher is 60%. Failure in teaching practice means that the student teacher has to repeat the activities of teaching practice again. No agents participate in the assessment of the student teacher and in deciding the final grade for the teaching practice, except the college supervisor(61). So neither the class teacher nor head teacher are given any role in assessing Arabic and Islamic student teachers, although they, and particularly the class teacher, are the people closest to the student teacher.

The assessment concentrates on the following aspects:

- (1). Lesson preparation
- (2). Teaching efficiency
- (3). Use of teaching methods

- (4). Classroom management
- (5). Participation in school activities
- (6). Attendance and abiding by rules and regulations
- (7) Relationship with students, other teachers, administrators and college supervisor
- (8). Personality
- (9) Motivation towards his profession
- (10) Knowledge of the subject.

The evaluation form prepared for the supervisor to complete is given in Table 17. This form, which is filled in once by the supervisor at the end of the teaching practice course(62), does not allow for the criticism and follow-up which could be made if continuous assessment were used. Also, such a single report could reflect his impressions about a student just in his early or last days of teaching practice. In such a case the student's progress is not systematically reported or assessed.



**Table 17:Assessment Card**

1. Trainee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. Teaching Practice School : \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Skills	Good	Fair	Weak
1. Analysis of subject material			
2. Behaviour Objectives			
3. Designing Teaching Strategies			
4. Being equipped with the learning resources needed for teaching			
5. Deciding the material for evaluation.			
6. Writing the daily lesson plan.			
7. Writing the lesson plan for the whole period.			
8. The effectiveness of the introduction to the lesson.			
9. Using questions effectively to stimulate thought			
10. Use of teaching aids			
11. Clarity and audibility of speech			
12. Movement in the classroom			
13. Using positive reinforcement in dealing with the students in the classroom.			
14. Time management			
15. Classroom management			
16. Solving students' educational problems.			
17. Interaction with students.			
18. The implementation of assessment plan teaching			
19. Selecting assignments			
20. Correction of these assignments			
21. Cooperation with the school administration			
22. Participation in activities outside the classroom.			
24. Designing and implementing school project to serve the environment			
25. Overall appearance.			
26. Attendance in the daily work in the school			
27. Enthusiasm for teaching			
28. Respecting the administrative hierarchy			
29. Cooperation with colleagues			
30. Accepting supervisor's guidance			
31. The impact of his personal problems on teaching task			
32. His attitudes towards the teaching profession.			

The Name of the supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Source:** Teachers' College in Riyadh. Guide to Teaching Practice at Teachers' College. Teachers' College, Riyadh, 1994, p 14.

## **6.4. Conclusion**

Teacher preparation in Saudi Arabia has advanced considerably, both quantitatively and qualitatively, from the days when it was possible to teach in an elementary school after a period of training equivalent only to intermediate education. Today's elementary school teacher is a subject specialist, with a Bachelor degree.

Teachers' Colleges provide the student teacher with general academic preparation, subject studies and professional preparation, including a full semester of teaching practice. Professional preparation accounts for 27% and 28% of the programme, for Islamic studies and Arabic specialists respectively, a little less than the 'at least one third', widely recommended in the literature, but a considerable improvement on some programmes (see chapter four).

This preliminary review of initial teacher preparation in Saudi Arabia suggests that the programme suffers from a number of shortcomings, a lack of critical analysis and practical applications of theory, and teaching and assessment methods which tend to encourage memorisation, rather than wide reading, analysis and problem-solving. The teaching practice component does not include continuous assessment, so there is no scope for criticism and follow-

up; moreover, the practice school plays no part in the student teachers' evaluation.

This chapter concludes the theoretical part of the study, which has drawn attention to some views on education and training preparation, and has explained how these are carried out in Saudi Arabia, in the context of Arabic and Islamic studies. This provides the context for the empirical investigation of student teachers' and teacher trainers' views on the preparation programme in Teachers' Colleges, described in the group of chapters which follows.

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**Part IV:**  
**Empirical Study**

# Chapter Seven

## Research Methodology

### **7.1. Introduction**

This chapter explains the methodology and procedures used in conducting the study and achieving its objectives. In investigating the professional preparation of elementary Arabic and Islamic studies teachers in Saudi Arabia, the researcher took into account what Al--Sef advises, including constructing broad goals with specific objectives which could be measured by the different reactions of the sample of the study(1). The following sections recapitulate the aims of the study and describe the procedures used in collecting the data:

### **7.2. Objectives and Aims of the Study:**

The main aims of the study are to examine the present professional preparation programme for Islamic and Arabic primary teachers in Teachers' Colleges, to determine problems and to suggest possible solutions. Specific objectives, which have been set out in detail in Chapter One, can be summarised as follows:

1. To highlight the advantages and disadvantages of the training programme in general and professional preparation in particular as it

is currently provided to primary school teachers of Islamic and Arabic studies;

2. To identify the problems which face student teachers during implementation of the training programme;

3. To identify the problems which face the members of the teaching staff during implementation of the training programme;

4. To identify to what extent educational aids and facilities are adequate and accessible;

5. To identify to what extent the members of the teacher training staff are involved in the planning of the programme;

6. To suggest improvements based on the findings with regard to the above and to make recommendations for future research.

### **7.3. Research Design**

To achieve the above objectives, the investigator used a variety of research methods to collect the required information: firstly, the use of questionnaires distributed to different groups; secondly, the selective interviewing of relevant officials in Ministry of Education



and in Teachers' Colleges who are concerned with teacher preparation in the Teachers' colleges; thirdly, the reviewing of previous literature upon the subject, and official and non-official reports. This use of multiple methods is in keeping with the opinions of many writers. For example, Paton has indicated that each research tool has its own strengths and drawbacks but the combination of methods can help the researcher to tap the strengths of each of these data sources and thereby reduce the weaknesses of a single method approach. This can help to improve the validity and reliability of the data so collected(2). Similarly, Van Dalen states:

**One does not master a single method of obtaining data, such as the questionnaire, and apply it to every problem that arises. Each tool is appropriate to for acquiring particular data, and sometimes several instruments must be employed to obtain the information required to solve a problem. Researchers, therefore, must possess considerable knowledge about a wide variety of techniques and instruments(3).**

Beliefs, intention, expectations, experience and behaviour will naturally differ from one individual to another. These have to be explored accordingly. A single method approach may not bring out the complexity involved in human interaction and behaviours.

## **7.4 The Questionnaire**

The purpose of any measurement procedure is to produce trustworthy evidence relevant to the research objectives. A questionnaire is not just a list of questions to be answered, but it is essentially a scientific instrument for collection and measurement of a particular kind of data(4). It is seen by Al-Sef as an instrument that is widely used by educational workers to obtain facts about current conditions and practices and to make enquiries concerning attitudes and opinions(5). Borg and Gall stressed that with careful planning and sound methodology, the questionnaire can be a very valuable research tool in education(6). The researcher agrees with Al-Sef that the main advantage in using a questionnaire is that a considerable amount of information may be obtained with the minimum of expenditure of both time and effort. Questionnaires are used frequently in research investigations since they are easy to administer. An advantage in the educational context is that they cause little disruption to the normal life of the school or college(7)

For the present study, since much of the information sought was in the form of views and opinions, a questionnaire was considered an appropriate means by which to obtain data about the professional preparation of elementary stage Arabic and Islamic studies teachers in Saudi Arabia.

The scale of the study also has a bearing on the choice of research instrument. Clift and Imrie suggest that a questionnaire is a very useful tool when collecting information from a sample of thirty or more respondents(8). Thus, the questionnaire is an appropriate tool to use in the present study, as there were to be more than thirty respondents in each sample group-student teachers and college teaching staff. The questionnaire, in the present study, is entitled “Questionnaire about the Present Professional Preparation for Islamic and Arabic Subjects Teachers in Primary Schools in Saudi Arabia”.

#### **7.4.1. The Preparation of the Questionnaires:**

The first step in developing the questionnaire for this study was to review previous studies, to see if a suitable instrument already existed, which had previously been tested in a similar context to the present study. Unfortunately, no suitable instrument for the sample was found. Instruments used in studies such as those by Al-Rabiah(9), Hamdan(10), Al-Ghamdi(11), Al-Tokhais(12) and others, were found to be inappropriate for this study because they dealt with general aspects of courses taken and objectives of teacher education programmes. Moreover, they were not directed to Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers but to all subject teachers. Instruments used in previous investigations of Arabic and Islamic Studies teacher

education such as those by Al-Hukemy(13), Al-Othem(14), Latefy(15) and others were also found inappropriate for this study because, again, they dealt with general aspects of courses taken and objectives of teacher education programmes, without particular focus on the professional preparation element.

In fact, there is a general lack of studies related to professional preparation in Arab countries. Most of the available surveys were conducted in developed countries such as USA, UK, and Germany. In those countries attention has been paid to this important element in the educational programmes, while much less attention has been paid to professional preparation in developing countries such as Saudi Arabia.

It was thought that in order to conduct an investigation in a society like Saudi Arabia, there was a need for an appropriate instrument specifically designed to be appropriate to the local culture and educational system. For these reasons (difference of sample, difference of focus and difference of culture), it was necessary to construct a new instrument (questionnaires) suitable for use with Arabic and Islamic student teachers and their teaching staff in Saudi Arabian Teachers' Colleges.



To this end, the researcher conducted a review of current literature related to questionnaire design. This search helped to identify the various key issues in the area. After an extensive review of literature, two questionnaires were designed in order to ascertain the opinions and experiences of two groups:

1. Student teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies in the final semester (semester eight) of the course in Teachers' Colleges;
2. Members of the Arabic, Islamic studies and Education teacher training staff in the Teachers' Colleges who teach and supervise student teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies during the teacher training programme.

The two questionnaires consisted of a mixture of closed and open items. Whereas the former sought specific information, the latter were designed to give the participants an opportunity to add comments they felt necessary and to elicit further information about teacher training programmes. It was felt that these questions would help the researcher obtain honest answers because such questions are considered to be appropriate when the objective is not only to discover a respondent's attitude towards some issue, but also to learn something about his level of information, the structure or basis on which he has formed his opinion, the frame of reference within which he answered and the intensity of his feelings on the topic. The

choice to include closed questions was made, since they are easier and quicker to answer, they require no writing, and quantification is straightforward, facilitating analysis of data(16).

#### **7.4.2. Student Teachers' Questionnaire:**

The questionnaire addressed to student teachers consisted of eight sections, each sub-divided into a varying number of questions, thus:

##### **Section One:**

In this section, questions were designed to obtain general background information on respondents, namely, the college at which they were studying, age, high school certificate, academic specialism, and how the choice of academic specialism was made.

##### **Section Two:**

This section, consisting of two questions, concerned admission criteria used to select students for enrolment to teacher training programmes in Arabic and Islamic studies, in Teachers' Colleges. A multiple choice question was used to identify the criteria used, while a four-point rating scale was used to measure the respondent's satisfaction with such criteria.

### **Section Three:**

This section focused on the duration of the teacher training programme. It, too, was composed of two questions. In the first question, respondents were requested to give their opinions about the adequacy of teacher training duration on a four-point scale. For respondents who were dissatisfied, an open-ended type question was included so that student teachers could suggest what they thought would be a suitable duration.

### **Section Four:**

Nine questions were included in this section. Here, student teachers were required to indicate on a four-point scale, the extent of their satisfaction with the curriculum as a preparation for the teaching profession, and a multiple choice question sought opinions about the relevance and importance of various aspects of the course. A series of open-ended questions invited respondents' ideas about desirable additions to the programme.

### **Section Five**

This section was designed to obtain respondents' opinions on the suitability and appropriateness of college facilities including the library, audio-visual aids and recreational provision. Answers were to be rated on a five-point scale.

### **Section Six**

The thirteen questions of this section dealt with teaching practice. The first two questions were about student teachers' satisfaction with the organisation and time allocation for teaching practice. The next three questions focused on different aspects of supervision. Seven questions in this section concerned the observation component of the programme. All these questions were answered by rating on two or four point scales. A final open-ended question was included to allow respondents to make suggestions or recommendations as to how teaching practice might be improved.

### **Section Seven:**

This section focused on course evaluation. Five open-ended questions were designed in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the academic and professional preparation in teacher training programmes and suggestions for improvement.

### **Section Eight:**

This section was concerned with the administration and organisation of the Teachers' Colleges. It comprised four questions, the first two of which were designed to allow respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction regarding the administration and the organisation of their



colleges. Answers were to be rated on four point scales. Question No. 3 in this section was an open-ended question, the purpose of which was to allow student teachers to say what problems and obstacles, if any, they had encountered during the implementation of the programme. The last question was about the role of the administration of the college in solving these problems. Answers to this question, again, were to be rated on a four-point scale.

### **7.4.3. Teaching Staff Questionnaire:**

This questionnaire was devised for teaching staff in Arabic, Islamic and Education departments who taught and supervised student teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies during the four-year teacher training programme in the Teachers' College. The teaching staff questionnaire comprised six sections, as follows:

#### **Section One:**

As with the student teacher questionnaire, the first section was designed to obtain general information about the teaching staff, including name of institution, age, qualification, present specialist section, and teaching experience.

## **Section Two:**

This section consisted of two questions and focused on the admission procedure. First, a multiple choice question was used, in order to determine the type of admission criteria used in Arabic and Islamic teacher training programmes in Teachers' Colleges. The next question concerned the level of teaching staff satisfaction regarding these criteria, rated on a four-point scale.

## **Section Three**

The purpose of this section was to identify the adequacy of time allocation for teacher training programme. In the first question, respondents were requested to rate their satisfaction with the duration of the programme on a four point scale. In case of dissatisfaction, they were asked in an open-ended question to indicate what they thought would be a suitable time.

## **Section Four**

Eleven questions were included in this section. These questions were used to allow teaching staff to indicate who planned the curriculum, the input of teaching staff in the planning of the curriculum, the need for more courses, and the adequacy of the curriculum to prepare students for the teaching profession.

### **Section Five**

This section consisted of two questions. In the first question, teaching staff were requested to rate on a four-point scale, the college facilities such as library, audio visual aids, and recreational provision. The next question was an open-ended question which asked staff to identify the teaching methods and training techniques they used in the teaching of their subjects.

### **Section Six**

Here, thirteen questions were designed to obtain information regarding teaching practice. The first question was set to reveal the involvement of teaching staff in the supervision of Arabic and Islamic student teacher in teaching practice programme. The next two questions were about teaching staff satisfaction with the organisation and time allocation for teaching practice. The next nine questions were concerned with their satisfaction with the supervision of teaching practice as it has been operated, the number of student teachers they supervised in the academic year 1995-1996, the number of visits, the arrangements they made, and the criteria used in the assessment of students. The last question was an open-ended type, which sought respondents' suggestions and recommendations as how the current teaching practice in teacher training could be improved.

### **Section Seven:**

This section consisted of five open-ended questions. All these questions concerned the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher training programme and suggestions for improvement.

### **Section Eight:**

This section was concerned with the administration and organisation of the Teachers' Colleges. It contained four questions, the first two of which were designed to allow respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction regarding the administration and the organisation of their colleges. Answers were to be rated on a four point-scale. The next question was an open-ended question, designed with the purpose of allowing teaching staff to mention any problems and obstacles during the implementation of the programme. The last question was about the role of the college administration of college in solving these problems. Answers for this question, again, were to be rated on a four-point scale.

#### **7.4.4. Validity of Questionnaire:**

Before applying any test, it is necessary to ensure that it is a valid measurement tool and, therefore, there is a need to check the validity. Pidgeon and Yates defined a valid instrument as one that demonstrably measures what it was intended to measure(17). They



went on to describe validity as a term used to indicate the acceptability of a test(18). Sudman and Bradburn(19) and Gronlund defined validity as the extent to which an instrument fulfils the purpose for which it was designed, i.e. assesses or measures what it purports to assess or measure(20) Naturally, the more valid and reliable instrument, the more reliable the results. In this regard, Gay points out that:

**A valid test is always reliable but a reliable test is not necessary valid. In other words, if a test is measuring what is supposed to be measuring, it will be reliable and do so every time, but a reliable test can consistently measure the wrong thing and be invalid.(21)**

The validity of a questionnaire can be tested by means of several methods(22), one of which might be presenting the questionnaire to independent experts to elicit their viewpoints about its content(23). To confirm the validity of the items of the questionnaires in the present study, the method of obtaining experts' opinions was followed and the following steps were undertaken:

1. Copies of the questionnaires were submitted to four teaching staff at Teachers' Colleges in Saudi Arabia.

2. Copies of the questionnaires were submitted to four teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies in Islamic schools in Britain.
3. Copies of the questionnaires were submitted to six students undertaking PhD. studies in Education at an English University.
4. A covering letter was attached to each copy of these questionnaires, indicating the nature and the purpose of the study
5. It was stressed that referees were not asked to respond to the items themselves (whether they agreed or disagreed), but to indicate, whether in their judgement, the items were appropriate to their scales.
6. To obtain their views about the strength of the relationship between each item and its scale or section, referees were be asked to tick one of the four boxes: NR not relevant, MR minimally relevant, FR fairly relevant, or VR very relevant.
7. All questionnaires were collected either in person or by post, and most of the respondents were interviewed after reviewing the questionnaires and invited to give their opinions about them.

8. The responses were coded NR=1, MR=2, FR=3, and VR=4. The data were analysed by using the MEAN. All items scoring below the mean (2.5) were removed, or replaced if some respondents suggested that, whilst all items scoring above the mean were retained.

This procedure completed the treatment of the English version of the questionnaires.

#### **7.4.5. Translating the Questionnaires into Arabic:**

In order to apply the questionnaires in Saudi Arabia, it was necessary for them to be translated into the Saudi Arabian language, Arabic. The translation was designed to retain the items' English meaning and to be as simple as possible for general understanding. To ensure that all items retained their English meaning, English and Arabic copies were checked by three students undertaking a Ph.D. degree in English-Arabic translation at English Universities. After some minor alteration, the final versions were printed for use in the field work.

#### **7.4.6. Timing the Items:**

Youngman observed that one effective way of detecting potentially difficult questions is to pilot them by administering the questionnaire personally, timing each response. Any questions which take substantially longer to answer than the others is quite likely to be too

complicated. Such questions should be reworded, or broken down into separate parts(24).

To make sure that all items were easily understandable by native Arabic speakers, each questionnaire was distributed to three postgraduate Arab students at an English university. The time taken to answer each item was recorded in each case. From these records the mean time for all items was calculated and analysed. Any item which took longer than the mean time was treated as a difficult item and reworded in a simpler way.

#### **7.4.7. Piloting the Questionnaires:**

In his dictionary, Rowntree defined the pilot study as a preliminary study undertaken prior to the major task(25), which like a feasibility study, can also be used to modify the proposed methods. Before carrying out the main study and distributing the questionnaires to the samples, it is important to make sure that the instruments are suitable for use with a particular sample. The main aim of piloting the instruments is to identify any possible problems and solve them. The writer felt that a pilot study would increase his own confidence in the research method selected and he recognised that, as Isaac and Michel had pointed out pilot study offers a chance to test hypotheses; provide new ideas and to check procedures(26). It was felt that this



pilot study would reduce error in the research approach, and act as a source of feedback, thereby saving time. Phillips *et al.* state that:

**The use of a pilot study is essential, where the draft questionnaire is tested on a small group of people, who have the same characteristics as the sample group to be used for the main study(27).**

Borg and Gall observed that pilot studies are carried out with fewer subjects than will be employed in the main study. For some pilot studies two or three subjects are adequate, and it is rarely essential to include more than twenty subjects(28) Supporting this view, Youngman stated that the pilot study concerns the questionnaire rather than the sample, so it normally involves a small sample of the main study(29). Consequently, between September and October 1996, the researcher conducted a survey in Saudi Arabia with a sample of individuals chosen at random from a population similar to that of the research subjects. The sample included twenty Arabic and Islamic student-teachers and twenty of their teaching staff in the Teachers' Colleges.

The two groups were asked to express their views about the clarity and comprehensives of the surveys. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a letter explaining the purpose of the study and giving instructions for the completion of the questionnaire. At the end

of each page, respondents were asked to look back at the items and circle the difficult ones. (This instruction applied only in the pilot study).

Returns of the pilot study indicated the ability of the questionnaires to elicit the information needed and the validity of the tool. A few respondents made unnecessary elaboration in their response to some open ended questions, very few items were rephrased without changing the original idea and some words were underlined. When the necessary amendments had been made, the questionnaires were finally prepared for administration to the sample population for the main study.

#### **7.4.8. The Sample of the Study:**

In accordance with the purpose and nature of this study, the survey was based on students teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies, and teaching staff in Arabic, Islamic and Education departments in Teachers' Colleges. In the Handbook of Reference and Statistical Methods in Psychology, Yaremko *et al*, defined the population of a research study as the entire collection or set of objects, people or events, of interest in a particular context, or the set of the measurement on the members of the population(30).

The target population for the study were male only. The reasons for this male orientation were given in Chapter One. However, it is recognised that a study which does not address the concerns of both women and men is incomplete and it is thus strongly recommended that work be done regarding training for female primary school teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies and that a dialogue be established for the benefit of all concerned.

Table. 18 shows the total numbers of the target populations for the study (the sampling frame) and their distribution over the seventeen Teachers' Colleges in Saudi Arabia. As indicated in the table, there were 17 Teachers' Colleges under the supervision of Ministry of Education at the time of the survey. The colleges were located in seventeen cities of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The total number of Arabic student teachers in the final semester (semester eight) was 103, while for Islamic student teachers, it was 55. The figure for Arabic teaching staff was 110, 125 for Islamic teaching staff and 250 for Education teaching staff.

**Table 18: Distribution of Islamic and Arabic student teachers and teaching staff in Arabic and Islamic teacher training programmes over the Teachers' Colleges in the year 1996**

Cities	No. of Teachers' College	No. of Arabic and Islamic student teachers		Full time teaching staff at Department of:		
		Arabic	Islamic	Arabic	Islamic	Education
Riyadh	1	6	2	11	7	30
Mecca	1	6	6	6	9	24
Medanh	1	3	1	7	12	17
Abah	1	5	4	8	5	30
Dammam	1	3	2	6	8	9
Al-Raus	1	3	4	7	7	15
Al-Taif	1	7	6	9	8	25
Al-Jouf	1	7	6	5	6	15
Jizan	1	10	2	7	8	9
Hael	1	10	4	7	7	15
Al-Hasi	1	3	3	8	8	13
Bishah	1	5	3	4	6	6
Tabok	1	2	8	4	7	8
Kunfetha	1	11	4	5	4	5
Jeddah	1	4	-	7	7	12
Arqr	1	2	-	4	9	7
Al-Biah	1	16	-	5	7	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>250</b>

Ministry of Education, Statistics Section. Teachers' College, 1996.



The possibility of constructing a basic sampling frame was considered. Borg and Gall have pointed out that sampling means selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as representative of that population.(31) However, the final decision was made to take the whole population of the study for two reasons:

1. In the light of the statistics shown in Table 18 above, it is evident that the size of parent population is relatively small. This is due of the government policy of restricting admission to the Teachers' colleges, so that the number of teachers trained is in line with the country's requirement.

2. Experts advise the use of the largest possible sample. For example,

Borg and Gall stated that:

**The general rule is to use the largest sample possible. The rule is a good one because, although we generally study only samples, we are really interested in learning about the population from which they are drawn. The larger the sample, the more likely is its mean and standard deviation to be representative of the population mean and standard deviation. Sample size is also closely connected with statistical hypothesis testing. The larger the sample , the less likely is the researcher to obtain negative results or fail to reject the null hypothesis when it is actually false.(32)**

Therefore, all seventeen Teachers' Colleges operated by the Ministry of Education, were chosen and the study sample included all

Arabic and Islamic student teachers and members of teaching staff in Arabic, Islamic and Education departments in each college.

#### **7.4.9. The Administration of the Questionnaires:**

As the field study was mainly concerned with the training of Arabic and Islamic elementary teachers in Teacher Colleges, it was decided to administer the questionnaires in the period between October and December 1996. The middle of the first term was thought to be the most suitable time in Saudi Arabia, because by that time, student teachers have completed enough of the teaching practice component to be able to form an opinion about the whole programme. Also, at that time, student teachers teaching staff are free from examination pressure.

In arranging research access, it was decided to take a number of steps to encourage the completion of the questionnaires. As an initial approach, in accordance with the regulations of the education authorities in Saudi Arabia, the investigator obtained a letter prepared by his supervisor, asking the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia to grant the investigator permission to conduct his field study in Saudi Arabia (see Appendix E, p 594). As a result of this permission (see Appendix F, p 596), all necessary documents, and contact with

the Teachers' Colleges, their Arabic and Islamic student teachers and their teaching staff were obtained

A great deal of effort was put into obtaining a high percentage return of the questionnaires. An introductory letter was affixed to the questionnaires, explaining the reason for the survey, so as to ensure that each respondent knew what he was committing himself to, and also so that the respondents understood the nature of the responses required. In fact, student teachers and their teaching staff were requested to answer all the items on the questionnaires and it was emphasised that their opinions were valuable as they alone had inside knowledge of the current Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme. In this regard, Al-Sef recommended that it is important to remind the respondent that his or her point of view is crucial in implementing the main aim of the study(33). Moreover, they were asked not to write their names on the questionnaire, and assured that all information obtained would be held in confidence and for the purpose of the study only. In this respect, Borg and Gall recommend that a brief assurance of confidentiality should be included in the introductory letter(34).

The possibility of postal distribution of the questionnaire was considered, but the final decision was determined largely by bearing in mind the warnings of experts such as Oppenheim who stated that:

**by far the largest disadvantage of mailed questionnaire, however, is the fact that they usually produce a very poor response rate...the important point about these poor response rates is not the reduced size of the sample, which could easily be overcome by sending out more questionnaires, but the possibility of bias(35).**

Oppenheim further added that the personal administration of questionnaires ensures a high response rate and accurate sampling(36). However, the number of the locations involved in this study would have made personal administration of the instrument by the researcher alone, excessively consuming of time and resources; a lengthy visit would have had to be made to each of seventeen cities. In view of resource constraints, the researcher enlisted the assistance of faculty members at the colleges. The investigator personally distributed the questionnaires to each Teacher College, and arranged with one of the faculty members in each college for his assistance in distributing the questionnaires, each assistant being responsible for running the survey in his college. This reduced the length of time the



researcher needed to spend in each college and ensured that all 17 colleges could be covered in the time available

In each Teacher College, the investigator's assistant distributed the questionnaires among the Arabic and Islamic student teachers in semester eight. Student teachers in each of the colleges were asked to take the questionnaire and fill it in. They were told to report back to the assistants in case of any problem encountered when filling the questionnaire. Within an average period of ten days for each of the colleges, the questionnaires were completed. For all the Teacher Colleges, 127 copies of the questionnaire were completed and handed back to the assistants, 79 questionnaires from Arabic student teachers and 48 from Islamic student teachers (see Table 19).

In respect of teaching staff, the investigator and his assistants contacted the educational authority in each case, where addresses (telephone and office) were obtained. The final number of the teaching staff questionnaires collected was 353, as follows:

1. 80 questionnaires from Arabic teaching staff;
2. 88 questionnaires from Islamic teaching staff;
3. 178 questionnaires from Education teaching staff.

During the survey period, the investigator was shuttling between the different colleges, co-ordinating the process, and doing a follow-up whenever it seemed necessary. The whole process was, generally, operated smoothly with no serious problems reported. All incomplete questionnaires were discounted. Table 19 shows the number and percentage of the participants who did or did not complete the questionnaires.

**Table 19: Questionnaire Response Rate**

College	Arabic student teachers			Islamic Student Teachers			Arabic Teaching Staff			Islamic Teaching Staff			Education Teaching Staff		
	No. of admin. copies	No. of returned copies	%	No. of admin. copies	No. of returned copies	%	No. of admin. copies	No. of returned copies	%	No. of admin. copies	No. of returned copies	%	No. of admin. copies	No. of returned copies	%
Riyadh	6	6	100	2	2	100	11	7	63.6	7	3	42.8	30	20	66.6
Mecca	6	4	66.6	6	6	100	6	4	66.6	9	5	55.5	24	18	75
Medanh	3	2	66.6	1	1	100	7	7	100	12	10	83.3	17	15	88.2
Abah	5	4	40	4	4	100	8	8	100	5	5	100	30	25	83.3
Dammam	3	2	66.6	2	2	100	6	5	83.3	8	5	62.5	9	7	77.7
Al-Raus	3	2	66.6	4	2	75	7	5	71.4	7	7	100	15	9	60
Al-Taif	7	3	42.8	6	5	83.3	9	8	88.8	8	5	62.5	25	18	72
Al-Jouf	7	6	85.7	6	5	83.3	5	5	100	6	6	100	15	10	66.6
Jizan	10	7	70	2	0	0	7	5	71.4	8	6	75	9	9	100
Hael	10	10	100	4	4	100	7	5	71.4	7	4	57	15	11	73.3
Al-Hasi	3	3	100	3	3	100	8	6	75	8	8	100	13	8	61.5
Bishah	5	5	100	3	2	66.6	4	2	50	6	4	66.6	6	2	33.3
Tabok	2	2	100	8	8	100	4	2	50	7	4	57	8	3	37.5
Kunfetha	11	10	90.9	4	4	100	5	3	60	4	2	50	5	2	40
Jeddah	4	2	50	-	-		7	5	71.4	7	5	71.4	12	8	66.6
Argqr	2	2	100	-	-		4	2	50	9	3	33.3	7	3	37.5
Al-Biah	16	9	56	-	-		5	3	60	7	6	85.7	10	10	100
Total	103	79	76.6	55	48	87.2	110	80	72.2	125	88	70.4	250	178	71.2

## **7.5. The Interview:**

The researcher believes that an interview in the setting of scientific research is essentially a scientific instrument. Cohen and Manion defined the interview as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, predication, or explanation(37). Borg has said that the interview is a form of measurement that is very common in descriptive research, such as surveys, but can also be used to collect a variety of Education data in other types of research(38). Borg and Gall said that the interview situation usually permits much greater depth than the other methods of collecting research data(39)

The interview adds a dimension to the gathering of survey data that is not provided by other methods. It ensures face-to-face encounter with the research participants. Tuckman, quoted by Cohen and Manion, described it thus :

**[The interview] by providing access to what is “inside a person’s head” makes it possible to measure what a person knows(knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes(values and preference), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs)(40).**



Accordingly, during his visit to Saudi Arabia (September-January) the investigator interviewed relevant officials in Ministry of Education and in Teacher Colleges. These people play a big role in the planning for Arabic and Islamic education in elementary schools, including designing the current Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme in Teachers' Colleges. Therefore, it was felt to be of great importance that their attitudes, disposition and suggestions toward the preparation programme of Arabic and Islamic elementary teachers be considered as part of this enquiry. The interview method was considered as the best way to explore the officials' views and attitudes toward the professional preparation of Arabic and Islamic teachers in the elementary stage because the number of such personnel in the Teacher Colleges and in the Ministry of Education is small. Borg and Gall claimed that the interview is a popular and an effective method which can be used to assess views when the target sample is small(41) A structured form was used for this study, in other words, one in which the content and procedures were organised in advance. Cohen and Manion indicated that this kind of interview is one of the most frequently used methods of eliciting information in social and educational research(42).

The interview sample had to be chosen largely on a convenience basis, due to the many commitments of the officials in question. In the case of Ministry officials, approaches were made to the three officials with responsibility for the issues of concern to this study, and eventually, interviews were granted by all of them. In the case of college administration, approaches were made to the Dean and Vice-Dean of each of the 17 Teachers' Colleges, and interviews conducted with as many of them as could spare time and were willing to participate. As we can see in Table 20, three of the top officials in the Ministry of Education, seven deans and nine vice-deans of Teachers' Colleges were interviewed. All the interviews were carried out personally by the researcher. The investigator met the interviewees and explained to them the purpose of the study. Additionally, the investigator explained to the respondents that their opinions would help the study of Arabic and Religious subjects. Supporting this step, Adams and Schvaneveldt, as quoted in Cohen and Manion, stated that it is important to remind the respondent that his or her point of view is vital to understand the whole picture(43).

**Table 20: The Interviewees**

<b>Name of interviewee</b>	<b>Position</b>
1. Dr. Mohammed Al-Asiyak	The General director for Teacher College in Saudi Arabia.
2. Dr. Ibrahim Al-drayer	The Deputy Assistant of Education Minister
3. Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Omar	The Dean of admission for Teacher Colleges in Ministry of Education
4. Dr. Abdullah Al-Mosedy	The Dean of Mecca Teacher College
5. Dr. Ali mohammed	The Dean of Dammam Teacher College
6. Dr. Sauid Al-Thouiny	The Dean of Hael Teacher College.
7. Mr. Mohammed Fares	The Dean of Bishah Teacher College
8. Mr. Naser Marey	The Dean of Tabok Teacher College
9. Mr. Fasiel Al-Hudeeb	The Dean of Arqr Teacher College
10. Mr. Hasen Fakyeeh	The Dean of Kurfetha Teacher College
11. Mr. Ali Al-Rashed	The vice dean of Riyadh
12. Mr. Fares Al-shaer	The vice dean of Al-Jouf
13. Mr. Mahedy Al-Kerny	The vice dean of Bishah
14. Mr. Abdullrahaman futail	The vice dean of Mecca
15. Mr. Othman Al-Amier	The vice dean of Hael
16. Dr. Eaudah Abdulalkufoer	The vice dean of Abah
17. Mr. Hasen Baraket	The vice dean of Kurfetha
18. Mr. Abdualrhaman Al-Ajajye	The vice dean of Dammam
19. Mr. Sulaman Al-Onesy	The vice dean of Arqar

Almost half of the questions in the interview were designed as open-ended items because they are flexible; they allow the interviewer to probe so that he may go into more depth if he chooses, or clear up any misunderstanding; they enable the interviewer to test the limits of the respondent's knowledge; they encourage cooperation and help establish rapport, and enable the interviewer to make a true assessment of what the respondents really believes(44). The interview schedule was divided into seven sections. It was designed to elicit data to enable an appraisal to be made regarding the teacher

training programme in general and professional preparation in particular for elementary teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies.

Section One was designed to obtain background information needed to identify the characteristics of the respondents participating in the study. The background information gathered from the respondents included age, qualification and position.

Section Two This section dealt with admission criteria used in Arabic and Islamic teacher training programmes in Teacher Colleges and the satisfaction of officials regarding these criteria.

Section Three This section was about the duration of the teacher training programme. Officials were asked to give their views about the duration of the programme, and in case of dissatisfaction, they were asked to suggest a suitable duration.

Section Four: This section dealt with the teacher training curriculum, who planned the curriculum, the input of teaching staff in the planning of the curriculum, the need for more courses, and the adequacy of the curriculum in preparing students for the teaching profession. Interviewees were also asked to indicate their opinions



about the importance of courses offered in the teacher training programme.

Section Five: In this section, officials were requested to give their opinion on the college facilities such as library, audio visual aids and recreational provision.

Section Six: This section covered the teaching practice component of the programme, and was designed to obtain information regarding the organisation, time allocation and supervision of teaching practice.

Section Seven: This section focused on course evaluation. Questions were designed in order to identify interviewees' perception of the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher training programme and suggestions for improvement.

## **7.6. Data Coding and Analysis:**

The data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews were grouped according to the type of respondents: Arabic and Islamic student teachers, members of teaching staff, and officials in Teacher Colleges and in the Ministry of Education. The researcher coded the

data for computer analysis and the data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science programme(spssx).

In the presentation, analysis and interpretation of findings, standard descriptive statistics were used, such as frequencies, percentage, and averages.

### **7.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has explained the research methods employed in this study. In order to overcome the limitations of any one research method and obtain as comprehensive a view as possible of the issues and attitudes under investigation, a combination of literature review, questionnaire survey and interview was adopted.

Two questionnaires were designed, one addressed to student teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies in semester eight of Teachers' College, and the other to teaching staff involved in their training, to ascertain their views on the current professional preparation programme and their ideas for its improvement. Because of the small size of the relevant survey population, the whole of that population was taken as the sample of the study.

Structured interviews with officials in Teachers' Colleges and in the Ministry of Education were carried out, to explore the perspective of those responsible for planning for Arabic and Islamic education in elementary schools, including the design and administration of teacher preparation programmes.

The findings from these surveys will be presented and discussed in the chapters which follow.

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# Chapter Eight

## Student Teachers' Questionnaire

### 8.1. Introduction

The Arabic and Islamic student teachers are a main focus of this study because their perception and views can provide vital insight into issues relating to the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme. They are the recipients of total learning packages. While the teacher training programme as provided by the teacher colleges was discussed in Chapter Six, the purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the questionnaire survey of the Arabic and Islamic student teachers (127), concerning aspects of the training programme and other related issues.

### 8.2. General Information

The first section of the questionnaire asked for general information about respondents, in order to obtain an overview of the characteristics of the sample, particularly any factors that might have a bearing on their views or experience of the programme.

**Table 21: The Age Distribution of Student Teachers\***

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
15-19	24	19.0
20-24	45	35.7
25-29	47	37.3
30-34	10	7.9

\* Students usually enter university at the age of 18.

Regarding the age distribution of the student teacher sample, as Table 21 shows, almost three quarters of the sample were in the 20-24 and 25-29 age categories, implying that they would have entered college



at the usual age (18 years), but some did so a little later. This may be attributed to the nature of the school system in Saudi Arabia (see Chapter Two) and to the fact that part of the college intake consists of mature students who have graduated from other institutions and are upgrading their qualifications.

**Table 22 : High School Certificate**

<b>High School Certificate</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Art	105	83.3
Science	17	13.5
Teacher Training	4	3.2

Not Answered: 1

Students are admitted to the college from Arts, Science and Teacher Training sections of secondary education, and it was thought their background might influence their view of the programme. Table 22 shows that Arts predominated in the sample; there were very few graduates from Science or Teacher Training. This reflects the admission policy of the Ministry of Education. Students who graduate from Arts with a low mark tend to enter Teachers' Colleges, because they have no chance of obtaining a university place and no other institutes are available for them.

**Table 23: Reasons for Choosing Arabic or Islamic Subjects**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Personal choice	94	74.6
Assigned to it by the college committee	24	18.9
It was my family choice	9	7.1

The Teachers' Colleges offer a range of subjects in various fields (See Chapter Six). The intention here was to find out why students chose to study Arabic or Islamic studies from the range of subjects offered in the college, as this might shed some light on students' enthusiasm or lack of it, for the cause, and in performing their professional duties. As can be seen from Table 23, the majority made

their own choice regarding their specialist subject. However, it is course for concern that approximately a quarter were studying a subject not of their own choosing, and so one for which they may not have had real aptitude or interest.

### **8.3. Admission**

**Table 24 : Admission Procedure**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Examination	9	7.1
Interview	18	14.2
High Grade	16	12.6
All of them	46	36.2
Interview and High Grade	12	9.4
Examination and Interview	26	20.5

The admission regulations were discussed in Chapter Six. The intention here was to determine the level of implementation of these officials procedures. While the regulations state that examination, interview and high school grade determine admission to the college, it was found that only 36.2% of the students were admitted through the instructed procedure. 64.8% had been admitted on the basis of just one or two of these criteria. As a result of inconsistency in implementing the selection procedure, it is possible that students of relatively low calibre, or with little real interest in teaching, were admitted to the college, after failing to find a place elsewhere.

**Table 25 : Student Satisfaction with Admission Procedure**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	14	11.0
Satisfied	41	32.3
Satisfied to some extent	51	40.2
Not satisfied at all	21	16.5

When the sample were asked if they were satisfied with the admission procedure, 43.3% of them were either very satisfied or satisfied, 40.2% were only satisfied to some extent, and 16.5% were not satisfied at all.

## **8.4 Duration**

**Table 26: Student Satisfaction with Duration**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Not enough	9	7.1
Enough	97	76.4
Very long	21	16.5

The questionnaire asked the students to express their views about the duration of the programme. According to Table 26, 76.4% of the sample were happy with the present duration of the programme. A few students believed that the duration is not enough, while slightly more found it very long. Those who were not happy with the present duration, were asked what they thought would be a suitable duration.

**Table 27: The Suggested Duration**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Three years	22	73.3
Five	8	26.7

Table 27 shows that the majority of this group, 73.3%, suggested reducing the duration to three years. This may be due to the common misconception that primary teachers do not need much preparation or because Teachers' College tends to be seen as a "second best" alternative to university, where the programme is four years. Eight student teachers (26.7%) suggested extending the duration to five years.

## **8.5. The Teacher Training Curriculum**

**Table 28: Student Satisfaction with the Teacher Training Curriculum**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	18	14.2
Satisfied	42	33.1
Satisfied to some extent	53	41.7
Not satisfied at all	14	11.0

The structure and content of the teacher training programme in Teachers' Colleges were discussed in Chapter Six. When students were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the curriculum, as Table 28 shows, over half (52.7%) of the respondents were either



satisfied to some extent or not satisfied, while 46.3% expressed their satisfaction (very satisfied + satisfied ).

**Table 29: The Orientation of the Present Teacher Training Curriculum**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Provides the student teacher with an adequate knowledge of his academic specialisation	22	17.3
Provides the student teacher with professional teaching skills	51	40.2
Provides both of these	46	36.2
Neither	8	6.3

One of the fundamental elements which defines the quality of teacher training programme is the balance between different parts of the programme. As demonstrated in Table 29, only 36.2% of trainees believed the current programme balanced professional preparation skills and academic specialisation. Of the 57.5% who thought only one of these elements was provided, the majority saw the focus as being on professional skills. There were also a number of student teachers (6.3%) who believed that the programme does not provide either of these elements.

**Table 30: Some of Curriculum Content Unrelated to Students' Future work**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	80	63.0
No	47	37.0

An effective teacher training programme should be relevant to students' future work as teachers. However, in this study nearly two thirds of the sample, 63.0%, believed that some of the programme content was irrelevant to their future work. Those who suggested this were asked which topics they considered irrelevant.

**Table 31: Irrelevant Topics**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
General education	43	53.8	1
Chemistry	12	15.0	2
Physics	10	12.5	3
Math	9	11.3	4
Biology	6	7.5	5



Four specific subjects, all from the general education part of the course, were mentioned as being irrelevant. The majority, 53.8% of students summarised their view by saying that many courses in general education are irrelevant. Interestingly, the specific courses mentioned were chemistry (15.0%), physics (12.5%), mathematics, (11.3%) and biology (7.5%). It is perhaps not surprising that respondents listed science and mathematics in this context, since most of the sample came from the Arts stream and all were training to teach Arts subjects. However, as Chapter Six indicated, in the study plan, general education courses are given the highest weight(44.%). This is because when the first elementary teachers' institute were established, the purpose was to produce general class teachers, not subject specialists. Although the purpose of the college has now changed and elementary teachers are now subject specialists, this change is not reflected in the college curriculum.

**Table 32: Student Satisfaction with the Amount of Attention Paid to Each of Area of the Programme**

Area	Not enough		Enough		Too much	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
General Preparation	7	5.5	33	26.0	87	68.5
Specialisation (Islam, Arabic Studies)	76	59.8	51	40.2	-	-
General Educational Principles	14	11.0	98	77.2	15	11.8
Educational Administration	15	11.8	95	74.8	17	13.4
Educational Psychology	18	14.2	97	76.4	17	13.4
Sociological and Cultural Issues	68	54.4	46	36.8	11	8.8
Islamic Education	50	39.4	75	59.1	?	1.6
Teaching Methodology	87	68.5	40	31.5	-	-

A detailed breakdown of the components of the study programme was given in Chapter Six. The intention in this part of the questionnaire was to identify students' opinion about the weight given to each area. Regarding General Preparation courses, the majority of respondents believed that too much weight is given to

these, consistent with comments made in relation to the previous question.

Concerning the specialisation area, unlike the previous area, the majority of student teachers (59.8%) believed that the attention paid to this area is not enough. Supporting this view, the study plan gives this area only 29% of the timetable. This answer supports the impression (Table 29) that students believed the programme paid comparatively less attention to providing an adequate grounding in the academic specialisation.

In respect of General Educational Principles, the majority of students believed the attention paid to it is sufficient. The Educational Administration was seen by 74.8% to be adequately covered. Regarding Educational Psychology, 76.4% expressed their satisfaction with the time spent on it. These answers support the impression that students believed that the programme is oriented to the professional educational element (see Table 29)

The time devoted to Sociological and Cultural Issues was seen by more than half of the sample as not enough. Only 36.8% believed the time given to these is enough and very few, 8.8%, stated that the time is too much. Concerning Islamic Education, the majority of the sample believed that enough time is allocated. Teaching Methodology courses were seen by more than two thirds (68.5%) as not sufficient. Only 31.5% believed enough attention was paid to these, and no-one thought they received too much attention.

**Table 33: Need to add New Courses**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	77	60.6
No	50	39.4

According to the above table, 60.6% of students expressed their desire for new courses to be added to the programme. However, 39.4% disagreed with this idea. The first group was then asked, 'What courses do you think should be added?'

**Table 34: Courses to be Added**

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Main subject	33	42.9	1
Teaching aids	13	16.9	2
Special teaching methods	11	14.3	3
Computing	10	13.0%	4
Modern dictionaries	7	9.1	5
Holy Quran	3	3.9	6

As Table 34 shows, the main need expressed was for additional courses in the main subject specialisation, desired by 42.9% of respondents, again supporting the perception expressed in responses to earlier questions. Other suggestions were for added courses on Teaching aids, Special teaching methods, Computing, Modern dictionaries and the Holy Quran, suggested by 16.9%, 14.3, 13.0%, 9.1% and 3.9% of the students, respectively.

**Table 35: Reasons for Teaching the Extra courses**

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Is not given enough time	23	29.9	1
The weakness of the teachers in the main subject	18	23.4	2
To train student to design the necessary teaching aids	11	14.3	3
Its vital importance	9	11.7	4
Reduce the problems when teach at school	8	10.4	5
To facilitate learning process	8	10.4	5

When the 77 student teachers who suggested extra courses were asked to indicate why they felt these subjects should be added, 29.9%



of them indicated that the main reason was the weakness of teachers in the major subject. One informant said

**The teacher needs much information about his main subject because pupils in school expect the teacher to know a lot about what he delivers to them.**

Almost a quarter of the sample, 23.4%, believed that the suggested courses are not currently given sufficient time in the study plan. The need to train students in designing the necessary teaching aids was expressed by 14.3%. The remaining student teachers mentioned that other reasons were the vital importance of the suggested course (11.7%), to facilitate the learning process(10.4%) and to reduce problems when starting teaching (10.4%).

**Table 36: Reasons for Not Teaching the Extra Courses**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Inappropriate time table	28	36.4	1
The importance is not clear for the planners	21	27.3	2
The absence of continuous evaluation	13	16.9	3
Financial Problems	8	10.4	4
Centralisation of system	7	9.1	5

As shown in Table 36, 36.4% of the sample indicated that the main reason for not introducing the extra courses suggested is an inappropriate time table. That the importance of these courses is not clear to the planners, was given as the second most important reason, mentioned by 27.3% of the students. One student teacher put it:

**The student is the recipient of the programme but unfortunately there is no consultation with students about their needs. Accordingly, there are many subjects students need but their importance is not clear for the planners.**

The other reasons mentioned by the remaining student teachers were the absence of continuous evaluation, financial problems and centralisation of the system, mentioned by 16.9%,10.4% and 9.1% of the respondents respectively.



## **8.6. Facilities**

**Table 37: The Availability of Facilities in the Colleges**

Facility	Very adequate		Adequate		Adequate to some extent		Not adequate at all		Not provided		Not Answered
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Library	12	9.8	23	18.9	57	46.7	24	19.7	6	4.9	5
Audio visual aids	8	6.3	25	19.7	61	48.0	22	17.3	11	8.7	-
Recreational facilities	1	.8	4	3.1	41	32.3	36	28.3	45	35.4	-

In order to establish the position in teacher colleges regarding facilities, the sample were asked to indicate the availability of facilities in the colleges. Table 37 shows that in the case of library facilities, 28.7% found the facilities very adequate or adequate. Almost half, 48.0%, found them adequate but only 'to some extent' in the audio visual case. The level of satisfaction with recreational facilities, however, was perceived to be a less adequate; indeed 35.4% said they were not available at all. From the above, it appears that facilities at the colleges are somewhat limited, which is of particular concern, given that many students will have come from homes which are not well-equipped for study.

## **8.7. Teaching Practice**

**Table 38: Student Satisfaction with Organisation of Teaching Practice**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	19	15.3
Satisfied	48	38.7
Satisfied to some extent	47	37.9
Not satisfied at all	10	9.1

Not answered: 3

The achievement of the objectives of teaching practice depends to a large extent on the type of organisation implemented by the teacher training programme. When the sample were asked to indicate their

level of satisfaction with the organisation of teaching practice, it was found that more than half of the sample 54% were satisfied (very satisfied and satisfied), while 37.9% were satisfied to some extent and only 8.1% of them were not satisfied at all.

**Table 39: Student satisfaction with Time of Teaching Practice**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	17	13.5
Satisfied	44	34.9
Satisfied to some extent	50	39.7
Not satisfied at all	15	11.9

Not answered: 1

As has been explained in Chapter Six, the duration of teaching practice is one semester (sixteen weeks). The sample were asked to what extent they were satisfied with the time given to the teaching practice. According to the above table 48.8% were satisfied with the time allocated to the teaching practice (very satisfied and satisfied), the remainder being relatively dissatisfied (39.7% satisfied to some extent, and 11.9% not satisfied at all).

**Table 40: Student Satisfaction with Supervision in Teaching Practice**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	17	13.4
Satisfied	43	33.4
Satisfied to some extent	58	45.7
Not satisfied at all	9	7.1

The method of supervision in the teaching practice exercise was discussed in Chapter Six. The sample were asked, 'To what extent are you satisfied with the supervision of teaching practice?' From the responses in the above table, it can be seen that 46.8% were satisfied or very satisfied and over half of the sample either satisfied to some extent (45.7%), or not satisfied at all (7.1%).

**Table 41: The Number of Visits Paid to Arabic and Islamic student teachers during Teaching Practice**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Once	19	15.0
Two	39	30.7
Three and more	69	54.3

The data presented in Table 41 show that 54.3% of students had been visited by their supervisor three times or more, while 30.7% indicated that they had been visited by their supervisor twice. 15.0% had received only one visit. The regulations of the Teachers College do not specify the number of visits required; it is left to the supervisor's discretion (See Chapter Six). However, it should be noted that the data presented in the above table refer to the whole teaching practice period. In other words, 45.7% of the student teachers received only one or two visits, during the whole semester. This small number brings the effectiveness of supervision into question, especially when we remember the regulations give the school co-operating teacher no specific role in the supervision of teaching practice.

**Table 42: Student Opinion on the Adequacy of the Period of Observation**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	58	45.7
No	69	54.3

Teaching practice is a crucial experience for student teachers and they should be gradually guided into it. This can be accomplished by making arrangements for students to spend a period of time observing school teachers and pupils in different settings. Student teachers were asked if they thought that the teacher training programme provided them with enough observation before commencing teaching practice. According to the above table, 54.3% indicated that the period of observation is enough, but 45.7% found it insufficient.



**Table 43: Awareness of the Aims of Observation Period**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	83	65.4
No	44	34.6

In order to achieve the best objectives from observation activities, good planning is required. Unless the student is aware of the aims of the observation period, he might sit in the classroom watching, but not observing. When asked, two thirds of students (65.4%) said they were made aware of the aims of the observation period. However, 34.6% of the sample were sitting in the classroom having no idea about the purpose of this activity. Again, this brings the value of the observation period into question.

**Table 44: Students Told What to Observe during Observation Period**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	61	48.0
No	66	52.0

It is essential during the observation period to make sure that the student knows precisely what things to observe. Unfortunately, more than half of the sample (52%) were asked to observe lessons without specifying the aspects to be watched, while 48.0% indicated they were told what to look for in the classroom.

**Table 45: Students Told to Write Notes during Teaching Practice**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	53	41.7
No	74	58.3

To get the best out of the observation activity, student teachers should be asked to observe and to note down the various phases of the observation period, or to answer a set of questions concerning specific features of the activities watched. According to the above table, 58.3% of the respondents stated that they were not asked to



write anything down during teaching practice. The 41.7% who said they were asked to make notes were asked if they were given any guidance about what to write.

**Table 46: Guidance about What to Write**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	56.6
No	23	43.4

As Table 46 shows, 56.6% of the sample indicated that they had been given guidance about what to write. In other words, out of 127 student teachers, only 30 (23%) were given both clear instructions and guidelines about note-taking during observation.

**Table 47: Lessons Observed by Student Teacher**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	102	80.3
6-10	11	8.7
11-15	12	9.4
16-20	2	1.6

An examination of the data presented in the Table 46 shows that the great majority of student teachers (80.3%) had observed five lessons or less. Six to ten lessons, eleven to fifteen lessons or sixteen to twenty lessons had been observed by 8.7%, 9.4% and 1.6% of students respectively. There is no specification of the required number of lessons to be observed by students. The supervisor is given discretion to choose the appropriate number for each student. It is very obvious from the above table that most student teachers only observed a very limited number of lessons.

**Table 48: Discussion of Lessons Observed**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	81	63.8
No	46	36.2

Discussion of the lessons observed with the trainee helps to develop their ability to interpret and learn from what they have seen and can reveal training areas which must be given further attention. As the above table shows, 63.8% said they were able to discuss the lesson observed with teachers and 36.2% were not.

**Table 49: The Arrangements for Observation**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Observing one teacher with one class	26	20.5
Observing one teacher with more than one class	28	22.0
Observing more than one teacher with one class	28	22.0
Observing more than one teacher with more than one class	45	35.4

Arrangements for observation are very important. Again, the official regulation does not specify the method of observation arrangement. Student teachers were therefore asked how the observation period is arranged. According to the above table, arrangements were made for 35.4% of student teachers to observe more than one teacher with more than one class. The remaining student teachers observed more than one teacher with one class, one teacher with more than one class or one teacher with one class (22.0%, 22.0% and 20.5% respectively). It seems that for some students, then, observation may provide a very limited perspective on teaching strategies and opportunity to observe relatively few pupils.

**Table 50: Ways to Improve the Current Teaching Practice process**

Suggestion	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
School teachers must be given a role in teaching practice process	81	59.8	1
Introducing a split teaching practice in semester seven	76	55.9	2
Visiting school before starting the teaching practice.	71	55.9	2
Expanding the period of teaching practice to one year	71	55.1	4
Delegating supervisors who have had professional training	70	55.1	4
Observation period must be increased	69	54.3	6
Increase the number of teaching methods courses for major subject	65	51.2	7
School must be well chosen and co-operate with student teachers	63	49.8	8
Student must be allowed to check and mark the classroom work	62	48.6	9
The observation period must be under professional teachers	60	47.2	10
Provide student teachers with teaching aids during teaching practice.	57	44.9	11

The student teachers were asked to indicate any suggestions they might have as to how teaching practice could be improved. their suggestions are presented in Table 50, above. 63.8% of the sample indicated that school teachers should be given a role in teaching practice process. Many made comments on this issue, for example:

**I have been in the practice school more than six weeks and I have never seen any role for school teachers in my practice.**

Introducing a split teaching practice in semester seven, as well as the final teaching practice in the final semester was suggested by 59.8%. The need for visiting the school before teaching practice starts was indicated by 55.9%, suggesting that at least this number had not visited the practice school before their own teaching practice started. This highlights a shortcoming in the current teaching practice



programme. The length of teaching practice period is not enough according to the 55.9% of the sample. One student teacher said:

**Teaching practice period should be extended to one year.**

This suggestion supported the view that student teachers are not satisfied with the time allocated to teaching practice (see Table 39). As a result of the regulation that supervision must be under the responsibility of the academic department, it sometimes happens that trainers have a good academic background but lack the requisite profession training (See Chapter Six). 55.1% of the sample suggested that the supervisors should be professionally trained.

54.3% of the sample suggested that the observation period should be extended, which is consistent with the earlier impression that students are not very satisfied with the period of observation (see Table 42). Also, 47.2% pointed out that the teacher observed must be well chosen, and have professional ability. One respondent expressed his view by saying:

**Unless the teacher observed is a good professional, the observation is worthless.**

In relation to the methodology courses, there was a suggestion from 51.2% that their weight in the study plan should be increased. This suggestion supports the impression that student teachers found the time allocated to teaching methodology not enough (See Table. 32). The importance of a well chosen school which co-operates with student teachers was indicated by 49.6%. One informant said:

**It is impossible to achieve the objectives of teaching practice if the school has no desire to co-operate.**

48.8% of the sample suggested that students should be allowed to check and mark class work. This could be seen as an example of the kind of co-operation students desired from the



practice school. The lack of teaching aids in schools led some students to suggest that student teachers should be provided with teaching aids during teaching practice. In this regard, one student teacher said:

**My practice school lacks teaching aids and at the same time, I cannot afford to bring them for each lesson and class.**

## **8.8. Course Evaluation**

**Table 51: The Main Weaknesses in Academic Preparation**

<b>Aspects of Weakness</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Over-emphasis on general education	82	64.6%	1
The use of traditional methods in teaching	77	60.6	2
Lack of co-ordination between academic and education element	75	59.1%	3
Lack of good library	64	50.4	4
Less attention given to the main subject	55	43.3%	5
Too much theory	52	40.9%	6

In order to identify any weakness in academic preparation, student teachers were asked what they saw as problems in this regard.

The over emphasis on general education was considered by 64.5% as the main weakness in the academic preparation. This answer is consistent with answers given in response to earlier questions. The use of traditional methods was indicated by 60.6% as the main weakness in the academic preparation. One student commented:

**Teaching staff do not vary their way of teaching. They use the lecture method, which I dislike.**

Another said:

**I do not feel happy with the way of teaching because the teaching staff rely heavily on the lecture method with some discussion occasionally.**

59.1% of the sample stated that the lack of co-ordination between academic and education element is the major weakness in the academic preparation. The lack of library facilities was identified as a main weakness by 50.4% of the sample, supporting the impression given in Table 37. that students are only moderately satisfied with the present library facilities. 43.4% of the sample mentioned there is inadequate attention to the main subject and this is the main reason for the weakness of the academic preparation. Again, this is in line with responses to earlier questions. The course was also criticised as being too theoretical, by 40.9%. One informant commented:

**Theory predominates, rather than giving practice the right attention.**

**Table 52: The Main Strengths in Academic Preparation**

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
The comprehensive of the curriculum	73	57.5	1
The good connection in teaching subject with Quran and prophet tradition	70	55.1	2
The good background about different field	70	55.1%	2

As indicated in the above Table 52, students identified three strengths in the academic preparation. The comprehensiveness of the curriculum was stated by 57.5% of the sample. The good connection between teaching subjects and the Quran and prophet's tradition was mentioned by 55.1% of them, and the third strength was said to be the good background students receive in different fields, which may be due to the high weight given to general subject course. (See Chapter Six).

**Table 53: The Main Weaknesses in Education Preparation**

Aspect of Weakness	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Lack of field visits	74	58.3%	1
No feedback in educational element from my supervisor in teaching practice	72	56.7%	2
Weakness in co-ordination between school and college	69	54.3%	3
Time allocated to teaching practice is not enough	69	54.3%	3
Not enough observation period	65	51.2	5
The choice of practice school is not good	65	51.2	5
No idea about the pattern of evaluation	61	48.0	7
Too much theory	60	47.2	8
No linking between curricula in college and curricula in basic education.	58	45.7	9
No visiting school before practice	57	44.9	10
No involvement in school activities	55	43.3	11
Lack of teaching aids in school	48	37.8%	12
Allocating many students to one school	47	37.0	13
Students do not have a professional supervisor	44	34.6	14

Students were also asked what they considered to be the main weaknesses in their professional preparation.

According to the Table 53, 58.3% of the sample mentioned lack of field visits as the main weakness in the education preparation. Many student teachers noted this deficiency in one way or another, e.g.

**Since I started studying in this college I have not visited any educational organisation, not even my practice school; the first time I saw it was in the teaching practice programme.**

Lack of feedback from teaching practice supervisors was commented on by 56.7% of the sample. This answer supports the



suggestions made by some students that supervision should be delegated to a professional trainer (See Table 49) and the impression that students are not very satisfied with supervision (See Table 40). 54.3% of the respondents reported weakness in the co-ordination between school and college. The inadequacy of the period of teaching practice was identified by 54.3% as a main weakness, an answer which is consistent with the suggestion that the time for teaching practice should be extended to one year (see Table 52). 51.2%, reported that the main weakness is poor choice of practice school, and the inadequacy of the observation period was mentioned by 51.2% both answers being consistent with comments made in response to previous questions. Almost half of the respondents complained that they did not know what criteria were applied in evaluating teaching practice.

Too much theory was mentioned as a deficiency by 47.2% of respondents, a comment they had made previously in relation to academic preparation. The disconnection between curricula in school and in the Teachers' College was stated by 45.7% of the sample. Also, 44.9% of the sample indicated that there had been no visit to the school before starting in the teaching practice. 43.4% considered non-involvement in school activities to be the main weakness of the programme. A lack of teaching aids was reported by 37.8% of the sample, and this answer supported the suggestion of students that student teachers should be provided with teaching aids. 37.0% of the students stated that too many students are allocated to one school.

One student pointed out,

**There are more than fifteen students in one school and this makes it difficult to carry out all the different activities of a teacher.**



Finally, 34.6% complained of the lack of professional supervision, a response in line with the relatively low level of satisfaction with supervision (see Table 52) and their suggestion that supervision should be delegated to a professional trainer (See Table. 49).

**Table 54: The Main Strengths in Education Preparation**

<b>Aspects of Strengths</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
The good proportion of education components	94	74.0	1
Teaching practice	60	47.2	2
Teaching methods courses	52	40.0	3

According to the above table, the majority believed the main strength of educational preparation is the high weighting for educational subjects. However, Teaching practice and Teaching methods courses were also mentioned as strengths of the programme, by 47.2% and 40.9% of trainees, respectively.

**Table 55: Ways to improve the Current Teacher Training Programme**

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Revising the current curriculum	81	63.8%	1
Linking the course of professional preparation in college with curricula in basic education.	78	61.4%	2
Providing colleges and institutions with teaching aids.	77	60.6%	3
Some cuts should be made in general subjects	76	59.8%	4
The programme must include computers	73	57.5%	5
Increase the attention paid to sociological and cultural issues	73	57.5	5
More attention should be paid to the academic specialisation	61	48.0%	7
Provide a good library	59	46.5%	8
Linking between the academic element and education element	59	46.5%	9
Increase the number of teaching method courses for major subject	52	40.9	10
Well qualified trainers	49	38.6.9%	11
Student needs guidance and counselling.	36	28.3%	12
Reduce the number of education courses	36	28.3	13

The sample was asked to suggest measures to improve the current teacher training programme. The suggestions received are presented above (Table 55).

The suggestion most often made (63.8% of the sample) was revising the curriculum. 61.4% of the sample suggested linking the course of professional preparation in college and curricula in basic education. 60.0% of the sample repeated the point made earlier about providing colleges and institutions with teaching aids. One of the respondents said:

**There is a lack of teaching aids in my college and my practice school, so I cannot transfer my knowledge of teaching aids into practice.**

Cuts in the general education component were suggested by 59.8% of the sample, supporting the view expressed earlier that a major weakness in academic preparation is the over emphasis on general education (see Table 32). Computing does not form part of the current study plan, and 57.5% suggested it should be introduced. Again this supports an earlier finding (Table 54). 51.2% believed there could be some reduction in education courses. As one informant put it:

**Many education courses could be integrated with the other educational subjects and by this means, the number of courses would be reduced.**

48.0% of the sample suggested that more attention should be paid to the academic specialisation, which was consistent with earlier responses. Also, providing a good library was suggested by 46.5% of the sample, not surprisingly, in view of the relatively low level of satisfaction indicated earlier. 46.5% of the sample suggested that a link should be made between the academic and education elements of the course. Well qualified trainers were suggested by 42.5% and this suggestion emphasises the impression that students were not very satisfied with supervision (see Table 54). Increasing the methodology courses was suggested by 40.4% of the sample also, supporting the impression that students were not satisfied with the time allocated to the methodology courses (see Table 54). 38.6% of student teachers suggested the need for counselling and guidance. As one of them put it:

**This will reduce the problems which meet the student during his study.**



28.3% of the sample suggested more courses in Sociological and Cultural Issues, consistent with the earlier complaint that the attention paid to this subject is not enough (see Table 54).

## **8.9. Administration and Organisation**

**Table 56: Student Satisfaction with Organisation of the College**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	27	22.1
Satisfied	39	30.7
Satisfied to some extent	42	34.4
Not satisfied at all	14	11.5

Not Answered: 5

The organisation of the college is a very important part in achieving the goals. When the sample were asked to express their views about levels of satisfaction with the organisation of the college, it was found that 52.8% of the sample were satisfied (very satisfied + satisfied) while 34.4% were only satisfied to some extent, and 11.5% were not satisfied at all.

**Table 57: Student Satisfaction with Administration of the College**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	28	22.6
Satisfied	44	35.5
Satisfied to some extent	43	34.7
Not satisfied at all	9	7.3

Not Answered: 3

Views of the college administration were similar. 57.1% of the sample were satisfied or very satisfied with the administration of the college, while 34.7% were satisfied to some extent, and 7.3% were not satisfied at all.

**Table 58: Is there any Problem or Obstacle Hindering you from Achieving the Teacher Training Goals?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	61	48.0
No	66	52.0



Student teachers were asked to indicate if they faced any problem or obstacle which hindered them in the achievement of teacher training goals. According to the above table, 52.0% of the sample indicated that they had no problems or obstacles. However, 48.0% stated the opposite. This group was asked to give brief details of the problem(s) and obstacles(s) they had encountered.

**Table 59: The Problems and Obstacles which Hinder the Achievement of Teacher Training Goals**

<b>Problems or Obstacles</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
No co-operation from practice school	45	73.7	1
No good reaction from the college to students' suggestions	39	63.9	2
Examination system	38	62.2	3
No idea about practice school before starting	35	57.3%	4
The practice school is far from the college	33	54.8	5
No good library available	31	50.8	6
The traditional teaching method	22	36.0	7
The teaching practice period is not enough for students to gain the required experience	15	24.8	8

Students' responses indicated several problems and obstacles which hinder the achievement of teacher training goals. The main one mentioned was lack of co-operation from practice schools. Negative reaction to students' suggestions was considered by 63.9% of the sample as an obstacle which hindered them from achieving training goals. The method of student assessment (which is by examination only, see Chapter Six) was considered a problem by 62.2% of the group. A typical comment was:

**The examination system is the only way students are assessed and other methods are ignored so the concern of every student is not to gain the knowledge, but to pass the exam.**

Again, 57.3% students considered the absence of an early visit to the practice school before starting teaching practice as a problem. This point had earlier been mentioned by student teachers as a weakness in their educational preparation (see Table 58). Distance of the practice school from the college was identified as an obstacle by 54.8% of the sample, while 50.8% of the sample considered the poor library facilities to be an obstacle hindering them from achieving teacher training goals. It should be noted that students emphasised this point many times, when asked about lack of facilities (see Table 37) and as a weakness in academic preparation (see Table 50) and therefore, many suggestions were made regarding the need to provide a good library (see Table 54). The use of traditional methods of teaching, mentioned as a weakness in the academic preparation was mentioned here by 34.9% as a problem. The last problem or obstacle, mentioned by 23.8% of the students, was that the teaching practice period is not enough for students to gain the required experience, a view consistent with earlier calls for extending the period of teaching practice.

**Table 60: Student Satisfaction with Administration in Dealing with these Obstacles and Problems.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	-	-
Satisfied	12	19.4
Satisfied to some extent	24	38.1
Not satisfied at all	27	42.7

According to the above table, 42.9% of the sample were not at all satisfied with the Administration of the colleges in dealing with these obstacles and problems. 38.1% expressed their satisfaction to some extent, and only 19.4% of them expressed their satisfaction.



## **8.10. Summary of the Outcome of the Student Teacher**

### **Questionnaire:**

Most of the trainees surveyed were aged between 20 and 29 and the great majority had come from the Arts stream at Secondary School. Although the majority were studying the subject of their choice, for a quarter, the choice was determined by the college or by family pressure. The section of the questionnaire devoted to selection procedure revealed considerable inconsistency in implementation of the selection policy, and more than half of the students were either not satisfied with the procedure, or expressed only a low level of satisfaction. Perceptions of the duration of the programme varied. Around three quarters of the students found four years to be satisfactory, but there were advocates for decreasing it to three years, and a few in favour of extending it.

Only a moderate level of satisfaction was found with the curriculum. Students thought it paid less attention to the academic specialisation, compared with professional preparation and felt much of the general education component, especially science subjects, was irrelevant to their future needs. On the other hand, they suggested their needs were not being met in relation to their main subject. They suggested supplementary courses in such areas as teaching aids and computers also. Although financial constraints were mentioned by a few students, most blamed aspects of the programme's planning and administration for failure to provide the courses they felt they needed.

Facilities were not highly rated. The greatest deficiency was seen to be in recreational facilities, but libraries and audio visual aids also met with only a moderate level of satisfaction and in some cases were not available at all. Regarding teaching practice, again, satisfaction was only moderate. Many students found the duration insufficient and supervision inadequate. Many received no clear guidance regarding the aims of the observation period, or how they should undertake observation. The need for more observation and/or practice was reflected in a number of suggestions for improving practice, while other suggestions related to the need for the school to play a co-operative role. Evaluating the course overall, respondents repeated their earlier complaints regarding curricular imbalance and inadequate library facilities. They also suggested that the teaching methods used are too traditional, and that the course as a whole is too theoretical.



# Chapter Nine

## Teaching Staff' Questionnaire

### 9.1. Introduction

The views of teaching staff were sought in this study because they are actively involved in the training of prospective Arabic and Islamic teachers in the Teacher's Colleges, and are involved in the teaching practice exercise in the schools. This chapter presents the findings from the questionnaire survey of 346 teaching staff in Arabic, Islamic, and Education departments, concerning aspects of the training programme and other related issues.

### 9.2. General Information

**Table 61: Teaching Staff Distribution by Age**

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	29	8.6%
30-39	52	15.4%
40-49	120	35.6%
50-59	136	39.3%

Not Answered: 9

The study desired to explore the age distribution of teaching staff, because this might shed light on the experience of members of the profession, and have a bearing on their receptivity to new ideas. The above table shows that the largest group of the sample, 39.3%, fell within the range 50-59 years. This suggests that they have knowledge and expertise. Older people are often more resistant to change. Yet staff in this age group would still have time to develop new skills and implement new methods, given that the minimum age for retirement in Saudi Arabia is 65. 35.6% of the sample were in the of 40-49 category, while there were fewer staff in the younger age

groups of 30-29 (15.9%) and 30-39 (8.6%) who might be expected to be more flexible and open to change.

**Table 62: Academic Qualification of Teaching Staff**

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Ph.D.	265	78.2%
MA	54	15.9%
BA	20	5.9%

Not answered: 7

Academic qualification was investigated, based on the premise that the quality of teachers has a direct relationship to the quality of teaching received by students. As the above table clearly reveals, the majority of the sample had a Ph.D. qualification, reflecting a government policy of preferring Ph.D. graduates for appointment to college posts. At the same time, academic excellence in a field of study does not necessarily equip a person to go into the classroom and transmit his or her knowledge effectively. To be an effective educator requires both training and experience. The latter was explored in the next item of the questionnaire.

**Table 63: Teaching Staff Experience**

Stage	Nil		1-4		5-9		10-14		Not answered
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Elementary	263	76.0	62	17.9	20	5.8	1	.3	-
Intermediate	236	68.	82	23.7	18	5.2	4	2.0	3
Secondary	184	53.2	131	37.9	18	5.2	13	3.8	-
Present position	49	14.5	135	39.0	81	23.4	74	21.8	7

'Experience is the best teacher' is a well known adage. The aim of this question was to find out how long staff had been involved in the teaching process and at what level(s). Table 63 shows that the majority of the teachers had little experience at school level, particularly elementary level-the level at which they were training others to teach. This result was expected because in Saudi Arabia, it is common for graduates of Teachers' colleges or other colleges to go

straight into teaching at the teacher's college, without spending time at the school level. Also, the government offers incentives (e.g. by scholarship) for teaching staff to study for their higher degrees in order to fulfil the appointment criteria, which focus on the academic element and neglect the experience factor. If lecturers had more experience at school level, they would be aware of the problems of teaching Arabic and Islamic subjects, and student teachers could gain from their experience.

### **9.3. Admission**

**Table 64: Admission Procures**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Examination	44	12.8%
Interview	51	14.8%
High Grade	65	18.8%
All of them	124	35.9%
Interview and High Grade	29	8.4%
Examination and Interview	32	9.3%

Not answered: 1

When teaching staff were asked how far the admission criteria mentioned in chapter six are implemented, only 35.9% pointed to use of all three criteria (examination, interview, high grade) mentioned in the regulation, while the remaining teaching staff mentioned various other criteria or combinations of them. In other words, almost two thirds of the sample used procedures other than that stipulated.

**Table 65: Teaching' Staff Satisfaction with the Admission Procures**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	131	38.0%
Satisfied	171	49.4%
Satisfied to some extent	33	9.6%
Not satisfied at all	10	2.9%

Not answered: 1

When the sample were asked about their satisfaction with the admission procedure, the majority of them expressed their



satisfaction (very satisfied + satisfied); relatively few were satisfied to a lesser extent(9.6%) or not at all( 2.9%).

#### **9.4. Duration**

**Table 66: Teaching Staff Satisfaction with Duration**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Not enough	17	4.9%
Enough	284	82.1%
Very long	45	13.0%

The duration of a teacher training programme is a very important element in its success. The majority of the respondents believed that the present duration of the programme is appropriate, and there were more who felt it is too long than who felt it is too short. Those who were not happy with the present duration were asked to suggest an alternative.

**Table 67: The Suggested Duration**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Three years	45	73.8
Five	16	26.2

Table 67 shows that the majority of this group, 73.8%, suggested reducing the duration to three years. Sixteen teaching staff (26.7%) suggested extending the duration to five years.

#### **9.5. The Teacher Training Curriculum.**

**Table 68: Planning the College Curriculum**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
College committee	50	14.6%
Teaching staff	71	20.5%
Ministry of Education	149	43.1%
All of them	34	9.8%
Teaching staff+ Ministry of Education	38	11.1%

Not Answered: 4

When asked who is in charge of planning the curriculum, 43.1% of the sample stated it is the Ministry of Education. However, 20.5% of them indicated teaching staff carry out the job. The remainder



indicated the College Committee or various combinations of the aforementioned groups.

**Table 69: Teaching Staff Input into the Planning of the Curriculum**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	13.6%
No	293	84.7%

Not Answered: 7

With respect to participation in the planning and development of teacher training curriculum, only 13.6% of teaching staff indicated that they were personally involved. Thus, most were teaching a curriculum into which they had no input. In view of this, it is interesting to find that their satisfaction with the curriculum was only moderate (see Table 69).

**Table 70: Teaching Staff Satisfaction with the Teacher Training Curriculum**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	30	8.9%
Satisfied	95	28.3%
Satisfied to some extent	152	45.2%
Not satisfied at all	59	17.6%

Not Answered: 10

62.8.% of the respondents were satisfied only to some extent or not satisfied all, while only 37.2% only expressed clear satisfaction (very satisfied + satisfied).

**Table 71: The Orientation of the Present Teacher Training programme**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Provides the student teacher with an adequate knowledge of his academic specialisation	32	9.5%
Provides the student teacher with professional teaching skills	87	25.9%
Provides both of these	211	61.0%
Neither	6	1.8%

Not Answered: 10

The certificate awarded by the teachers' colleges, which amounts to a licence to teach in elementary school, implies that the student has

been equipped with a solid background in his academic specialisation and teaching skills. The majority of staff (61.1%) believed that the present teacher training curriculum does in fact, provide the student teacher with both areas of expertise. Those who found the programme oriented to one area or the other, were more inclined to see it as oriented to teaching skills than to the academic specialisation.

**Table 72: Some of Curriculum Content Unrelated to Students' Future Work**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	214	61.8%
No	132	38.2%

Regarding the relevance of different subjects in the programme to students' future work as teachers, 61.8% of teaching staff surveyed, believed that the problem of irrelevance exists (Table 72). When asked which topics they considered irrelevant, they mentioned four specific subjects, all from the general education part of the course; indeed, the majority, 62.6% of teaching staff summarised their view by saying that many courses in general education are irrelevant. As indicated in Chapter Eight, this can be seen as reflecting an earlier concern for colleges to produce general subject teachers, and a failure to up-date the curriculum in the light of changes in the school system.

**Table 73: Irrelevant Topics**

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Many Courses in general Education	134	62.6%	1
Math	29	13.6%	2
Chemistry	21	9.8%	3
Physic	17	7.9%	4
Biology	13	6.1%	5

**Table 74: Teaching Staff Satisfaction with the Amount of Attention Paid to each of Area of the Programme**

Area	Not enough		Enough		Too much		Not Answered
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
General Preparation	23	6.7	73	21.1	248	72.1	2
Specialisation (Islam, Arabic Studies)	236	68.2	70	20.2	40	11.6	-
General Educational Principles	24	7.4	176	54.3	124	38.3	22
Educational Administration	59	17.3	208	60.1	75	21.9	4
Educational Psychology	29	8.4	255	73.7	62	17.9	-
Sociological and Cultural Issues	65	18.8	228	65.9	53	15.3	-
Islamic Education	122	35.5	193	56.1	29	8.4	2
Teaching Methodology	187	54.8	102	29.9	52	15.2	5

In the light of the previous result, it is not surprising that, when asked their opinions of the weight given to each area of the curriculum the majority indicated that too much weight is given to general preparation courses (see Table 74). This was the only element of the programme that teachers generally found to be excessively weighted. In contrast, the majority of teaching staff (68.2%) believed that the attention paid to the academic specialism is not enough.

General Educational Principles, Educational Administration and Educational Psychology, were all considered to be adequately covered, but Teaching Methodology coverage was less highly rated. The time devoted to Sociological and Cultural Issues was seen by 65.9 % of the sample as enough, and over half the teachers were satisfied with the time given to Islamic Education, though over a third would have liked more time to be allocated to it.

**Table 75: Need for More Courses**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	143	41.3%
No	203	58.7%



According to the above table, 41.3% of teaching staff expressed their desire for new courses to be added to the programme. However, 58.7% disagreed with this idea. The first group was asked, 'What courses do you think should be added?'

**Table 76: Courses to be Added**

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Main Subject	42	28.4	1
Holy Quran	26	17.6	2
Research skills	22	14.9	3
Computer	19	12.8	4
Linguistic curriculum	18	12.2	5
Micro teaching	18	12.2	5
Citizen education	10	6.8	7

As Table 76 shows, the main need expressed was for additional courses in the main subject specialisation, desired by 28.4% of respondents, again supporting the perception expressed in responses to earlier questions. Other suggestions were for added courses on Holy Quran, Research skills, Computer, Linguistic curriculum, Micro teaching, and Citizen education, suggested by 17.6%, 14.9, 12.8%, 12.2%, 12.2% and 6.8% of the teaching staff, respectively.

**Table 77: Reasons for Teaching Extra Courses Suggested**

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Is not given enough time	50	33.8	1
The weakness of teachers in their major subject	31	20.9	2
Train students in research skills	24	16.2	3
To increase their teaching skills	17	11.5	4
It is very important subject	16	10.8	5
To implant the love of country in the soul of students	10	6.8	6

When the teaching staff who suggested extra courses were asked to indicate why they felt these subjects should be added, 33.8% of them



indicated that the main reason was that the suggested courses are not currently given sufficient time in the study plan. One informant said:

**Lots of these subjects have been mentioned in one way or another, but there is a problem of lack of available time**

20.9% of the sample believed that the main reason was the weakness of teachers in the major subject. While most of the reasons for the course suggestions were practical, one was ideological. It was suggested that citizen education is needed to implant the love of their country in the students' souls (6.8%).

**Table 78: Reasons for Not Teaching Extra Courses Suggested**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
The importance is not clear for the planners	48	32.4%	1
Inappropriate time table	48	32.4%	1
The absence of continuous evaluation	43	29.1%	3
Financial Problems	9	6.1%	4

As shown in Table 78, 32.4%% of the sample indicated that the main reason for not introducing the extra courses suggested is that their importance is not clear for the planners,. One teacher said:

**Students need such courses and the teaching staff who are the people in the education process closest to students recognise these needs, whereas the planners cannot know a lot of their problems because they are not in the practical field. Unfortunately, the role of teachers in curriculum affairs is to teach the prescribed syllabus to the learners, without involvement in curriculum development.**

An inappropriate time table was mentioned as the other main reasons for not introducing new courses. The other reasons mentioned by the remaining student teachers were the absence of

continuous evaluation and financial problems mentioned by 29.1%, and 6.1% of the respondents respectively.

## **9.6. Facilities and Teaching Methods**

**Table 79: Teaching Staff' Opinions on the Availability of Facilities**

Facility	Very adequate		Adequate		Adequate to some extent		Not adequate at all		Not provided		Not Answered
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Library	41	12.	74	22.3	158	47.6	59	17.8			14
Audio visual aids	25	7.4	18	5.3	188	55.	80	23.7	27	8.0	8
Recreational facilities	29	8.4	21	6.1	115	33.2	112	32.4	69	19.9	-

To help to establish the position in teacher colleges regarding facilities, the sample were asked to indicate the availability of facilities in their colleges. Library facilities were highest rated, with 47.6% finding them adequate to some extent and around a quarter rating them more highly than this. The majority (55%) found Audio visual aids adequate but only 'to some extent'; fewer people rated them adequate or above, than did for libraries, and more found them totally inadequate. Recreational facilities, however, were perceived to be the least adequate facilities, with almost a third of the sample rating not adequate at all, and 19.9% saying they were not available. These results show a moderate level of satisfaction with facilities at the colleges, but there are indications that both study and recreational facilities need to be up-graded.

**Table 80: Teaching Methods Used**

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Lecture	219	63.3%	1
Discussion	236	68.2%	3
Question	146	47.4%	2
Demonstration	85	24.6%	4

A wide range of teaching methods can be used to prepare effective teachers. In view of this, teaching staff were asked about the teaching methods and training techniques they used. As Table 80 shows, lecture and discussion are the main techniques used by teaching staff, though almost half claimed to use questioning. Less than a quarter used demonstration. The continued use of traditional instruction by teaching staff might be attributed to the following factors:

1. The lack of facilities including teaching materials and visual aids. (see Table 79)
2. Some teaching staff have no background in pedagogy or teaching practice in other words, they themselves are not qualified teachers.
3. They have no knowledge of other instructional techniques because of the lack of in-service training. Consequently, they are most likely to rely on the traditional approach, by which they themselves were taught.

## **9.7. Teaching Practice**

**Table 81: Involvement in Supervision of Arabic and Islamic Student Teachers in Teaching Practice**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	82	23.7
No	264	76.3

In respect of supervision of teaching practice, the majority of the sample, 76.3%, reported they were not involved in this aspect of teacher training.

**Table 82: Teaching Staff Satisfaction with the Organisation of Teaching Practice**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	15	18.3
Satisfied	43	52.4
Satisfied to some extent	15	18.3
Not satisfied at all	9	11.0



When the sample were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the organisation of teaching practice, it was found that more than half of the sample 52.4%, were satisfied and a little less than a fifth were very satisfied. However, this still leaves a significant minority who were satisfied only to some extent or not satisfied at all.

**Table 83: Teaching Staff Satisfaction with the Time Allocated to Teaching Practice**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	16	19.5
Satisfied	25	30.5
Satisfied to some extent	32	39.0
Not satisfied at all	9	11.0

As has been explained in Chapter Six, the duration of teaching practice is one semester. The sample were asked to what extent they were satisfied with the time given to the teaching practice. According to the above table, 50.0% were satisfied with the time allocated to the teaching practice (very satisfied and satisfied), the remainder being relatively dissatisfied (39.0% satisfied to some extent, and 11.0% not satisfied at all)

**Table 84: Teaching Staff Satisfaction with the Supervision in Teaching Practice**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	14	19.5
Satisfied	25	30.5
Satisfied to some extent	32	39.0
Not satisfied at all	9	11.0

Regarding the method of supervision of the teaching practice, a moderate degree of satisfaction was expressed. Half the supervisors were satisfied or very satisfied, and the other half either satisfied to some extent (39.0%), or not satisfied at all (11.0%).



**Table 85: Number of Students Supervised**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
1-5	56	68.3	1
6-10	13	15.9	2
11-15	8	9.8	3
21+	5	6.1	4

Chapter Six pointed out that teaching practice supervision does not involve the school teacher or head teacher at all. Those staff involved in supervision were requested to indicate the number of Arabic and Islamic student teachers supervised by them in the academic year 1995-1996. Table 85 reveals that a few supervisors were charged with supervision a large number of Arabic and Islamic student teachers during teaching practice. However, the majority, 68.3%, undertook supervision of groups that ranged in size from one to six.

In view of the above figure it could be concluded that the majority of the supervisors were not unduly burdened by the number of Arabic and Islamic student teachers for whom they were responsible during teaching practice. However, it is important to take into consideration the following points:

1. Arabic and Islamic supervisors have other commitments, e.g., teaching courses in different departments in Teachers' colleges.
2. The Arabic and Islamic student teachers in practice school are not involved in the supervision of Arabic and Islamic student teachers. In other words, no teacher-tutor scheme has as yet been implemented in the Teachers' Colleges.

**Table 86: Number of Visits Paid by Supervisor to Each Student**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
One	3	3.7
Two	13	15.9
Three and more	66	80.5

The data presented in Table 86 show that 80.5% of supervisor visited their student teachers three times or more, while 15.9% indicated that they visited their student teachers twice. Very few supervisors 3.7% had paid only one visit.

However, even three visits is not a particularly large number to cover a teaching practice and it is cause for concern that some students received only one or two visits.

**Table 87: Discussing the Arrangement of Teaching Practice with Practice School**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	69	86.3
No	11	13.8

The main task of the teacher training programme is not only to educate and train student teachers, but also to prepare the ground for them in school so as to create an appropriate atmosphere and, as far as possible, to maintain a balance between what should happen ideally and what the school feels it can provide. Meeting between the teaching staff of both the training college and the practice school to discuss the process of teaching practice is certainly desirable. In such meetings, the aims and problems of teaching practice could be discussed and further suggestions made, agreed upon and implemented. Trainers were asked 'Did you discuss the arrangement/requirements of the teaching practice?'. Table 87 indicates that the great majority (86.3%) of the supervisors discussed arrangements and requirements for teaching practice, with the school.

**Table 88: Arrangement for Activities Other than Classroom Observation and Teaching**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	49	59.8
No	33	40.2

Regarding the activities in which they arranged for students to participate, 59.8% of the supervisors stated that they made arrangements for activities other than classroom observation and teaching. However, the fact that 40.2% did not, means their trainees are deprived of useful experience. This may be because the administrative responsibilities which are considered suitable to be carried out by student teachers are very limited. Also, the range of out of classroom activities, such as sports, arts, etc., differs from one school to another. Therefore, the opportunities available to students to participate vary considerably. Supervisors who did arrange extra activities for their student teachers were asked to indicate the nature of those activities.

**Table 89: Extra Activities and Responsibilities  
by Student Teachers**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Supervision of and participation in school celebration, publications and broadcasting programmes	20	28.6	1
Supervision of pupils in the corridor, during playground activities, morning assembly, etc.	17	24.3	2
Both of them	33	47.1	3

Among the supervisors who arranged activities outside the classroom activities, 47.1% of them indicated that students supervised and participated in school celebrations, publications and broadcasting programmes, and supervised pupils in the corridor, during playground activities and morning assembly. Other supervisors arranged for trainees to be involved in only one or other of these areas.



**Table 90: Criteria Used in Assessing Student Teachers**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
preparation of the lesson	47	57.3	1
evaluation card	35	42.7	2
student personality and appearance	33	40.2	3
relation and participation	33	40.2	3
presentation of the lesson	29	35.4	5
using teaching aids.	23	28.0	6
fluency in Arabic language spoke and write	19	23.2	7
student involvement in the activities	18	22.0	8
student success in achieving the objectives of lessons	18	22.0	8

The supervisors were asked to list the criteria that they used to assess student teachers. The answers obtained appear in rank order in the above table. It appears from the response of the supervisors that the main criteria are:

1. preparation of the lesson
2. evaluation card
3. student personality and appearance
4. relationships and participation
5. presentation of the lesson
6. using teaching aids
7. fluency in Arabic language, spoken and written
8. students' involvement in the activities
9. students' success in achieving the objectives of lessons

From these responses, a number of general observations can be made, namely

1. A wide range of criteria was reported by the supervisors. Some criteria were not mentioned at all by the supervisors, and others referred to by a limited number only. Again, the supervisors listed some criteria in detail but mentioned others in general terms only. The differences could be the result of the lack of professional training.



2. Although student involvement in school activities is an important experience, which should be taken into account in the assessment of the student, nevertheless this criterion was overlooked by the majority of the supervisors.

3. Comparing the assessment criteria laid down by the Ministry of Education with those reported by the supervisors, one finds that most supervisors did not apply the official criteria. The evidence shows that the supervisors applied other criteria to those contained in the official instrument (see Chapter Six).

The official assessment instrument was established some years ago, and has not witnessed any improvement subsequently despite the weaknesses which limit its value. This has caused supervisors to establish their own criteria, which include some of the official criteria, plus others derived from their own teaching experience, and their perceptions of the good teacher and of effective teaching.

**Table 91: Are Student Teachers Aware of the Intending Assessment Criteria Used in Assessing Their Teaching?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	85.4
No	12	14.6

Table 91 reveals that the overwhelming majority of the supervisors claimed that they had made student teachers aware of the assessment criteria used by them. Only 14.6% of the supervisors did not carry out this procedure.

**Table 92: Methods of Communicating Criteria to Students**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Verbally	20	28.6
Handouts, c.g. (students' handbooks, duplicated notes, etc.)	17	24.3
Both of them	33	47.1

It appears clearly from Table 92 that 47.1% of the supervisors informed the student teachers of their assessment criteria verbally and by handout. The remaining supervisors communicated by one of these methods only. It seems that there were a number of factors that might have caused some supervisors to rely on the oral method in informing students about the assessment criteria. Among these factors are:

1. The official assessment criteria established by the Ministry of Education are not widely enforced by teachers colleges.
2. Standardised statements of assessment criteria are not issued . Others are devised by Teachers Colleges in substitution for the official one.
3. The supervisors are not officially required to provide student teachers with copies of their assessments or reports

**Table 93: Ways to Improve the Current Teaching Practice**

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
School teachers must be given a role in teaching practice process	65	79.3	1
The ministry must encourage schools to be more co-operative	61	74.4	2
Using micro-teaching before teaching practice	55	67.1	3
Observation period must be increased.	52	63.4	4
Delegating supervisors who had professional training.	50	61.0	5
Encouraging students to be involved in school activities	50	61.0	5
Expanding the period of teaching practice to one year	35	42.7	7
Reduce the number of student teachers in school	35	42.7	7
Introducing a split teaching practice in semester seven	18	22.0	9

The teaching staff were asked to indicate any suggestions they might have as to how teaching practice could be improved. Their suggestions are presented in the above Table 93. 79.3% of the sample



indicated that school teachers should be given a role in the teaching practice process. Many made comments on this issue, for example **The college supervisor cannot provide student teachers with everything because he has other commitments in the college and with other students; accordingly, the only solution is for the school teacher to join in the supervision process**

That the Ministry should encourage schools to be more co-operative was suggested by 59.8%. The need for visiting the school before teaching practice starts was indicated by 74.4%, suggesting using micro-teaching before teaching practice was identified by 67.1% of them. One of them put it:

**by micro-teaching student will be prepared for actual teaching practice instead of moving to the school and classroom.**

This highlights a shortcoming in the current teaching practice programme. The length of the observation period must be increased not enough according to the 63.4% of the sample. This suggestion supported the view of many of teaching staff who are not satisfied with the time allocated to teaching practice (see Table 93).

As a result of the regulation that supervision must be under the responsibility of the academic department, it sometimes happens that trainers have a good academic background but lack the requisite professional training (see Chapter Six). 61.0% of the sample suggested that the supervisors should be professionally trained. 61.0% of the sample suggested encouraging students to be involved in school activities. Also, the length of teaching practice is not enough, according to 42.7% of the sample. This suggestion supported the view that teaching staff are not satisfied with the time allocated to teaching practice (see Table 82). Finally, 22.0% of the sample

suggested introducing a split teaching practice in semester seven, as well as the final teaching practice in the final semester.

## **9.8. Course Evaluation**

**Table 94: The Main Weaknesses in Academic Preparation**

<b>Aspect of Weakness</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
over-emphasis on the general education	211	61.0	1
Less attention given to the main subject	202	58.4	2
Too much theory	167	48.3	3
Lack of co-ordination and integration between academic and educational element	165	47.7	4
Lack of good library	163	47.1	5
Lack guiding principles and clearly defined objectives	80	23.1	6
Weakness in student teacher ability in research skills	63	18.2	7

In order to identify any weaknesses in academic preparation, teaching staff were asked what they saw as problems in this regard.

The over-emphasis on general education was considered by 61.0% as the main weakness in the academic preparation. This answer is consistent with answers given in response to earlier questions. 58.4% of the sample mentioned there is inadequate attention to the main subject and this is the main reason for the weakness of the academic preparation. Again, this is in line with responses to earlier questions. The course was also criticised as being too theoretical, by 48.3%. One informant commented:

**The study plan for each course does not allow teaching staff to give the practical aspect its right place in the course, as we have the responsibility to finish the study scheme for each course, which gives theory the upper hand.**

47.7% of the sample stated that the lack of co-ordination between academic and education elements is the major weakness in the academic preparation. The lack of library facilities was identified as a main weakness by 47.1% of



the sample, supporting the impression given in Table 79 that teaching staff are only moderately satisfied with the present library facilities. 23.1% of the sample indicated a lack guiding principles and clearly defined objectives. 18.2% of the sample mentioned there weakness in student teachers' research skills which hampers their academic preparation. This is consistent with an earlier suggestion that a course on research skills should be added to the study plan (see Table 76).

**Table 95: The Main Strengths in Academic Preparation**

<b>Aspect of Strength</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
The comprehensivnees of the curriculum	202	58.4	1
The good background about different fields	152	43.9	2
The good connection in teaching subject with Quran and prophet's traditional	122	35.3	3
Quality of staff	48	13.9	4

As indicated in the above table. 95, teaching staff identified four strengths in the academic preparation. The comprehensiveness of the curriculum was stated by 58.4% of the sample. The good background students receive in different fields was mentioned by 43.9%, which may be due to the high weight given to general subject courses. (see Chapter Six) The good connection between teaching subjects and the Quran and prophet's tradition was mentioned by 35.3% of them, and the fourth strength was said to be quality of staff, indicated by only 13.9%.

**Table 96: The Main Weaknesses in Educational Preparation**

<b>Aspect of Weakness</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Lack of field visit	170	49.1	1
Too much theory	166	48.0	2
Assigning student to no professional supervisor	142	41.0	3
The educational subjects are not connected with the situation in schools	137	39.6	4
Inadequacy of courses in teaching methods for major subject	119	34.4	5
Time allocated to teaching practice is not enough	93	26.9	6
Not enough observation period	67	19.4	7
Large number of students with each supervisor	53	15.3	8
Lack of co-operation from school	53	15.3	8
Assessment card	47	13.6	10
No role for school teacher in teaching practice programme	34	9.8	11

Teaching staff were also asked what they considered to be the main weaknesses in trainees' professional preparation. According to Table 96, 49.1% of the sample mentioned lack of field visits as the main weakness.

Many teaching staff noted this deficiency, e.g.

**The study plan does not give attention to this aspect. There are specific plans and times for the courses, and so any other aspect of the course, such as field work, cannot be provided unless the time and plan is expanded to include them.**

Again, the professional preparation was criticised by 48.0% as being too theoretical. This answer supported the previous comment on the lack of field visits. The lack of professional supervision was identified by 41.0%, a response in line with the opinions of some supervisors who had low level of satisfaction with supervision (see Table 84) and their suggestion that supervision should be delegated to a professional trainer. One informant said:

**The reason behind this weakness that the majority of supervisors are qualified in academic aspect and they are not professional trainers. Our qualifications is in the subject itself not in the way**

**of preparing teachers for this subject, or the proper teaching methods for this subject.**

It was pointed out earlier that the regulations require the supervisor to hold a PhD, or at least a Master's degree, in the student teacher's major subjects, in this case, Arabic or Islamic studies. Knowledge or experience in education as a discipline in its own right appears to have been a low priority, recently as regards the situation of teaching staff in teachers' colleges. Other criticisms were that educational subjects are not connected with the situation in schools, was commented on by 39.6% of the sample, and inadequacy in teaching methods courses for the major subject. Consistent with responses to earlier questions, the inadequacy of the period of teaching practice was identified by 26.9% as a main weakness and that of the observation period was mentioned by 19.4%. This may be because the regulations make no specific stipulation on this matter.

The large number of students with each supervisor was mentioned by only 15.3% of supervisors. However, when supervisors were requested to indicate the number of Arabic and Islamic student teachers supervised by them in the academic year 1995-1996, it was found that that few were charged with supervision of more than five students, so this comment may have reflected the views of a few over-burdened supervisors. The absence of the school teacher in the training process was indicated by only 9.8% of the sample. However, it is worth recalling that 79.3 % of teaching staff had earlier suggested that the way to improve the teaching practice process is to give the school teacher his proper role (see Table 93).



**Table 97: The Main Strength in Educational Preparation**

Aspect of Strength	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
The good portion for education component	251	72.5	1
Teaching practice	158	54.3	2

According to the above table, the majority believed the main strength of educational preparation is the high weighting for educational subjects. However, teaching practice was also mentioned as a strength of the programme, by 54.32%.

**Table 98: Ways to Improve the Current Teacher Training Programme**

Suggestion	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Some cuts should be made in general subject	244	70.5	1
Revising the current curriculum	204	59.0	2
Linking between the academic element and education element	195	56.4	3
Linking between the course of professional preparation in college and curricular in basic education	188	54.3	4
Supplying the college and practice school with necessary teaching aids	184	53.2	5
The programme should have guiding principle and clearly defined objectives	132	38.2	6
The number of methodology courses should be increased	119	34.4	7
Reduce the number of education courses	132	33.8	8
Provide good library	116	33.5	9
Co-operation must be established between different departments	111	32.1	10
More attention to admission procedure	106	30.6	11
The programme must include computer subject	67	19.4	12
Micro teaching should be added in the programme	52	15.0	13
The duration of the programme should be increased	47	13.6	14

The sample was asked to suggest measures to improve the current teacher training programme. The suggestions received are presented in the above Table (98).



The suggestion most often made (70.5% of the sample) was that some cut should be made in general subjects. This answer is consistent with answers given in response to earlier questions. The need for linkage between the academic element and education element was pointed out by 56.4%, while 59.0% of the sample suggested revising the current curriculum. Linking the course of professional preparation in college to curricula in basic education was suggested by 45.3%, a suggestion which supports the opinion of teaching staff that there is no connection between educational subjects and the situation in schools (see Table 98)

The need to supply the college and practice school with necessary teaching aids was indicated by 53.2%. One respondent said:

**No teaching aids are available for teaching staff in the college or for student teachers in the school. Accordingly, some students bring them themselves, while the majority do not use teaching aids during their training.**

38.2% of the sample commented that the programme needs guiding principles and clearly defined objectives, a view obviously related to suggestions made earlier by some teaching staff that the programme at present lacks these (see Table 98). In relation to the methodology courses, there was a suggestion from 34.4% that their weight in the study plan should be increased. This suggestion supports the impression that teaching staff found the time allocated to teaching methodology not enough (see Table 98). 33.8% of the sample suggested reduction in the number of education courses. One of teacher staff put it:

**Many courses could be integrated into other courses instead of separating some subjects as whole courses.**

Also, providing a good library was suggested by 33.5% of the sample, not surprisingly, in view of the relatively low level of satisfaction indicated earlier. Co-operation must be established between different departments, according to 32.1% of the teachers. 30.6% suggested a need to pay more attention to the admission procedure. Computing does not form part of the current study plan, and 19.4% suggested it should be introduced. Again this supports an earlier finding (Table. 76). That micro teaching should be added to the programme was mentioned by 15.0%. Also, this supports an earlier finding. 13.6% of the sample suggested that the duration of the programme should be increased. However, the majority of the teaching staff had earlier expressed their satisfaction with the duration of the course (Table 66).

## **9.9. Administration and Organisation**

**Table 99: Teaching Staff satisfaction with organisation of the college**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	113	32.7
Satisfied	149	43.1
Satisfied to some extent	71	20.5
Not satisfied at all	13	3.8

The organisation of the college is a very important part in achieving the goals. When the sample were asked to express their views about levels of satisfaction with the organisation of the college, it was found that 75.8% of the sample were satisfied (very satisfied + satisfied) while 20.5% were only satisfied to some extent, and 3.8% were not satisfied at all.

**Table 100: Teaching Staff satisfaction with administration of the college**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	111	32.1
Satisfied	119	34.4
Satisfied to some extent	113	32.7
Not satisfied at all	3	.9

These views of the college administration were similar. 66.51% of the sample were satisfied or very satisfied with the administration of the college, while 32.7% were satisfied to some extent, and three teaching staff, 9%, were not satisfied at all.

**Table 101: Is There any Problem or Obstacle Hindering you from Implementing the Teacher Training Goals?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	203	58.7
No	143	41.3

Teaching staff were asked to indicate if they faced any problem or obstacle which hindered them in the achievement of teacher training goals. According to the above table, 58.7% of the sample indicated that they had no problems or obstacles. However, 41.3% stated the opposite. This group was asked to give brief details of the problem(s) and obstacles(s) they had encountered.

**Table 102: Problems and Obstacles which hinder the Achievement of Teacher Training Goals**

problem or obstacle	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Lack of visual aids in the college	144	70.9	1
No co-operation between different departments	101	49.8	2
Not enough co-operation from school	85	41.9	3
Lack of seminars and scientific journals	51	25.1	4
Lack of period teaching practice component	20	9.9	5
Short time of the course	11	5.4	6

Teaching staff responses indicated several problems and obstacles which hinder the achievement of teacher training goals. The main one mentioned was lack of visual aids in the college. Lack of co-operation between different departments was indicated by 49.8%. 41.9% of the sample



indicated that there is lack of co-operation from practice schools. Lack of seminars and scientific journals was considered as problem by 25.1% of the sample. One of the teaching staff said:

**The way to improve the ability of teachers is to give them the opportunity to show their products such as by organising seminars or publishing a journal. Unfortunately this is not taken into consideration in teachers' colleges.**

The short time allocated to teaching practice was considered by 9.9% of the sample as a problem facing the present teacher training programme. One informant said:

**It is hard for supervisors to make student teachers pass the different aspects of teaching practice in one semester. The best solution to avoid this problem would be to extend the period so that the supervisors can benefit student teachers more**

The last problem or obstacle mentioned by 5.4% of the teaching staff was the short length of time of the course. However, as reflected in an earlier answer, the majority of teaching staff believe the time allocated to the teacher training programme is enough (see Table 66).

**Table 103: Teaching Staff Satisfaction with Administration in Dealing with These Obstacles and Problems**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied		
Satisfied		
Satisfied to some extent	99	49.0
Not satisfied at all	103	51.0

According to the above table, 51.0% of the sample were not at all satisfied with the College Administration's performance in dealing with these obstacles and problems and the remainder were satisfied only to some extent. Thus, there appears to be some inconsistency between the views expressed here and those expressed in Table 100.



## **9.10. Summary of the Outcome of the Teaching Staff**

### **Questionnaire:**

The majority of the staff surveyed were over 40 and highly qualified academically, but lacked experience in schools, particularly at elementary level.

Regarding admissions, there was considerable inconsistency of practice, with some two thirds of the staff failing to implement the official admission criteria, yet the majority expressed satisfaction with this situation.

More than 80% were satisfied with the duration of the course.

Reports as to who is responsible for curriculum planning were inconsistent, but the main agency was said to be the Ministry of Education. Staff expressed moderate satisfaction with the curriculum and most thought it provided both a good background in the academic specialism, and teaching skills. However, they found some courses in general education irrelevant to students' needs. Several new courses were suggested, from additional units in the academic specialisation, to citizen education. Planners' lack of awareness of needs, and the overloaded time-table, were the main reasons suggested for non-implementation of such courses.

Facilities were moderately rated, with libraries faring best. The main teaching methods were said to be lecture and discussion. Demonstration, in particular, was little used.

Just under a quarter of the staff were involved in supervising teaching practice. They were generally satisfied with its organisation and

duration, and most supervised relatively few students (1-6), but a sizeable minority paid only 1 or 2 visits to each student. More than 40% did not arrange for students to participate in activities other than observation and teaching in the practice school. Criteria for assessing teaching practice were very varied, and not consistent with the official regulations on this matter, though supervisors claimed students were aware of the criteria applied. Suggestions for improving teaching practice included a greater role for the school, more preparation (observation and micro teaching) before the student starts class teaching, and longer duration of practice.

A number of strengths and weaknesses were identified in the programme as a whole. Staff thought it could be improved by cutting the time spent on general subjects, providing teaching aids, greater linkage with school curricula, and clear objectives.

The final section of the questionnaire dealt with organisation and administration. Most teachers expressed satisfaction with these. On the other hand, they noted several obstacles to achieving training objectives (e.g. lack of educational aids, lack of co-operation and co-ordination between departments or with the schools) and were very dissatisfied with the performance of the college administration in dealing with these.

This chapter and the previous one have presented briefly the views of the two groups most concerned with the teaching practice programme: trainees and staff. The next chapter will analyse these two sets of responses in more detail.

# Chapter Ten

## Data Analysis

### 10.1 Introduction

The two preceding chapters presented the responses to the survey questionnaire, the two groups whose perceptions are the main focus of this study: student teachers in Saudi Teachers' Colleges, and their trainers. This chapter examines these two sets of results in aggregate and also explores possible differences of opinion and perspective between the two groups, using Chi-square. The main body of this chapter is divided into seven sections, corresponding to the seven sections of the questionnaire, which were common to the two groups (i.e. excluding personal data).

### 10.2. Admission

**Table 104: Admission Procedure**

Criteria	Student teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Examination	9	7.1	44	12.8	53	11.2
Interview	18	14.2	51	14.8	69	14.6
High Grade	16	12.6	65	18.8	81	17.2
All of them	46	36.2	124	35.9	170	36.0
Interview and High Grade	12	9.4	29	8.4	41	8.7
Examination and Interview	26	20.5	26	9.3	58	12.3
Column Total	127	100	345	100	472	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=14.37565, P=01339, DF=5					

Not Answered: 1 Teaching staff.

The replies show that only 36.0% of the whole sample stated that the criteria, examination, interview and high grade are all used in deciding on admission of students. This should surprise us, given that the official regulations state that these are the criteria to be used. (see



Chapter Six). However, 64% of participants mentioned different procedures

This result confirms the impression gained by the researcher from his experience as a lecturer in a Saudi university, that the colleges do not always implement the regulations as strictly; the exemption from one or more criteria is quite common. The X2 test shows that there was a significant difference between the two groups in their ranking of the various criteria. For example, 20.5% of student teachers mentioned the combination of examination and interview as the criteria used, making it their second most reported alternative, but this combination was reported less frequently by college staff, for whom high grade was seen as the second-ranking criteria.

**Table 105: Participants' Satisfaction with Admission Procedure**

Response	Frequency		Percentage		Frequency	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very satisfied	14	11.0	131	38.0	145	30.7
Satisfied	41	32.3	171	49.6	212	44.8
Satisfied to some extent	51	40.2	33	9.6	84	17.8
Not satisfied at all	21	16.5	10	2.9	31	6.6
Column Total	127	100	345	100	472	100
Result of Chi-Square	X= 103.21563, P= 0000, DF=3					

Not Answered: 1 Teaching staff

Table 105 shows that the majority (75.5%) of participants were very satisfied or satisfied with the admission procedure. However, the X2 test revealed a significant difference between the two groups, teaching staff being more satisfied with the admission procedure than student teachers. It should be borne in mind that teachers are not necessarily involved with the admission process as they have other commitments in the college. Accordingly, particular attention should



be paid to the students' view, since they are the ones who have direct experience of the admission procedure.

### **10.3 Duration**

**Table 106: Satisfaction with Duration**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not enough	9	7.1	17	4.9	26	5.5
Enough	97	76.4	284	82.1	381	80.5
Very long	21	16.5	45	13.0	66	14.0
Column Total	127	100	346	100	473	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=2.00285, P= .36735, DF=2					

It can be seen from Table 106 that the majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the programme is long enough. Only 19.5% of the whole sample were not happy with the duration of the programme. The X<sup>2</sup> test reveals no significant difference in the opinions between the two groups. The suggestions of the minority who were not happy with the duration of the programme can be seen from Table 107.

**Table 107: Suggested Duration**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Three Years	22	73.3	45	73.8	67	73.6
Five Years	8	26.7	16	26.2	24	26.4
Column Total	128	100	61	100	91	100
Result of Chi-Square	X= 60198, P=.96452, DF=1					

Table 107 shows that the majority, 73.6%, suggested reducing the duration to three years. A possible reason for this, in terms of the perception of Teachers' Colleges as a "second best" alternative to university, was suggested in Chapter Eight. The X<sup>2</sup> test showed no significant differences in the opinions of the two groups.

## 10.4 The Teacher Training Curriculum

**Table 108: Satisfaction with The Teacher Training Curriculum**

Response	Student teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very satisfied	18	14.2	30	8.9	48	10.4
Satisfied	42	33.1	95	28.3	137	29.6
Satisfied to some extent	53	41.7	152	45.3	205	44.3
Not satisfied at all	14	11.0	59	17.6	73	15.8
Column Total	127	100	336	100	463	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=5.91499, P=.11582, DF=3					

Not Answered: 10 Teaching staff.

As can be seen in Table 108, 40% of the sample overall, were very satisfied or satisfied with the teacher training curriculum, while 44.3% expressed their satisfaction but only 'to some extent'. No significant difference was found between the opinions of the two groups.

**Table 109: The Orientation of the Present Teacher Training Curriculum**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Provides the student teacher with an adequate knowledge of his academic specialisation	22	17.3	32	9.5	54	11.7
Provides the student teacher with professional teaching skills	51	40.2	78	25.9	138	29.8
Provides both of these	46	36.2	211	62.8	257	55.5
Neither	8	6.3	6	1.8	14	3.0
Column Total	127	100	336	100	463	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=29.03580, P=.0000, DF=3					

Not Answered: 10 Teaching staff.

Over half of the sample 55.5%, expressed the belief that the present teacher training curriculum is oriented to provide student teachers with the two elements, academic specialisation and professional

teaching skills. However, the Chi-square showed significant differences in the opinions of the two groups. While the majority of the teaching staff (62.8%) believed that the programme provides both elements, only 36.2% of students agreed with this. They were more likely than teachers to see the programme as oriented to professional teaching skills at the expense of the academic specialisation. Such a difference in opinions is to be expected in one sense because the teaching staff tend to have a high regard for their own courses. On the other hand we must consider the fact that teaching staff may not be familiar with some courses taught by other staff. Certainly, careful consideration should be given to this apparent difference in perspective between teachers and students, which may have implications for future planning.

**Table 110: Some of Curriculum Content Unrelated to Students' Future work**

Response	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Yes	80	63.0	214	61.8	294	62.2
No	47	37.0	132	38.2	179	37.8
Column Total	127	100	346	100	473	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=.05155, P=.82040, DF=1					

According to Table 110, the majority of the respondents (62.2%) believe that all of the curriculum content is relevant to students' future work as teachers. The X<sup>2</sup> did not reveal any significant differences in the opinions of the two group in this respect. There was also agreement between the groups in the identification of courses perceived as being irrelevant.



**Table 111: Irrelevant Topics**

Response	Student teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
General education	43	53.8	134	62.6	177	60.2
Chemistry	12	15.0	21	9.8	33	11.2
Physics	10	12.5	17	7.9	27	9.2
Math	9	11.3	29	13.6	38	12.9
Biology	6	7.5	13	6.1	19	6.5
Column Total	80	100	214	100	294	100
Result of Chi-Square	X= 3.89404, p=.42054, DF=4					

The majority, 60.2%, of the whole sample said that many courses in general education are irrelevant, while maths and science courses were specified by members of both groups, as having little relevance to students' future work. Again, the X<sup>2</sup> did not reveal any significant difference of opinions of the two group in this respect

**Table 112: Satisfaction with the Amount of Attention Paid to the Area of General Preparation**

Response	Student teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not enough	7	5.5	23	6.7	30	6.4
Enough	33	26.0	73	21.2	106	22.5
Too much	87	68.5	248	72.1	335	71.1
Column Total	127	100	344	100	471	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=1.30392, P=.52102, DF=2					

Not Answered: 2 Teaching staff

Looking at the responses of student teachers and their teaching staff to the question on the amount of the attention paid to general education, it was found that the majority of respondents (71.1%) found it excessive, a result which should not surprise us, considering the very high weighting given to this component in the study plan (see Chapter Six). The X<sup>2</sup> indicated that there is no significant difference in opinion between the two groups.



**Table 113: Satisfaction with the Amount of Attention  
Paid to the Area of Specialisation**

Response	Student teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not enough	76	59.8	236	68.2	312	66.0
Enough	51	40.2	70	20.2	121	25.6
Too much	-	-	40	11.6	40	8.5
Column Total	127	100	346	100	473	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=30.08709=, P=.0000, DF=2					

As we can see from Table 113, 66% of all participants believed that the amount of focus on specialisation courses is not enough. Again, this should not surprise us, in view of the course weightings mentioned earlier. However, students and staff had different perspectives on this matter, with students viewing the academic specialisation as less well covered, than did the staff. Indeed, several staff thought this component to be excessively covered, while no students were of this opinion.

**Table 114: Satisfaction with the Amount of Attention  
Paid to the Area of General Educational Principles**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not enough	14	11.0	24	7.4	38	8.4
Enough	98	77.2	176	54.3	274	60.7
Too much	15	11.8	142	35.8	139	30.8
Column Total	127	100	324	100	451	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=29.97997, p=.0000, DF=2					

Not answered: 22 Teaching staff

Regarding the amount of the attention paid to general educational principles, the majority of respondents(60.7%) found it sufficient. There was, however, a difference between the two groups. As shown in Table 114 students were more inclined than staff to view this

component as receiving the appropriate amount of coverage. Staff were more likely than students to see this component as excessively covered. This may indicate that many staff were oriented more to their academic specialisation than to educational theory, or it may be that they underestimated students' needs regarding coverage of this aspect of the programme.

**Table 115: Satisfaction with the Amount of Attention Paid to the Area of Educational Administration**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not enough	15	11.8	59	17.3	74	15.8
Enough	95	74.8	208	60.8	303	64.6
Too much	17	13.4	75	21.9	92	19.6
Column Total	127	100	342	100	469	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=7.98700, P=.01844, DF=2					

Not answered: 4 Teaching staff

Table 115 shows that the majority of respondents (64.6%) believed that the attention paid to educational administration is enough. The X<sup>2</sup> revealed significant differences in the opinions of the two groups, with more student teachers (74.8%) than staff (60.8%) supporting this opinion. Staff were more divergent in opinion than students, with more of them inclined to see coverage of this component as inadequate, but also, more seeing it as excessive.

**Table 116: Satisfaction with the Amount of Attention Paid to the Area of Educational Psychology**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not enough	18	14.2	29	8.4	47	9.9
Enough	97	76.4	255	73.7	352	74.4
Too much	17	13.4	62	17.9	74	15.6
Column Total	127	100	346	100	473	100
Result of Chi-Square	X= 7.48603, p= .02368, DF=2					



Respondents' satisfaction with the attention paid to educational psychology is shown in Table 116 from which it appears that almost three-quarters found it appropriate. The X<sup>2</sup> showed significant differences between the two groups, with staff being more inclined than students to see the coverage as excessive and less inclined to view it as inadequate.

**Table 117: Satisfaction with the Amount of Attention Paid to the Area of Sociological and Cultural Issues**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not enough	68	54.4	65	18.8	133	28.2
Enough	46	36.8	228	65.9	274	58.2
Too much	11	8.8	53	15.3	64	13.6
Column Total	125	100	346	100	471	100
Result of Chi-Square	X= 57.47.899, P=.00000, DF=2					

Not Answered: 2 Teaching staff

Coverage of sociological and cultural issues, was less highly rated by the sample than other components with 58.2% finding the attention paid to this area to be enough. The X<sup>2</sup> revealed significant differences between the two groups, with teaching staff more satisfied than students. The latter were much more inclined than the former to view the attention paid to this course as not enough.

**Table 118: Satisfaction with the Amount of Attention Paid to the Area of Islamic Education**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not enough	50	39.4	122	35.5	172	36.5
Enough	75	59.1	193	56.1	268	56.9
Too much	2	1.6	29	8.4	31	6.6
Column Total	127	100	344	100	471	100
Result of Chi-Square	X= 7.15246, P=.02798, DF=2					

Not Answered: 2 Teaching staff

Table 118 shows that over half of the respondents (56.9%) found the attention paid to Islamic education area to be enough, but that there were significant differences in the opinions of the two groups. Table 118 shows student teachers were less inclined than teachers to view the coverage as excessive.

**Table 119: Satisfaction with the Amount of Attention Paid to the Area of Teaching Methodology**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not enough	87	68.5	187	54.8	274	58.5
Enough	40	31.5	102	29.9	142	30.3
Too much	-	-	52	15.2	52	11.1
Column Total	127	100	341		468	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=22.39458, P=.00001, DF=2					

Not Answered: 5 Teaching staff.

When the sample of student teachers and their teaching staff were asked about the amount of the attention paid to teaching methodology, it was found that more than half of the respondents (58.5%) considered the attention paid to this area to be insufficient. The X<sup>2</sup> indicated significant differences in the opinions of the two groups, with students being more inclined to see coverage as inadequate. While over 15% of teaching staff viewed coverage as excessive, no students agreed with them. This result may reflect a need which students felt, when they started teaching practice activity.

**Table 120: Need to add New Courses**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Yes	77	60.6	143	41.3	220	46.5
No	50	39.4	203	58.7	253	53.5
Column Total	127	100	346	100	473	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=13.91016, P=.00009, DF=1					



More than half of the whole sample (53.5%) believed that the programme does not need any additional courses, However, 46.5% did not support this claim. The X<sup>2</sup> indicated that there were significant differences in the opinions of the two groups. While the majority of students saw a need to add new courses, only 41.3% of staff were of the same opinion. It appears, then, that students were conscious of needs which were not always recognised by their teachers. Those who saw a need for more courses were asked to give more details.

**Table 121: Courses to be Added**

Response	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total		Rank Order
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Main Subject	33	42.9	42	28.4%	75	34.0	1
Computer	10	13.0	19	12.8	29	13.8	2
Holy Quran	3	3.9	26	17.6%	29	13.1	3
Research skills	-	-	22	14.9%	22	10.0	4
Linguistic curriculum	-	-	18	12.2%	18	8.1	5
Micro teaching	-	-	18	12.2%	18	8.1	5
Teaching aids	13	16.9	-	-	13	5.9	7
Special teaching methods	11	14.3	-	-	11	5.	8
Citizen education	-	-	10	6.8%	10	4.5	9
Modern dictionaries	7	9.1	-	-	7	3.1	10

As Table 121 shows, there was agreement among the sample, on the need for courses in the main subject specialisation, computers and Holy Quran. suggested by 13.8%, and 13.1%, and 3.9% of the participants, respectively.

Other needs were suggested by only one or other of the groups. In student teachers' case, these subjects were teaching aids, special teaching methods and modern dictionaries, suggested by 16.9%, 14.3% and 9.1%. In the teaching staff sample there were

three suggestions: linguistic curriculum, micro teaching and citizen education. (12.2%, 12.2% and 6.8%)

**Table 122: Reasons for Teaching Extra Courses suggested**

Response	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total		Rank Order
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Is not given enough time	23	29.9	50	33.8%	73	33.1	1
The weakness of teachers in their major Subject	18	23.4	31	20.9%	49	22.2	2
It is very important subject	9	11.7	16	10.8%	22	11.3	3
Train student in research skills	-	-	24	16.2%	24	10.9	4
To increase their teaching skills	-	-	17	11.5%	17	7.7	5
To train student to design the necessary teaching aids	11	14.3	-	-	11	5.0	6
To implant the love of country in the soul of students	-	-	10	6.8%	10	4.5	7
To facilitate learning process	8	10.4	-	-	8	3.6	8
Reduce the problems when teach at school	8	10.4	-	-	8	3.6	8

When the sample who suggested extra courses were asked to indicate why they felt these subjects should be added, there were three reasons on which the whole sample agreed. The first (mentioned by 33.1%) was that the time so far given to these subjects is not enough. The second was the weakness of teachers in their main subjects, mentioned by 22% of them and the third, a belief in the subject's importance.

Also, there were some reasons mentioned by only one type of sample. 14.3% of the student teachers stated the reason that there is a need to train students in designing the necessary teaching aids or said

that their suggested courses were needed to facilitate the learning process (10.4%) and to reduce the problems when teaching in school (10.4%). Teaching staff mentioned some other reasons, namely, to train students in research skills (16.2%), to increase their teaching skills (11.5%) and to implant the love of their country in the souls of the students (6.8%).

**Table 123: Reasons for Not Teaching Extra Courses Suggested**

Response	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total		Rank Order
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Inappropriate time table	28	36.4	48	32.4%	76	34.5	1
Their importance is not clear for the planners	21	27.3	48	32.4%	69	31.3	2
The absence of continuous evaluation	13	16.9	43	29.1%	56	25.4	3
Financial Problems	8	10.4	9	6.1%	17	7.7	4
Centralisation of system	7	9.1			7	3.1	5

As shown in Table 123, 34.5% of the whole sample indicated that the main reason for not introducing the extra courses suggested is an inappropriate time table. That the importance of these courses is not clear to the planners was given as the second most important reason, mentioned by 31.3% of the sample.

The other reasons mentioned by the remaining sample were the absence of continuous evaluation and financial problems mentioned by 25.4% and 7.7% respectively. Another reason, mentioned by student teachers only, was centralisation of the system.



## 10.5. Facilities

**Table 124: The Availability of Library Facilities in the Colleges**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very adequate	12	9.8	41	12.3	53	11.7
Adequate	23	18.9	74	22.3	97	21.4
Adequate to some extent	57	46.7	158	47.6	215	47.4
Not adequate at all	24	19.7	59	17.8	83	18.3
Not provided	6	4.9	-	-	6	1.3
Column Total	122	100	332	100	454	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=17.49439, P=.00155, DF=4					

Not answered 5 Student teachers, 14 Teaching staff.

When the sample were asked about the adequacy of the library facilities, it was found that 33.1% indicated their adequacy (very adequate + adequate) while 47.4% said they were adequate to some extent (Table 124). The remaining sample (19.6%) believed them to be not adequate at all, or not provided. The X<sup>2</sup> showed significant differences between the two samples. Teaching staff were slightly more satisfied than students, with more of them finding facilities very adequate or adequate and none saying that library facilities are not provided.

**Table 125: The Availability of Visual Aids Facilities in the Colleges**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very adequate	8	6.3	25	7.4	33	7.1
Adequate	25	19.7	18	5.3	43	9.2
Adequate to some extent	61	48.0	188	55.6	249	53.5
Not adequate at all	22	17.3	80	23.7	102	21.9
Not provided	11	8.7	27	8.0	38	8.2
Column Total	127	100	338	100	465	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=23.47990, P=.00010, DF=4					

Not answered: 8 Teaching staff

Table 125 shows that over half of the sample (53.5%) believed the visual aids in the colleges to be adequate to some extent. However,



30.1% of the sample viewed this sort of facility as not adequate at all or not provided, while with only 16.3% of them believed them to be very adequate or adequate. The X<sup>2</sup> shows that there is significant differences between the opinions of the two groups. As we can see from Table 125, student teachers appeared more satisfied than staff with the adequacy of these facilities. This could be as a result of the fact that teaching staff feel the responsibility to provide these facilities when delivering the lesson and are aware of constraints on their teaching due to the lack of audio-visual aids, so they feel the need more than their students. The latter may be more inclined to be satisfied, because compared with the situation in the schools (see Chapter Five), the colleges appear relatively well equipped.

**Table 126: The Availability of Recreational Facilities in the Colleges**

Response	Student Teachers		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very adequate	1	.8	29	8.4	30	6.3
Adequate	4	3.1	21	6.1	25	5.3
Adequate to some extent	41	32.3	115	33.2	156	33.0
Not adequate at all	36	28.3	112	32.4	148	31.3
Not provided	45	35.4	69	19.9	114	24.1
Column Total	127	100	346	100	473	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=19.70153, P=.00057, DF=4					

According to Table 126 over half of the whole sample (55.4%) saw recreational facilities as not adequate at all or not provided. Very few respondents (11.6%) reported the adequacy of these facilities, though 33% saw them as adequate to some extent. The X<sup>2</sup> indicated that there were significant differences between the two groups. It can be seen from the table that the majority of students (63.7%) saw these facilities as being not adequate or not provided, while the proportion of teaching staff who thought this was lower

(52.3%). This result no doubt reflects the fact that students used these facilities more the teaching staff, and so were more aware of the need for them. It could also be that facilities existed of which some students were not aware, or that the two groups differed in their definitions of what is "recreational".

## 10.6 Teaching Practice

**Table 127: Satisfaction with Organisation of Teaching Practice**

Response	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very satisfied	19	15.3	15	18.3	34	16.5
Satisfied	48	38.7	43	52.4	91	44.2
Satisfied to some extent	47	37.9	15	18.3	62	30.1
Not satisfied at all	10	9.	9	11.0	19	9.2
Column Total	124	100	82	100	206	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=9.13051, P=.02760, DF=3					

Not answered: 3 Student Teachers

The majority of the whole sample (60.7%) were very satisfied or satisfied with the organisation of teaching practice, compared with 30.1% who expressed their satisfaction to some extent and only 9.2% who were not satisfied at all. The X<sup>2</sup> revealed a significant difference in the opinion between the two groups. It can be seen from Table 127 that teaching staff (70.7%) were more satisfied with the organisation of teaching practice than their students (54%). This divergence of opinions may be seen as result of the fact that the supervisors are usually the people who are involved in organising the teaching practice and therefore most likely to defend the satisfactory standard of their programme.



**Table 128: Satisfaction with  
the Time Allocated to Teaching Practice**

Response	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very satisfied	17	13.4	16	19.5	33	15.9
Satisfied	44	34.6	25	30.5	69	33.2
Satisfied to some extent	50	39.4	32	39.0	82	39.4
Not satisfied at all	15	11.8	9	11.0	24	11.5
Column Total	126	100	82	100	208	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=1.47156, P=.68885, DF=3					

Not answered: 1 Student Teacher.

It can be seen from table that 49.1% of the whole sample were very satisfied or satisfied with the duration of teaching practice. The groups shared a similar level of satisfaction on this matter.

**Table 129: Satisfaction with Supervision  
in Teaching Practice**

Response	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very satisfied	17	13.4	14	17.1	31	14.8
Satisfied	43	33.4	25	30.5	68	22.5
Satisfied to some extent	58	45.7	22	26.8	80	38.3
Not satisfied at all	9	7.1	21	25.6	30	14.4
Column Total	127	100	246	100	209	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=17.16163, X=.00065, DF=3					

When the participants were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the supervision, it was found that 37.3% were very satisfied or satisfied, 38.3% of them expressed their satisfaction to some extent and only 14.4% were not satisfied at all. The X<sup>2</sup> revealed significant difference, in the opinions of the two groups, with fewer staff than students satisfied to some extent and more staff than students not satisfied at all. The lower level of satisfaction expressed by staff reflects a view expressed by many of them in conversation with the researcher that they believed they lacked the

requisite professional qualification for this task and were not happy to undertake it.

**Table 130: The Number of Visits Paid to Arabic and Islamic Student Teachers during Teaching Practice**

Response	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Once	19	15.0	3	3.7	22	1.5
Two	39	30.7	13	15.9	52	24.9
Three and more	69	54.3	66	80.5	135	64.6
Column Total	127	100	82	100	209	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=15.74390, P= .00038, DF=2					

When the student teachers and teaching staff were asked about the number of visits paid to students during teaching practice programme, almost two-thirds claimed that three or more visits were made. This lack of visits may reflect first, the fact that the supervisors are academic teachers rather than professional trainers and may not see the need for frequent visits to student teachers, or may be too over-burdened with teaching commitments to undertake them. It also suggests a need for the regulations of the Teachers College to lay down some criteria as to the minimum number of visits to be paid.

The X<sup>2</sup> indicated that there was a significant difference in the opinions of the two samples. While the majority of supervisors, 80.5%, stated that they made three or more visits, 45.7% of students disagreed with this view and claimed fewer visits were made. This difference in the claims made by the two groups may reflect a desire on the part of the supervisors to place their supervision in as favourable a light as possible.



## 10.7 Course Evaluation

**Table 131: Weaknesses in Academic Preparation**

Aspect of weakness	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total		Rank Order
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Over emphasis on the general education	82	64.6	211	61.0	293	61.9	1
Less attention given to the main subject	55	43.3	202	58.4	257	54.3	2
Lack of co-ordination and integration between academic and educational element	75	59.1	165	47.7	240	50.7	3
Lack of good library	64	50.4	163	47.1	227	47.9	4
Too much theory			167	48.3	167	35.3	5
Lack of guiding principles and clearly defined objectives			80	23.1	80	16.9	6
The use of traditional methods in teaching	77	60.6			77	16.2	7
Weakness in student teacher ability in research skills			63	18.2	63	13.3	8
Too Much Theory	52	40.9			52	10.9	9

As Table 131 shows, there was agreement between students and staff on several weaknesses in the academic preparation provided by the programme: the over-emphasis on general education, inadequacy of attention to the main subject, lack of integration between academic and educational components, and inadequacy of library facilities. Each group was to some extent critical of the other, students commenting on the overly traditional teaching methods and excessively theoretical orientation of the course, while staff saw students as lacking the requisite research skills.

**Table 132: Strengths in Academic Preparation**

Aspect of Strengths	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total		Rank Order
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
The comprehensive of the curriculum	73	57.5	202	58.4	275	58.1	1
The good background about different field	70	55.1	152	43.9	222	46.9	2
The good connection in teaching subject with Quran and prophet traditional	70	55.1	122	35.3	192	40.5	3
Quality of staff	-	-	48	13.9	48	10.1	4

There was broad agreement between the groups on the strengths of academic preparation, particularly its comprehensiveness, but whereas some teachers noted staff quality as a strength of the programme, none of the students did so. (see Table 132)

**Table 133: Weaknesses in Educational Preparation**

Aspect of Weakness	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total		Rank Order
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Lack of field visit	74	58.3	170	49.1	244	51.5	2
Too much theory	60	47.2	166	48.0	226	47.7	3
Delegating student to no professional supervisor	44	34.6	142	41.0	186	39.3	4
Time allocated to teaching practice is not enough	69	54.3	93	26.9	162	34.2	5
The educational subjects are not connected with the situation in schools			137	39.6	137	28.9	6
Not enough observation period	65	51.2	67	19.4	132	27.9	7
Inadequacy courses in teaching methods for major subject			119	34.4		25.1	8
Large number of students with each supervisor	47	37.0	53	15.3	100	21.1	9
No feedback in educational element from my supervisor in teaching practice	72	56.7			72	15.2	10
Weakness in co-ordination between school and college	69	54.3			69	14.5	11
The choice of practice school is not good	65	51.2			65	13.7	12
No idea about the pattern of evaluation	61	48.0			61	12.8	13
No linking between curricular in college and curricular in basic education	58	45.7			58	12.2	14
No visiting school before practice	57	44.9			57	12.0	15
No involvement in school activities	55	43.3			55	11.6	16
Lack of co-operation from school			53	15.3	53	11.2	17
Lack of teaching aids in school	48	37.8			48	10.1	18
Assessment card			47	13.6	47	9.9	19
No role for school teacher in teaching practice programme			34	9.8	34	7.1	20



Regarding educational preparation, again, there were a number of common concerns, relating to lack of field visits, excessively theoretical orientation, non-professional supervision and inadequate duration of teaching practices and the inadequacy of the observation period, though the latter two concerned students more than staff (see Table 133). Other than these elements, there were common concerns viewed from different perspectives. What students saw as lack of co-ordination between school and college, staff saw as lack of co-operation on the school's part; students were worried about lack of feedback from supervisors and confusion about evaluation, while staff's concern in these areas focused on the assessment card itself.

**Table 134: Strengths in Educational Preparation**

Aspect of strengths	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total		Rank Order
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
The good portion for education component	94	74.0	251	72.5	345	72.9	1
Teaching practice	60	47.2	158	54.3	218	46.0	2
Teaching Method courses	52	40.9	-	-	52	10.9	3

The attention paid to the education, and teaching practice, were seen by both staff and students as strengths of the educational preparation component of the course, as Table 134 shows. However, it is interesting that only students saw the teaching method courses in this light. Though it should be noted that many staff, as academic specialists, may not have been in a position to comment on these courses, it is perhaps cause for concern that even Education Department staff (who would be involved in teaching such courses) did not rate them as a strength of the programme.



## **10.8 Administration and Organisation**

**Table 135: Satisfaction with Organisation of the College**

Response	student teacher		teaching staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very satisfied	27	22.1	113	32.7	140	29.6
Satisfied	39	30.7	149	43.1	188	39.7
Satisfied to some extent	42	34.4	71	20.5	113	23.9
Not satisfied at all	14	11.5	13	3.8	27	5.7
Column Total	127	100	346	100	473	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=35.98686, P=.00000, DF=4					

Not answered: 5 Student teachers.

According to Table 135, it was found that 69.3% of the sample expressed their satisfaction with the organisation of the colleges (very satisfied + satisfied). 23.9% of them were satisfied but only to some extent and only 5.7% were not satisfied at all. The X<sup>2</sup> indicates that there are significant differences in the opinions of the sample, with teaching staff being noticeably more satisfied with the organisation of the college than the student teachers. This divergence of opinions may be seen as result of the fact that teaching staff have a vested interest in defending the organisation of the college, in which they may have contributed. Students, as recipients of the programme, may be conscious of needs which the college is failing to meet

**Table 136: Satisfaction with Administration of the College**

Response	student teacher		teaching staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very satisfied	28	22.6	111	32.16	139	29.4
Satisfied	44	35.5	119	34.4	163	34.5
Satisfied to some extent	43	34.7	113	32.7	156	33.0
Not satisfied at all	9	7.3	3	.9	12	2.5
Column Total	127	100	346	100	473	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=25.56314, P=.00004, DF=4					

Not answered: 3 Student teachers

As Table 136 shows, 63.9% of the sample expressed their satisfaction with the organisation of the colleges (very satisfied +

satisfied). 33.0% of them are satisfied but to some extent and only 2.5% were not satisfied at all. The X<sup>2</sup> revealed significant differences in the opinions of the sample. Once again, teaching staff expressed greater satisfaction than the students teachers (58.1%). This divergence of opinions may again reflect teachers' defence of their contribution in administration or they may have feared to be too critical of their superiors.

**Table 137: Is there any Problem or Obstacle Hindering Achievement of the Teacher Training Goals?**

Response	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Yes	61	48.0	203	58.7	264	55.8
No	66	52.0	143	41.3	209	44.2
Column Total	127	100	346	100	473	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=4.26378, P= .03893, DF=1					

Student teachers and teaching staff were asked to indicate if they faced any problem or obstacle which hindered them in the achievement of teacher training goals. According to the above table, 55.8% of the sample indicated that they had no problems or obstacles. However, 44.2% stated the opposite. The X<sup>2</sup> indicated differences in perspective between the two groups. Teaching staff were more inclined to report problems and obstacles than student teachers.

Respondents were then asked to give brief details of the problem(s) and obstacles(s) they had encountered.

**Table 138: Problems and Obstacles**

Response	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total		Rank Order
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Lack of visual aids in the college			144	70.9	144	54.5	1
Not enough co-operation from school	45	73.7	85	41.9	130	49.2	2
No co-operation between different departments			101	49.8	101	38.2	3
Lack of seminars and scientific journals			51	25.1	51	19.3	4
Insufficient for period teaching practice component	15	24.8	20	9.9	40	15.1	5
No good reaction from the college to students' suggestions	39	63.9			39	14.7	6
Examination System	38	62.2			38	14.3	7
No idea about school practice before starting in teaching practice	35	57.3			35	13.2	8
The practice school is far from the college	33	54.8			33	12.5	9
Traditional methods used in teaching	31	50.8			31	11.7	10
Lack of good library	22	36.0			22	8.3	11
Short time of the course			11	5.4	11	4.1	12

Not surprisingly, the obstacles and problems reported were different for the two groups, though they agreed on lack of co-operation from the school and the fact that the teaching practice period is insufficient to enable students to gain the necessary experience. Although fewer students than staff reported having problems, they reported a wider range of problems.



**Table 139: Satisfaction with Administration  
in Dealing with these Obstacles and Problems**

Response	Student Teacher		Teaching Staff		Row Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very satisfied	-	-	-	-	-	
Satisfied	12	19.0			12	4.5
Satisfied to some extent	24	38.1	99	49.0	123	46.4
Not satisfied at all	27	42.9	103	51.0	130	49.1
Column Total	63	100	202	100	265	100
Result of Chi-Square	X=42.01215, P=.00000, DF=4					

According to the above table, 49.1% of the whole sample were not at all satisfied with the Administration of the colleges in dealing with these obstacles and problems. 46.4% expressed their satisfaction to some extent, and only 4.5% of them expressed their satisfaction. The X<sup>2</sup> revealed a significant difference between the two groups. It can be seen from Table 139, that teaching staff were less satisfied than students, none being 'satisfied' and a greater proportion of them being not satisfied at all.

### **10.9. Summary of the Outcome of the Student Teacher and Teaching Staff Questionnaires:**

The foregoing analysis reveals that there were a number of areas of agreement between students and teachers, but many others in which they had different opinions.

There was only one aspect of the programme on which the two groups were in full agreement, namely, its duration; which was for the most part considered appropriate. It will be recalled from Chapters Eight and Nine, that those who found the duration inappropriate, were more inclined to think it was too long, than too short.



Regarding curriculum issues, there was consistency between the samples in their moderate level of satisfaction expressed with the curriculum as a whole and their doubts as to the relevance of some of the general education subjects. They agreed that there is too much focus on general academic preparation and that there is a need for more courses on the subject specialisation, computer and the holy Quran. Their opinions on the reasons for such courses not being introduced so far (e.g. overloaded timetable, planners' misperceptions) were also similar.

Questions about teaching practice revealed that the samples were both only moderately satisfied with its duration. They also agreed on a number of measures for improving teaching practice.

Some weakness and strengths in the present programme were agreed by both groups. For example, academic preparation was perceived as being marred by focus on general education at the expense of the main study, lack of co-ordination, and inadequate library resources, though it was commended for its comprehensiveness. Educational preparation was criticised for its theoretical orientation, non-professional supervision and lack of time allocated to teaching practice, but the weighting given to educational components of the course, and teaching practice, were seen as strengths.

The final area of agreement was with regard to some of the problems seen as impeding achievement of course objectives = lack of co-

operation from practice schools, and insufficient teaching practice for students to gain the experience they need.

Numerous areas of disagreement were found between the groups, indicating different levels of satisfaction with aspects of the programme, and differences in priorities.

In one section of the questionnaire, there was no agreement at all between the groups. This was the section on facilities, where staff were more satisfied than students with library and recreational facilities, while for audio-visual aids, the converse was true.

Regarding admission procedure, staff were more satisfied than students.

Curriculum was a contentious issue. Students saw it as more imbalanced than did staff, and there were disagreements about most components. Students were more satisfied than staff with the attention given to educational principles and educational administration, but were more inclined than staff to see coverage of social and cultural issues, and teaching methods as inadequate. More students than staff suggested a need for additional courses.

Teaching practice was another source of disagreements. Some of those disagreements were factual in nature, for example, the fact that staff claimed more supervisory visits than students. Others related to level of satisfaction. Staff were more satisfied than students with the overall organisation of teaching practice, but in the area of

supervision, which students did not rate highly, staff were even less satisfied.

Staff reported greater satisfaction than students with the organisation of the college and its administration, even though they reported more problems impeding achievement of educational goals and were dissatisfied with the way those problems were addressed.

The findings from the two questionnaires, taken together, suggest that although the teacher training programme has its strengths, there are a number of problems and deficiencies that need to be addressed. We shall return to those and respondents' suggestions for dealing with them in chapter Twelve. Meanwhile, the next chapter will consider the information and opinions obtained from college administrators and ministerial officials.

# Chapter Eleven

## The Interview

### 11.1 Introduction

During his visit to Saudi Arabia (September 1996- January) the investigator interviewed relevant officials in the Ministry of Education and in Teacher's Colleges. These people play a big role in the planning for Arabic and Islamic education in elementary schools, including designing the current Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme in Teachers' Colleges. Therefore, it was felt to be of great importance that their opinions regarding the preparation programme of Arabic and Islamic elementary teachers be considered as part of this enquiry. Three of the top officials in the Ministry of Education, seven deans and nine vice-deans of Teachers' Colleges participated in these structured interviews, which may serve as an interesting counterpart to the opinions of direct participants in the teacher training programme (students and trainers), presented in the foregoing chapters.

### 11.2. General Information

**Table 140: Distribution of Officials by Age**

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
20-29	2	10.5
30-39	8	42.1
40-49	7	36.8
50-59	2	10.5



Table 140 indicates the age range of the interviewees. The largest group was in the 30-39 age range, followed by the 40-49 group. It may, perhaps, seem surprising to find two interviewees as young as 20-29 in these senior positions. This can be attributed to the fact that some of the colleges are in small cities which do not attract the sort of older, more experienced people who are more usually appointed as dean or vice-dean; they prefer the colleges in the main cities, where facilities tend to be better. Sometimes, therefore, the Ministry of Education appoints younger teaching staff to act as dean or vice dean in smaller colleges.

**Table 141: Interviewees' Qualification**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Ph.D.	8	42.1
MA	10	52.6
BA	1	5.3

Table 141 reveals that the 42.1% of the sample had a Ph.D. qualification while 52.6% of them had MA. This again reflects the Saudi government regulation according to which the teaching staff should preferably hold a PhD, or at least a Master's degree. Many officials were formerly teaching staff in Teachers' Colleges.

### **11.3. Admission**

**Table 142: Admission Procedure**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Examination	-	-
Interview	-	-
High Grade	-	-
All of them	15	78.9
Interview and High Grade	4	21.1
Examination and Interview	-	-

In respect of admission procedure, the majority of officials asserted that admission is based on a combination of examination, interview, and school grade; in other words, what they said was consistent with what is laid down in the official regulations, but did not accord with the experience of students and teaching staff, who reported several variations on the use of these criteria, singly or in combination.

**Table 143: Official Satisfaction with Admission Procedure**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	7	36.8
Satisfied	7	36.8
Satisfied to some extent	4	21.1
Not satisfied at all	1	5.3

When the sample were asked if they were satisfied with the admission procedure, the majority of them expressed their satisfaction (very satisfied + satisfied). Only a few respondents were satisfied to a lesser extent (21.1%) and only one was not satisfied at all(5.3%). This high level of satisfaction is perhaps to be expected, bearing in mind that the interviewees had for the most part expressed belief in the implementation of regulations.

## **11.4 Duration**

**Table 144: Official Satisfaction with Duration**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Not enough	3	15.8
Enough	16	84.2
Very long	-	-

The period of teacher training programme, in the view of the great majority of the sample (84.2%) is adequate. Only a few officials (15.8%) expressed the view that the duration is insufficient. When

asked to suggest a more appropriate duration for the programme, all three recommended the five years.

## **11.5. The Teacher Training Curriculum.**

**Table 145 : Planning the College Curriculum**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
College committee	-	-
Teaching staff	2	10.5
Ministry of Education	14	73.7
All of them	-	-
Teaching staff Ministry of Education	3	15.8

In order to identify who plans the curriculum, interviewees were asked about this issue. The majority of the sample, 73.7%, stated it is the Ministry of Education. However, 15.85% of them indicated that teaching staff do the planning in conjunction with the Ministry, and two interviews said planning done by the teaching staff (see Table 145).

**Table 146 : Official' Input into the planning of the curriculum**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	15.8
No	16	84.2

With respect to their own participation in the planning and development of the teacher training curriculum, three interviewees indicated that they had input in that area, but the majority of them indicated they had no input into the curriculum.



**Table 147: Official Satisfaction with  
The Teacher Training Curriculum**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	-	-
Satisfied	11	57.9
Satisfied to some extent	7	36.8
Not satisfied at all	1	5.3

Examining the results in the above table, we can see that 57.9% of the respondents were satisfied, and 36.2% only expressed a lesser degree of satisfaction (i.e. satisfied to some extent.) One respondent was not satisfied at all.

**Table 148: The Orientation of The Present  
Teacher Training Programme**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Provides the student teacher with an adequate knowledge of his academic specialisation	2	10.5
Provides the student teacher with professional teaching skills	9	47.4
Provides both of these	8	42.1
Neither	-	-

The results of the above table show that almost half the officials believed that the present teacher training curriculum provides the student teacher with professional teaching skills alone, while a slightly smaller number (42.1%) believed that the programme provide both elements, specialisation and professional teaching skills. Two respondents viewed the curriculum as being oriented to the academic specialisation.

**Table 149: Some of Curriculum Content Unrelated  
to Students' Future Work**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	2	10.5
No	17	89.5

When asked whether any of the curriculum content is not related to students' future work as professional teachers, the great majority of



the respondents, 89.5% of the sample, denied this. Only two respondents agreed that some of the curriculum is not relevant. They were asked topics they considered irrelevant.

**Table 150: Irrelevant Topics**

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Many Courses in general Education	1	50	1
Math	1	50	1

As can be seen from the Table 149, one interviewee said that many courses in the general education component are not directly relevant.

He commented:

**Many courses are not relevant to the student's future. On the contrary, because of the time spent on these subjects, students get only a brief introduction to many different aspects in the account of their main subject.**

The other interviewee saw mathematics as the main subject which is not relevant to the student's future work.

**Table 151: Official Satisfaction with the Amount of Attention paid to each of Area of the Programme**

Area	Not enough		Enough		Too much	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
General preparation	1	5.3	6	31.6	12	63.2
Specialisation (Islam, Arabic Studies)	10	52.6	9	47.4	-	-
General Educational Principles	2	10.5	16	84.2	1	5.3
Educational Administration	2	10.5	16	84.2	1	5.3
Educational Psychology	2	10.5	16	84.2	1	5.3
Sociological and Cultural Issues	6	31.6	12	63.2	1	5.3
Islamic Education	-	-	3	15.8	16	84.2
Teaching Methodology	3	15.8	16	84.2	-	-

In order to shed light on the issue of balance in the curriculum, interviewees were asked their opinions about the attention given to each area. Regarding general preparation courses, the majority of respondents believed that they receive too much attention. In contrast, the academic specialisation was considered by over half the officials (52.6%) to be inadequately covered. It will be recalled from Chapter Six that the study plan gives this area only 29% of the time table. This answer supports the impression given earlier, that many officials did not see the programme as providing the student with a good grounding in his academic specialisation (see Table 148).

General Educational Principles, Educational Administration, Educational Psychology and Sociological and Cultural Issues and Teaching Methodology were seen by the majority of officials to be satisfactorily provided for, in line with the impression (Table 148) that the programme provides the student teacher with professional teaching skills. In contrast, Islamic Education was seen by 84.2% of respondents as receiving excessive attention.

**Table 152: Need for More Courses**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	13	68.4
No	6	31.6

According to Table 152, 68.4% of officials expressed their desire for the addition of new courses to the programme, though 31.6% disagreed with this idea. The first group were asked what courses they thought should be added.

**Table 153: Courses to be Added**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Main Subject	6	42.9	1
Curricular issues	2	14.3	2
Teaching aids	2	14.3	2
Computing	1	7.1	4
Arabic language	1	7.1	4
Special teaching method	1	7.1	4
Pre-school	1	7.1	4

The greatest number of suggestions was for additional courses on the specialisation, which were desired by 42.9% of those who answered this question. This preference is consistent with opinions expressed in answer to previous questions. Two officials has suggested the addition of curricular issues and the same number suggested a course on teaching aids. Computing, the Arabic language, special teaching methods and pre-school education, were each the subject of a single suggestion.

**Table 154: Reasons for Teaching Extra Courses suggested**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Is not given enough time	10	71.4	1
The weakness of Teachers in their major Subject	3	21.4	2
It is very important subject	1	7.1	3

When the interviewees were asked to indicate the reasons why they felt these subjects should be added, over half said they thought that the suggested courses have not so far been given the proper attention



in the study plan, supporting the view expressed earlier that the time allocated to the main subject is not enough( see Table 151)

Two respondents indicated that the main reason for needing additional courses is the weakness of teachers in their major subject.

One interviewee said:

**It is a fact which we cannot deny that there is a deficiency in teachers' knowledge of their main subject, especially in the elementary stage as many teachers think that there is no need for much preparation for this stage.**

The remaining respondents said they thought that the suggested subjects are very important and should not be ignored in the study plan.

**Table 155: Reasons for Not Teaching Extra Courses suggested**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Inappropriate time table	8	57.1	1
The absence of continuous evaluation	5	35.7	2
Financial problems	1	7.1	3

As indicated in the above table, seven interviewees suggested that the main reason why such courses have not been introduced is an inappropriate time table. Five respondents blamed absence of continuous evaluation of the programme; as one interviewee commented:

**The programme has been running for some time without any effort to see its advantages and disadvantages.**



Only one official gave the reason that adding courses will create additional cost.

## **11.6 Facilities**

**Table 156: Officials' Opinions on the Availability of Facilities**

Facility	Very adequate		Adequate		Adequate to some extent		Not adequate at all		Not provided	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Library	1	5.3	-	-	10	52.6	8	42.1	-	-
Audio visual aids	-		-	-	12	63.2	6	31.6	6	31.6
Recreational facilities	-		4	21.1	4	21.1	8	42.1	8	42.1

Table 156 shows that over half of the sample were satisfied to some extent. with the provision of the library facilities in colleges, while 42.1% found them totally inadequate. Surprisingly, bearing in mind the comments of students and trainers (Chapters Eight and Nine) audio visual aids received a higher satisfaction rating from the officials, than did libraries. This may, of course, indicate not that the facilities are better, but that the officials saw less need for them. Opinions on recreational facilities were mixed. 42.1% of interviewees found them inadequate and three people said they were not available at all; yet these were the only facilities which received an 'adequate' rating from some interviewees. Again, this may indicate that little importance was attached to recreational facilities by these interviewees, so that they were satisfied with a low level of provision. On the other hand, the differences in views may have reflected difference in resources among the various colleges. What is

certain is that interviewees' responses indicate a very low level of satisfaction with all facilities.

## **11.7. Teaching Practice**

**Table 157: Official Satisfaction with The Organisation of Teaching Practice**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	2	10.5
Satisfied	9	47.4
Satisfied to some extent	8	42.1
Not satisfied at all	-	-

In respect of official satisfaction with the organisation of teaching practice it was found that more than half of the sample (57.9%) were satisfied (very satisfied + satisfied) while 42.1% expressed their satisfaction to some extent. None of the interviewees were totally dissatisfied.

**Table 158: Official Satisfaction with The Time Allocated to Teaching Practice**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	5	26.3
Satisfied	10	52.6
Satisfied to some extent	4	21.1
Not satisfied at all	-	-

The officials were asked to what extent they were satisfied with the time given to the teaching practice itself. According to the above table, the majority of them were satisfied (very satisfied + satisfied), while 21.1% expressed a lesser degree of satisfaction. Again, none were dissatisfied.

**Table 159: Official Satisfaction with The Supervision of Teaching Practice**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	1	5.3
Satisfied	9	47.4
Satisfied to some extent	7	36.8
Not satisfied at all	2	10.5

When the interviewees were asked about supervision of teaching practice (52.7%) expressed satisfaction (very satisfied + satisfied), but more than a third were satisfied only "to some extent." and two were not satisfied at all.

## **11.8. Course Evaluation**

**Table 160: The Main Weaknesses in Academic Preparation**

<b>Aspect of Weakness</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Over emphasis on general education	12	63.2	1
Too much theory	11	57.9	2
Less attention paid to main subject	10	52.6	3

The overemphasis on general education was considered by 63.2% of the sample as the main weakness in the academic preparation, a view consistent with earlier responses by the interviewees (see Table 150). 57.9% of the interviewees commented on the excessively theoretical focus of the programme. One interviewee put as:

**I think the main problem, not only in the Arabic and Islamic studies but in the other department and other colleges and universities is that they always focus on the theory at the expense of practice issue.**

52.6% of the officials argued that inadequate attention is paid to the main subject, again confirming earlier responses (see Table 151).



**Table 161: The Main Strengths in Academic Preparation**

<b>Aspect of Weakness</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
The comprehensiveness of the curriculum	15	78.9	1
The good background in different fields	10	52.6	2

As shown in Table 161, officials identified two strengths in the academic preparation. The comprehensive of the curriculum was commended by almost four fifths of the sample, while over half said the programme provided a grounding in different fields.

**Table 162: The Main Weaknesses in Educational Preparation**

<b>Aspect of Weakness</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Unavailability of qualified professional trainers for each major subject	14	73.7	1
More focus on theory rather than the practice	13	68.4	2

When asked about possible weaknesses in the professional preparation, interviewees highlighted two issues: almost three-quarters lamented the non-availability of professional trainers for Arabic and Islamic student teachers. For example:

**The number of qualified professional trainers for Arabic and Islamic student teachers is very small in Teachers' colleges and this is the reason why we rely on academic staff who don't have enough experience of the teaching methods or education staff who lack the knowledge of the student's main subject.**

The other major problem was highlighted the focus on theory rather than giving practice due attention. As one interviewee put it:

**Education courses tend to focus on knowledge that students must memorise in order to pass in the exam, but there is no emphasis, as yet, on putting it into practice.**



**Table 163: The Main Strength in Education Preparation**

Aspect of Weakness	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Teaching practice	15	78.9	1
The variety of subjects which give students a good idea about different issues in education.	10	47.4	2

According to the above table, officials identified two strengths in the educational preparation. The teaching practice exercise was cited by 78.9% of the sample, while the variety of subjects taught, which give students a good idea about different issues in education, was commented on by 47.4% of them.

**Table 164: Ways to Improve the Current Teacher Training Programme**

Suggestion	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
Providing a qualified trainers in every major subject.	12	63.2	1
Graduates from teacher college to be teachers' college should not be accepted as they demonstrate their desire and ability to teach. Those who are not suitable should be transferred to another job, for example in the visual aids room or library	11	57.9	2
There is a need to provide staff with induction and in- service training.	9	47.4	3
More attention should be paid to main subject	8	42.1	4
There is need to review the current teacher training programme regularly	8	42.1	4
Some cut should be made in general education	7	36.8	6

The interviewees were asked to recommend changes which they thought would improve the current teacher training programme. The suggestions received are presented in Table 164. The suggestion most often made was providing qualified trainers in every major subject, a natural response to the weakness identified by the officials in answer to a previous question (see Table 161).

The need for staff induction and in service training was commented on by almost half of the sample. As one of them put it:

**In order to update the knowledge of teaching staff and to deal with any deficiency in teaching staff ability, in-service training is the right solution.**

In addition to staffing issues, interviewees made suggestions about programme content. Eight of them suggested that more attention should be paid to the main subject, and seven suggested cutting back on general courses. Following on from earlier comments about lack of evaluation, eight respondents recommended a review of the programme, for example.

**Unless we have regular revision to our curriculum we cannot improve any part of the programme**

Interestingly, however, the second most popular suggestion was not, strictly speaking, one for improving the programme itself but it concerned the future destination of its graduates (see Table 164). If, as this suggestion implies, administrators believe that some students are allowed to graduate from the college and become teachers, without having demonstrated sufficiently the ability to teach, then the colleges' assessment procedure is seriously called into question.

### **11.9. Summary of the Outcome of the Official Interview:**

The nineteen administrators interviewed included one or two who had been appointed at a relatively young age, perhaps to fill less prestigious posts in the smaller colleges. However, all were well-qualified academically, all except one having a post-graduate degree.

When asked about the admission procedure, few mentioned anything other than the officially prescribed combination of selection criteria, and the majority were satisfied with the current position in this regard. The great majority were also satisfied with the duration of the programme, though there were a few calls for it to be extended to five years.

Regarding curriculum planning, it was made clear that this is dominated by the Ministry of Education. Few interviewees mentioned any involvement of teaching staff, and only three had personal input into the curriculum, though it seemed to be viewed as more oriented to professional skills than the academic specialisation. All but two respondents were satisfied with the relevance of the course contents, though it was suggested that too much attention is paid to general preparation and Islamic Education, and not enough to the academic specialisation. This latter view was reflected in suggestions for additional courses. Time-tabling problems were seen as the main reason for not introducing the desired courses.

Library facilities, audio-visual aids and recreational facilities were not highly rated by the respondents.

Regarding teaching practice, interviewees were satisfied with its organisation and the time allocated to it, but less satisfied with supervision.

Evaluating the course overall, the main problems on the academic side were said to be over-emphasis on general education and a highly theoretical approach. The same focus on theory was found in the case of professional preparation. Lack of professional trainers was the other problem identified in this component of the course. For both academic and professional components, the breadth of the curriculum was seen as a strength.

A number of suggestions were made for improving the programme. These related to staff (provision of qualified trainers - in-service training), programme content (more attention to main subject, less to general education) and programme evaluation. It was also suggested that trainees who did not demonstrate sufficient teaching ability be directed into non-teaching posts.

This report of the views expressed by administrators in interview reveals some interesting similarities and differences in perception between them and those directly involved in the programme. The issues raised by the three groups will be discussed in the next chapter.



# Chapter Twelve

## Discussion of the Results

### 12.1. Introduction

This survey research, as indicated in chapter one, was basically designed to investigate the professional preparation of Arabic and Islamic teacher training in teachers college in Saudi Arabia. In this respect, Al-sef argued that:

**The need for research into educational issues would seem to be unlimited. Although knowledge in this field continues to increase, there is a demand for further research in order to understand and thus to improve the quality of education remains. Some issues in education are more important, and more urgent than others and could be given priority(1).**

In the light of the above argument and when considering the research position in Saudi Arabia, the present survey can be seen as meeting an urgent need.

The foregoing chapters have reported the responses obtained from three interest groups, to the questionnaires and interviews:

In this chapter the results obtained are discussed and interpreted in terms of the current status of the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme in Saudi Arabia and of relevant literature. It is in the discussion and interpretation of the results that the real value of data of an educational study lies. Reichmann observed that proper use and interpretation of the results can

produce meaningful results(2). In order to provide clarity in the analysis, comments in this chapter are arranged under headings which coincide with those within chapters eight, nine, ten and eleven, i.e.

1. admission criteria
2. duration of the programme
3. teacher training curriculum
4. facilities
5. teaching methods
6. teaching practice
7. course evaluation
8. administration and organisation.

## **12.2. Admission**

During the last decades, admission to teacher training programmes in Saudi Arabia was based only on the grade point average of the applicants. This was due to the lack of graduates from the secondary stage and the urgent demand for teachers to meet the expansion in public education. Today, the situation is different because there is a huge number of secondary graduates, while at the same time, the country is close to achieving staff sufficiency. In view of these facts, the policy makers in the Ministry of Education raised the admission requirement in the teacher colleges to include passing a written examination and personal interviews as well as having attained the minimum grade requirement(3). In fact, the admission requirement does not give a guarantee of candidates' suitability before training, but it increases the possibility that the

training programme will be able to develop the potential of the prospective teachers selected into an effective teaching force through professional training.

The findings of this study suggest that the procedure mentioned in the regulations (examination, interview and high grade) is not followed, as only 36.0% of student teachers and teaching staff reported use of all three criteria. In the official case, it was found the majority (78.9%) believed the regulations to be implemented. Such a difference in opinions is to be expected in one sense because the officials tend to have a high regard for the regulation and are further removed than students and staff, from day-to-day practice. As a result of inconsistency in implementing the selection procedure, it is possible that students of relatively low calibre, or with little real interest in teaching, were admitted to the college, after failing to find a place elsewhere. In many Arab States, it is the policy of universities to assign students to courses on the basis of availability of places or of, for example, the student's grade point average in high school, irrespective of the student's own inclinations and preference. In such institutions, it is often the case that students with higher GPA are assigned to courses such as medicine or science, while the education department is allocated students with comparatively poor GPA(4). Unfortunately, approximately a quarter of student teachers studying Arabic and Islamic subjects were not doing so out of choice, and so many have been directed to a subject for which they may not have had real aptitude or interest. These considerations may explain why, when student teachers were asked to express the



level of their satisfaction about admission procedure, it was found that over half (56.7%) were relatively unsatisfied, while the officials and teaching staff were satisfied with the admission procedure.

Teacher colleges ought to be give priority to obtaining students who have good ability, if the aim of education in Saudi Arabia is to produce sufficient skilled manpower to satisfy the needs of the nation in different areas of life. In order to produce able doctors and engineers, there must first of all be skilled and intelligent teachers who can instruct them. It is logical to assume that if sufficient able students entered teacher colleges, this would ensure a greater supply of gifted teachers who, in turn, would produce more able students to meet the nation's needs.

### **12.3. Duration**

The literature review revealed that there is no full agreement among educationalists in different countries about the appropriate duration of teacher training programmes. It varies from one country to another. However, there is a widespread tendency among many countries for the period of teacher training to be extended. In Saudi Arabia (as explained further in Chapter Six) elementary school teachers (including Arabic and Islamic teacher) used to be prepared through a two-year Junior Colleges course after the secondary certificate. However, the Junior Colleges came under pressure to improve the quality of their programmes, and many educators suggested the extension of the teacher education



programme into a four year programme, so that the teacher would be provided with more than the traditional academic and professional components, by including, for example, field experience, internships and advanced theoretical studies and pedagogic skills. In 1989, the Ministry of Education responded to this suggestion. Accordingly, a new decree was issued to replace the Junior Colleges with Teachers Colleges, in which the study would be for four years(5). In this study, the majority of respondents in all groups were satisfied that this length of programme is appropriate. Only a few respondents were not happy with the duration of the programme and were, accordingly, asked to give their suggestions regarding the suitable period. It was found that the majority of these suggested a reduction to three years, while the remainder, included three officials, suggested their training be extended to five years.

#### **12.4. The Teacher Training Curriculum**

The curriculum provided to Islamic and Arabic Teachers during their preparation in teacher colleges, may be expected to have a crucial influence on their effectiveness in their later teaching practice. This enquiry has shown that student teachers and teaching staff are relatively dissatisfied with the programme(44.3% satisfied 'to some extent' and 15.8% not satisfied at all), though over half the officials (57.9%) expressed their satisfaction with the present teacher training curriculum.

It is interesting that, as with admission criteria, the greatest satisfaction was expressed by those least in contact with the day to day realities of the programme. Since it is the students and teaching staff who are directly experiencing the teacher training curriculum, their relative dissatisfaction may be cause for concern, and careful consideration should be given to their views.

The suitable distribution of time among the different components which make up Arabic and Islamic teacher training is a significant factor. In the light of the previous literature review, one can conclude that a sound initial teacher preparation should include, in addition to general education, and the specialised academic area, educational and professional studies. UNESCO stated that

**it is accepted everywhere that teachers should possess a higher level of general education, know thoroughly the subjects they are to teach and through professional studies, be competent classroom teachers, administrators and advisors(6).**

Teachers' colleges in Saudi Arabia aim to provide these different strands of preparation by requiring students to follow a curriculum divided between three elements, namely

- (A) General preparation
- (B) The specialisation
- (C) Professional Education(7).

In this respect, the Saudi practice would appear to be consistent with theory, and with practice in other countries.

However, the literature review suggests that no full agreement has been reached on the balance that should be achieved in the course of preparing teachers for elementary education. In the case of the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme it was found that 57.5% of trainees believed only one of these elements was provided and they saw the focus as being on professional skills while a little under half the official sample (47%) were of the same view. However, teaching staff did not support this claim, as the majority of them (61%) believed the programme provides both academic and professional preparation. It should be borne in mind that teaching staff are not familiar with other courses since these may be taught in different way by different teaching staff. We must therefore give consideration to the view of students who are the ones who have experienced the courses and are now undergoing the experience of teaching practice.

Regarding the general education component, it was found that there was a general complaint from all samples that the attention paid to this component is too much. Confirmation of this result came in two ways. The first was when the participants were asked about any courses not related to the students' future work as teachers; all the subjects mentioned were general education courses. The second was the many suggestions made by the different participants, that there is a need to make some cut in the general education courses. As Chapter Six indicated, in the study plan, general education courses are given the highest weight(44.%). This is because when the first elementary teachers' institute were established, the purpose was to produce general class teachers, not



subject specialists. Although the purpose of the college has now changed and elementary teachers are now subject specialists, this change is not reflected in the college curriculum.

Regarding the specialisation course, most participants in all three groups emphasised that insufficient attention is given to the main subject. Supporting this view, many participants from the different groups, when asked whether there was any need to add some courses to the study plan, suggested more attention to the main subject, making this the first ranking among the suggestions offered. Many justified this by adding that the time given to this component is not enough. This area constitutes less than 30% of the study plan. In England, by comparison, up to 50 per cent of B.Ed course time is allocated to academic subject study(8) and more recently, HMI has proposed that all B.Ed students should spend half of their training course on the main area of specialised academic study(9) Thus, the situation in the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme, is contrary to the trends and theories indicated in the literature, where most of studies have stressed that students at the teacher training level should gain a good standard of specialist subject knowledge. Abdullah asserted that:

**when a teacher does not have complete mastery of the subject he teaches, his definitions and proofs are developed with subtle errors(10).**

It is not enough to have knowledge of primary school Arabic and Islamic studies in order to become a component primary Arabic and Islamic teacher. Teachers should have a broad and deep



knowledge of their field so as to be able to gear their teaching to students' future needs, and to meet the needs of gifted pupils.

Concerning the educational courses, it was found that the majority of respondents from different groups were generally agreed that time spent on General Educational Principles, Educational Administration and Educational Psychology is enough. In the case of Sociological and Cultural Issues, however, while over half of the teaching staff and officials were satisfied with the attention paid to this subject, 45.4% of the student teachers saw it as inadequate. Regarding Islamic education, over half of student teachers and their teaching staff were satisfied with the time spent on this subject, whereas the majority of officials believed that this course is given too much attention. Again, consideration must be given to students who receive the courses in estimating the actual need. In relation to the methodology courses, it was found that while the majority of officials were satisfied with the time spent on this area, the majority of student teachers (68.5%) and over half their teaching staff (54.8%) did not support such claim, and believed the time is not enough. This answer was confirmed by the suggestion of some students and teaching staff that there is a need to add courses in teaching methodology as the time specified is not enough. According to the study plan (see Chapter Six) students receive only one course in methodology relevant to their chosen specialisation. Some students admitted that they faced problems in teaching subjects for which their training had not equipped them. Furthermore, the special methods courses are taught by teaching staff who have had no professional training in teaching Arabic and

Islamic subjects. In practice, student teachers appreciate courses which are related to teaching skills rather than other aspects of professional content. The results of this study are in the line with the results of a survey by Al-Kalizh about professional teacher preparation in Egypt, which revealed that the majority of students believed that the most beneficial courses in their programme were: teaching methods, teaching practice, teaching aids, the organisation of curricula, and educational sociology(11).

In fact, the methodology of teaching Arabic and Islamic studies is not simply a matter of acquiring the different principles underlying different methods; rather it is the acquisition of the teaching skills through practical work, reflecting the principles behind them. Moorwood suggested a step-by step transition from aims and principles (in lecture form) to methods (via demonstration and discussion) to techniques (at the time of practising a method) which will lead to a far more realistic discussion of methods and will make further discussion or lectures on aims and principles a more relevant and meaningful(12) Accordingly, this subject deserves careful attention, so that student teachers can meet the challenge when they start to teach.

Concerning the need for additional courses, the majority of student teachers (60.6%) and officials(68.4%) believed that the programme needs some additional courses, while only 41.3% of teaching staff supported such a claim. Thus, although teaching staff were to some extent aware of needs that are not being met by the

current programme, it seems that they were perhaps not aware of the full extent to which students felt such needs.

Interestingly, there are some subjects, the need for which was identified by all three samples. These were the main subject and computers. Student teachers and teaching staff also added the holy Quran. Moreover, student teachers and officials suggested including teaching aids, and special teaching methods. Each individual sample mentioned some other courses. For example, some student teachers felt a need for a course on modern dictionaries while teaching staff included four subject research skills, linguistic curriculum, micro teaching and citizen education. Officials suggested two more courses, Arabic language and pre-school education.

When the sample who suggested extra courses were asked to indicate why they felt these subjects should be added, there were three reasons on which there was general agreement. The main reason was that the time currently given to these subject is not enough. The second was the weakness of teachers in their main subjects, and the third, the perceived importance of these subjects. Also, there were some reasons mentioned by only one type of sample. 14.3% of the student teachers stated the reason that there is a need to train students in designing the necessary teaching aids. Student teachers mentioned that other reasons were to facilitate the learning process(10.4%) and to reduce the problems when teach at school(10.4%).Again, teaching staff mentioned some other reasons which were to train students in research skills( 16.2), to increase



their teaching skills(11.5%) and to implant the love of country in the souls of the students( 6.8%).

The whole sample indicated that the main reason for not introducing the extra courses suggested is an inappropriate time table. The other reasons mentioned by many participants in the whole sample were the absence of continuous evaluation and financial problems. Student teachers and their teaching staff, however, mentioned another reason, that the importance of these courses is not clear to the planners. They saw this as the second most important reason, mentioned by 31.3% of the sample. Another reason mentioned by student teachers only was Centralisation of the system, mentioned by 9.1% of the sample.

In short, it is clear from the above that the curriculum of the teacher training programme needs revision. It has evidently suffered from the absence of evaluation. It is widely accepted that evaluation should be a continuous process, so that the strengths and weakness of what is being taught or learnt can be assessed, thus enabling the programme to be improved. Some educationalists think that student opinion is very important because it is the students who are in receipt of this education. For example, Saman and others argued that because the curriculum is produced for the benefit of the students and it is the students who are directly affected by it, they should therefore be involved in its evaluation.(13). Even teaching staff have no real role in the planning of the teacher training curriculum, as was indicated, when teaching staff were asked who is responsible for planning the



curriculum It was found that the majority of officials (73.7%) said the Ministry of Education alone and 43.1% of the teaching sample supported such a claim. Only 13.6% indicated that they had input in this respect. In the official case, also only three interviewees indicated that they had input in that area.

This situation may be due to the factor mentioned by some student teachers and observed by Al-Eissa namely:  
the most obvious characteristics of the educational system is its very tight centralisation with all aspects being subject to central control, with policy matter being legislated centralisation of the programmes by the Ministry of Education. Curricula, syllabus are uniform across the country(14).

In fact, it is a major weakness in curriculum provision in Saudi education that the decision-making is not informed by contact with current daily activities or practices in schools and there is a lack of participation of teachers, principals, parents and students. The role of teachers in curriculum affairs is to teach the prescribed syllabus to the learners without involvement in curriculum development(15)

Rutter et al, reported that schools performed better when teachers worked with a group-planned curriculum. This gave the teachers a greater sense of belonging and involvement in the work they were doing. They reported that importantly, where teachers had this sense of involvement with the curriculum they were

delivering, more favourable pupil outcomes were seen. Involvement in curriculum decision-making was found to correlate positively with better pupil performance(16).

If Islamic and Arabic student teachers are to be trained well, one of the most crucial factors is that teaching staff and student teachers should be active participants in the process rather than passive recipients of it, as happens in the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme in the Teachers' colleges.

### **12.5. Facilities**

The achievement of teacher training programme goals require facilities. Among these are the library, visual aids and recreational facilities. The participants were asked to indicate on four point scales, the level of availability of these facilities. None of the facilities were highly rated. In the case of library facilities, only 28.7% of students and 34.6% of staff found the facilities very adequate or adequate. In the official case, over half of the sample said the provision of the library facilities in colleges was adequate, but only 'to some extent.'

Regarding visual aids, almost half (48.0%) of student teachers found them adequate but only 'to some extent' while over half of the staff sample (55.%) gave a similar rating. However, the audio visual aids received higher satisfaction rating from the officials, than did libraries. This may, of course, indicate not that

the facilities are better, but that the officials saw less need for them.

Concerning recreational facilities, the level of provision was perceived to be a less adequate; indeed 35.4% of student teachers said they were not available at all. Teaching staff were also unsatisfied with 32.4% indicating that facilities were not adequate, and 19.9% saying they were not available at all. Regarding the officials their opinions on recreational facilities were mixed. 42.1% of interviewees found them inadequate and three people said they were not available at all; yet these were the only facilities which received an 'adequate' rating from some interviewees in this category. Again, this may indicate that little importance was attached to recreational facilities by these interviewees, so that they were satisfied with a low level of provision. On the other hand, the differences in views may have reflected difference in resources among the various colleges. What is certain is that participants' responses indicate a very low level of satisfaction with all facilities.

As a result of the lack or shortage of required facilities, equipment and teaching materials, all subjects tend to be taught theoretically and teaching staff rely heavily on the use of formal teacher-centred instruction methods, conducive to passive learning. One may conclude that although major improvements have been achieved in the provision of institute buildings, and the teaching staff and student class ratios, as a consequence of central administration and financing, the Teachers' Colleges are not



endowed with appropriate facilities and equipment. They are under-supplied, and ill-equipped with teaching aids. Under such conditions, teaching in Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme has been dominated by the official reference books, the spoken word, and the chalkboard. In brief, the present Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme is characterised by the absence of the use of multi-media techniques in teaching.

With such weakness, the quality of Arabic and Islamic teacher training programmes in teachers colleges will continue to be in question. More attention should be given by the Ministry of Education to the provision of educational facilities and equipment in the field of teacher education. Efforts are needed to give the teaching staff the required educational materials and apparatus. Teaching staff should be trained to use the available facilities and equipment effectively. Students should be exposed to a variety of instructional media throughout the training course.

Finally, the use of the library to facilitate study and learning should be developed at an early stage. Teachers feel students lack research skills and want to provide training in them- but students cannot develop research skills if library facilities are inadequate. The use of reference books, the study of a variety of texts and not merely the set book should become part of the learning stages applied in Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme in teachers colleges. Such effort will improve the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme., and subsequently the primary education in Saudi Arabic.



## **12.6. Teaching Methods**

Teacher training institutions are expected more than other institutions, to employ a varied and effective use of appropriate teaching and training methods. This is partly because the variety of components of initial teacher training programmes, i.e. curriculum content to be transmitted, professional knowledge to be provided and operational skills to be acquired, necessitate the use of more than one pedagogical technique.

Although there are many teaching methods which could be used by teaching staff there are a number of factors which hinder or even prevent them from applying certain instruction techniques. Among these factors may be the students' general learning abilities and attitudes, the training policy or approach adopted by the educational authority, the subject matter itself and the objectives of the course. Again, the availability of resources and facilities is a factor and last but not at least, the tutors' level of competency in the techniques.

Having said this, we turn now to examine those teaching methods actually used in Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme in teachers colleges. The survey revealed that that lecture and discussion are the main teaching techniques used by teaching staff. Staff claimed the question technique was often employed but only 24.6% of staff used demonstration. Unfortunately, the use of traditional methods is one of the

characteristics of Arabic and Islamic subject teaching, even at the school stage. Thus, the results of this study are similar to those of Al-Meajal(17), Al-Shafee(18) Al-Sadan(19), and Al-Safee(20) confirming that teaching methods are often poor and ineffective, leaving most of the participants feeling their teachers did not make the best use of the opportunities in teaching. The continuous use of traditional methods by teaching staff might be attributed to the following factors:

#### 1. The quality of student teachers:

As has already been mentioned, trainees are selected to enter the programme to teach in basic education. Their schooling has been based on the formal class lesson style supplemented by homework. For this group, in particular, the pattern of much college instruction, attendance at classes and the production of their own course notes, present difficulties. Therefore teaching staff have to begin their lessons by testing what was dealt with in previous lessons, to be sure their students have understood the basis of work. Some students have low academic standards as well as low motivation. Applying instruction techniques other than the traditional ones, requires students to possess certain abilities as well as the motivation to participate actively in the learning situation. Group discussion, private study and other methods can be conducted successfully only when with well motivated students who have acquired study skills, research skills and ability to use different learning resources.

#### 2. The rigidity of curriculum

As indicated in an earlier chapter, Teachers' Colleges have a unified curriculum and teaching staff are required to teach the

content prescribed by the regulations, to use the prescribed materials and to prepare students to pass the examination. Furthermore, the courses are designed as detailed packages which allow little in the way of individual interpretation.

### 3. The lack of required facilities:

As answers in the previous section revealed, audio visual aids are relatively inadequate.

### 4. Overloaded timetable

The present curricula are seen by tutors as overcrowded on existing time allocations. It is difficult, if not impossible, to cover all the requisite subject matter by using teaching methods other than the traditional formal lesson style.

### 5. The examination system:

The present assessment system forces teaching staff to process students from one stage to another. The teaching staff rely heavily on their students memorising facts, and assess them in these terms. This could, perhaps, be seen as a legacy of the early approaches to teaching described in Chapter Three.

## **12.7. Teaching Practice**

Teaching practice is considered one of the most important components in the initial training programme. It is the vehicle which puts into practice the theoretical aspects of the course of professional preparation and during which teaching skills may be



acquired and improved. The researcher believes that teaching practice:

- 1). is a time for students to apply their knowledge of teaching in a real classroom situation;
- 2). is an opportunity to reflect on how each individual utilises the teaching methods learned and will indicate which areas of teaching are to be improved upon.
- 3). gives opportunities for good question and answer technique, careful planning, clear speech, a pleasant and encouraging manner, selecting of visual aids and lesson preparation;
- 4) allows students to see if the methods and techniques they have been taught are applicable to different types of schools. and if there are any problems, to let their tutors know of these problems.(21)

In short, there is no argument among educationists about the value and importance of teaching practice. There may, however, well be differences with regard to its practical resolution, time allocation, the supervisory requirements and so on. The general procedure and different aspects were discussed in Chapter Four. This section will discuss the participants' opinions related to aspects of teaching practice activity.

### **12.7.1 The Organisation of the Teaching Practice:**

The organisation of the teaching practice is one of several factors which can contribute positively or negatively to the effectiveness of teaching practice. Any weakness in organisation resulting from poor planning or any other factor, could affect the whole and thus obstruct the achievement of teaching practice objectives. When the participants were asked to record their level of satisfaction with the organisation of teaching practice, it was found that the majority of



teaching staff (70.7%) were satisfied with the organisation of teaching practice, compared with (54%) of the student teacher sample. In respect of official satisfaction with the organisation of teaching practice it was found that more than half of the sample 57.9% were satisfied (very satisfied + satisfied). In short, most participants are satisfied with the organisation of teaching practice.

### **12.7.2. The Duration of the Teaching Practice:**

One of the unique characteristics of teaching practice is its limited duration. However, this period should be long enough for considerable development to take place in the student teacher's competence and confidence in doing the job, and for him to develop increasing interest in the task of teaching.(22). In Saudi Arabia (as explained in more detail in Chapter Six), the period of teaching practice for intending primary teachers has been extended to 15 weeks, occupying the whole of the last semester of the programme(23).

Over half of the sample (52%) of student teachers were satisfied only to some extent or not satisfied with this duration, whereas the teaching staff were equally divided between those who were satisfied and those who were relatively dissatisfied (satisfied to some extent or not satisfied at all). The officials (78.9%) were more satisfied with the time allocated to teaching practice than other groups, but it must be remembered that they themselves had no direct experience of teaching practice. The survey suggests that those who have experience of teaching

practice and see their own needs, or those of their students, find the duration inadequate. Indeed, the literature review suggests that teacher training institutions differ in the amount of time allocated to teaching practice. The time allocated for teaching practice in any teacher training programme is a matter particular to each programme because it depends on general considerations such as the duration of the programme and the previous direct experience of students. However, there is a notion that the period of teaching practice should be extended. Tibble believed that such an extension would provide the student teacher with more time:

**to find his feet, to get to know children and staff,  
to gain confidence, to make mistakes and have  
time to correct them(24)**

### **12.7.3. Observation**

Teaching practice is a critical transition stage for student teachers and they should be gradually guided into it. This can be accomplished by making arrangements for students to spend a period of time observing school teachers and pupils in different learning situations. Student teachers were asked if the programme provided enough observation opportunities, and 54.3% indicated that the period of observation is enough, but 45.7% found it insufficient. It is worth mentioning here that there is no specification of the required number of lessons to be observed by students. The supervisor is given discretion to choose the appropriate number for each student.(25). The investigator discussed this matter with some supervisors who explained that they arranged a few observations and took the rest of the time for actual teaching; there was not enough time for a prolonged

observation period. When student teachers were asked how many lessons they observed, it was found that the great majority (80.3%) had observed five lessons or less. It is very obvious from this result that most student teachers only observed a very limited number of lessons. An inquiry into the operation of PGCE courses in England and Wales showed that student teachers had undertaken periods of observation in schools either before the course proper commenced, or during the period of the course. The number of days spent on observation both before the formal beginning of the course and during the period of the course differed from one college to another and within the departments. However, the mean was 12 days, 27% of student teachers spent fewer than five days, while 21% had 16 or more days observation.(26). Thus, the Saudi practice compares very unfavourably in this regard.

To make the observation phase of the teaching practice element contribute effectively to the achievement of the objectives of teaching practice, students should be made aware of the purposes of spending a portion of time observing school teachers and pupils in different learning situations. Unless these this made clear to the students, such activities might be perceived as wasting time. Unfortunately, a large proportion of students said they were not made aware of the aims of the observation period, and sitting in the classroom having no idea about the purpose of this activity. That means this group of students might sit in the classroom watching, but not observing, as they have no guidelines to follow and no specific assignments to perform.



Even students who were told the purposes of the observation were not necessarily told what things to observe. More than half of the sample (52%) were asked to observe lessons without specifying the aspects to be watched. Indeed, asking student teachers to observe a lesson without specifying precisely the aspects to be watched does not make any sense to student teachers who have already spent many years watching their teachers at different schooling levels. Consequently, it is essential to make sure student teachers know precisely what to observe and train them how to observe, as well as the way in which to classify and analyse collected data. Mills suggested that a training programme should be organised for student teachers to develop their own recording skills and devices. Among these skills are: tallying, listing, coding, verbatim recording, anecdotal recording and timing(27). In the present study it was found, out of 127 student teachers, only 30 (23%) were given clear instructions and guidelines about note-taking during observation. The student teachers should be asked to observe and then to write an account about the various phases observed, and to interpret what took place. The student teacher could also write about the observed aspects by answering a set of questions concerning specific features of the activities watched(28).

One way of making students more able to examine and interpret the data collected through their attending lessons in school, is by holding post observation discussion with teachers.. Such contacts are more likely to develop professional and personal relationships between school teachers and trainees. In this present



study, the majority (63.8%) said they were able to discuss the lesson observed with teachers and 36.2% were not. In fact, these discussions could develop and improve the students' abilities to explain the gathered data in the light of their training courses and at the same time to identify those training areas that must be given further attention, audio visual aids used and the assessment techniques employed(29).

During the observation phase, student teachers should be provided with opportunity to observe a number of experienced teachers working in different classes and grades. Arrangements should be made for students to attend learning situations affecting the classes which they might be required to teach later, and so enable them to make contact with pupils. In practice, however, only 35.4% of student teachers to observed more than one teacher with more than one class. The remaining student teachers observed more than one teacher with one class, one teacher with more than one class or one teacher with one class (22.0%, 22.0% and 20.5% respectively). It seems that for some students, then, observation may provide a very limited perspective on teaching strategies and opportunity to observe relatively few pupils.

In short, it seems that achievement of objectives of the observation activity is at present impeded by lack of clear planning on the part of both student teachers and their supervisors.

#### **12.7.4. The Supervision**

The different aspects of supervision were discussed in Chapter Six. In this section, selected supervisory activities are to be examined in the light of the evidence of the fieldwork carried out by the investigator 1996.

Regarding levels of satisfaction with supervision, it was found that over half the student teachers and teaching staff are relatively dissatisfied (satisfied to some extent, not satisfied at all), though over half of the officials (52.7%) expressed satisfaction (very satisfied + satisfied), suggesting again, that officials may not be in touch with the realities of teaching practice as experienced by staff and students.

An examination of the regulations in Teachers' Colleges, reveals some probable reasons for the relative dissatisfaction of the latter groups. The supervisor should hold a PhD, or at least a Master's degree, in the student teacher's major subject, in this case, Arabic or Islamic studies(30). It seems that although the regulations stipulate the academic qualification to be possessed by the supervisor, there is no such stipulation regarding professional training or experience. It is remarkable that supervisors for Arabic and Islamic study student teachers have good academic backgrounds but lack the requisite professional training. Even though the teacher colleges were established some years ago, in-service training courses designed for the teaching staff of those colleges have not been introduced. The problem is exacerbated by

the fact that so few supervisors had much experience as school teachers. Again, this may be related to the regulation requiring teaching staff to hold a PhD, or at least a Master's degree. However, academic excellence in a field of study does not necessarily equip a person to go into the classroom and transmit his or her knowledge effectively. Education itself is subject which requires a study in order to train teachers of appropriate quality. This appears to have been a low priority in appointing staff to teacher colleges.

In fact, great attention should be made to the selection and training of the staff member of teacher training programme, so that they will be seen to be people of special professional qualifications. Short intensive in-service training programme should be organised by the Ministry of Education. Two international conferences have emphasised the importance of in-service training to teacher educators. The first was the Commonwealth conference held in 1973 which recommended that:

**All teacher educators should receive induction to their work and on-going support through their career(31)**

The second was the International Conference of Education held in 1975 which recommended the following:

**Those responsible for the education teachers should have at their disposal all the necessary means of keeping abreast of progress achieved in the feild of education and of new methodologies and approaches concerning their specific function(32)**



In summary, the selection and training of teacher educators is of paramount importance and cannot be over stressed.

Another problem with supervision is that the regulations neglect the importance of the school co-operating teacher, giving him no specific role at all in the teaching practice process. According to the literature, and practice elsewhere the co-operating teacher has an important part to play in the teaching practice period. Olaitan and Agusiobo pointed out that the co-operating teacher has two advantages, in that he is present throughout the period of practice teaching, and that he knows the school and pupils well(33). Indeed, research findings support the idea of appointing school teachers as supervisors of student teachers in teaching practice. In a survey of B.Ed and certificate students by Yates, it was found that about three-quarters of them believed that teachers in school had been of greater help and made more valid evaluations than their college supervisors.(34). Similarly, Andrews and Protherough stated that many students they interviewed found the supervision offered within the schools most helpful(35).

An important duty of the Teachers' College is to guarantee as far as possible that student teachers are not only supervised by specialist persons but, even more important, that the process of supervision is effectively carried out. School teachers can play a great role in the professional preparation of student teachers. This does not mean that supervision of student teachers on teaching practice need depend entirely on school teachers, but they should



play the key role. The researcher believes that both of them have a very important role in implementation of the teaching process and the role of each one of them should be complemented by the other and not duplicate it. Unfortunately, the role of the school teacher is one of the elements which today's teaching practice in Teachers' Colleges is lacking.

Concerning the number of visits paid to each student teacher, it was found that while the majority of supervisors 80.5% stated that they made three and more visits, 45.7% of students said they received one or two only. This differences between the opinions of the two groups may be seen as natural if we take into account that the supervisors are the ones who perform these visits and are therefore most likely to defend the quality of their supervision. However, it should be noted that the data revealed in the survey refer to the whole teaching practice period. In other words, a quarter of the whole sample of student teachers and teaching staff mentioned only one or two visits, during the whole semester. This small number brings the effectiveness of supervision into question, especially in view of the lack of provision in the regulations for supervision by the school. This lack of visits also may come as a result of two factors: first of all, that the supervisors are academic teachers rather than professional trainers and may not recognise appropriate the importance of frequent visits to student teachers, and secondly, that the regulations of the Teachers College do not specify the number of visits, leaving it to the supervisor's discretion (see Chapter Six).

The main task of the teacher training programme is not only to educate and train student teachers, but also to prepare the ground for them in school so as to create an appropriate atmosphere and, as far as possible, to maintain a balance between what should happen ideally and what the school feels it can provide. Meetings between the teaching staff of both the training college and the practice school to discuss the process of teaching practice are certainly desirable. In such meetings, the aims and problems of teaching practice could be discussed and further suggestions made, agreed upon and implemented. It was therefore encouraging to find that the majority (86.3%) of the supervisor discussed arrangements and requirements for teaching practice with the school.

Regarding participation in school activities it was found that 59.8% of the supervisors stated that they made arrangements for activities other than classroom observation and teaching. In the light of the responses of the supervisors, one concludes that the majority of the supervisors did arrange for their trainees to participate in the activities other than teaching and observation; however, 40.2% did not make this sort of arrangement. That means their trainees are deprived of useful experience that might be acquired through the involvement in a variety of school activities. This may be attributed to the fact that the administrative responsibilities which might be carried out by student teachers are very limited. Consequently, only a few students could be allowed to practise such duties. Also, the range of out of classroom activities such as sports, arts, etc. differs from one school to

another. Therefore the extent to which student may participate and be in-involved in school extra curricular differs accordingly.

### **12.7.5. The Method of Assessment**

Assessment is an essential element in the professional preparation of teachers and is regarded by many experts as the most important aspect of the teacher training process. The supervisors were asked to list the criteria that they used to assess student teachers. It appears from the responses of the supervisors that the main criteria are:

1. preparation of the lesson
2. evaluation card
3. student personality and appearance
4. relationships and participation
5. presentation of the lesson
6. using teaching aids
7. fluency in Arabic language, spoken and written
8. student involvement in the activities
9. student success in achieving the objectives of lessons

From these responses, a number of general observations can be made. Among these are:

1. There are differences between the categories of supervisors, as well as within each group concerning the criteria employed. Some criteria were not mentioned at all by the supervisors, and other referred to by limited number only. Again the supervisors listed some criteria in detail but mentioned others in general terms only.



The differences could be the result of the lack or shortage of professional training available.

2. Although student involvement in school activities is an important experience, which should be taken into account in the assessment of the student, nevertheless this criterion was mentioned by only 22.% only and overlooked by the majority of the supervisors.

3. Comparing the assessment criteria set by the Ministry of Education and the criteria reported by the supervisors one finds that most of the supervisor, did not apply the official criteria. The evidence shows that the supervisors applied other criteria to those contained in the official instrument (see Chapter Six).

The official assessment instrument was established some years ago, and has not witnessed any improvement subsequently, despite the weakness which limit its value. This has caused supervisors to establish their own criteria, which include some of the official criteria, plus others derived from their own teaching experience, and their perceptions of the good teacher and of effective teaching.

The overwhelming majority of the supervisors claimed that they had made student teachers aware of the assessment criteria used by them, most doing so verbally and/or by handout. Factors that might have caused some supervisors to rely on the oral method in informing students about the assessment criteria were:



1. The official assessment criteria established by the Ministry of Education has not been widely enforced by teachers colleges.
2. There is a lack of standard issued assessment criteria
3. The supervisors are not officially required to provide the student teacher with copies of their assessment or reports.

The inadequacy of these efforts are indicated by the fact that uncertainty about the evaluation system was one of the problems mentioned by students.

The assessment of teaching practice is a very important function and should be given more attention by the educational authority. Its importance can be appreciated more when we remember that induction programmes for new teachers have no place in teacher education in the country, and in-service training is organised on a limited scale only. In fact, the assessment of teaching practice is one of the major problems which face teacher education programmes in both developing and developed countries throughout the world. However, efforts are presently being exerted to improve this aspect by attempting to develop valid and reliable assessment instruments, and so raise the quality of assessors themselves.

## **12.8 Course Evaluation**

It might be appropriate to remind the reader that the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme is designed to prepare qualified Arabic and Islamic teachers for the primary stage. As discussed

earlier, this requires an appropriate balance of academic and professional preparation.

### **12.8.1. Academic Preparation**

The participants in the study were asked the main weakness and main strengths in academic preparation. Starting with the weaknesses in academic preparation, it was found that there was general agreement from the different samples on two weaknesses in academic preparation. The first was the over-emphasis on general education, which had also been reflected in answers given in earlier sections.

The second weakness was inadequate attention paid to the main subject, again confirming earlier responses. Many suggestions from the different samples were made, that in order to improve the level of Arabic and Islamic teachers and to overcome the problems which face teachers during teaching enough attention must be paid to the main subject. The literature review supports this suggestion.

Abdullah observed that:

**A particular change for the providers of curriculum courses is the need to develop students' understanding of a relevant subject as well as training them to teach it(36)**

The teaching staff and officials agreed on another weakness, that the academic preparation is theoretically rather than practically oriented. UNESCO, cited in Shaw, recognised the need for balance between theoretical and practical aspects and advocates that:

**Training programmes should, whenever possible, be arranged so as to provide training in professions which are not narrowly specialised, allowing for interaction between general education, theoretical instruction, practical training in workshop, and other simulate facilities, including field work. To this end, it is desirable to secure the participation of specialists.(37)**

Student teachers and their teaching staff agreed on another two weaknesses. The first of these was a lack of co-ordination and integration between academic and educational elements. The literature emphasises that the academic specialisation needs to be related to the teacher's profession. Renshaw cited in Al-Shabbi said:

**There needs to be a close relationship between academic and professional studies(38).**

He added that academic studies should not be isolated, but should be an integral part of professional study. Marssion also stated that:

**Academic subject specialisation and educational theory is castigated for its neglect of the problems of day-to-day teaching and its apparent lack of relevance to the teacher(39).**

The second weakness which agreed on by student teachers and teaching staff was the lack of library facilities, supporting their earlier responses in which they had given only a moderate rating to the present library facilities.

Teaching staff pointed out some other weaknesses. 23.1% of the sample indicated a lack guiding principles and clearly defined

objectives. In fact, this is considered as a weakness in the present regulations. 18.2% of the sample mentioned that there are weaknesses in student teachers' research skills which hampers their academic preparation. This is consistent with an earlier suggestion that a course on research skills should be added to the study plan. Finally, student teachers indicated the use of traditional methods as the main weakness in the academic preparation.: again this is consistent with their earlier claim that the method most employed by teaching staff is the lecture.

Regarding the main strengths in the academic preparation, there was general agreement between the different samples on two points, namely, the comprehensiveness of the curriculum and the good background given in different fields. Student teachers and teaching staff also favoured the good connection between subject teaching and the Quran and Prophet traditional. Presumably this reflects the distinct nature of the particular subjects with which this study is concerned. A few teaching staff believed that the quality of teaching staff is the main strength in academic preparation, but this claim was not made by many of them and not by any of their students.

### **12.8.2. Educational Preparation**

The participants in the study were asked to evaluate the main weaknesses and strengths in the educational preparation component of the course. Starting with the weakness in educational preparation, in the supervision element it was found that all groups



of participants indicated a problem of unavailability of qualified professional trainers for Arabic and Islamic subjects. As it was pointed out earlier, the regulations require the supervisor to hold a PhD, or at least a Master's degree, in the student teacher's major subject, in this case, Arabic or Islamic studies. Knowledge or experience in education as a discipline in its own right appears to have been a low priority. In fact, some supervisors themselves agreed on that. When the researcher discussed this with some of them, they complained that they found it difficult to shoulder this task as they were trained in academic staff in Arabic or Islamic subjects and were not professional trainers. It is not surprising then, that student teachers complained of some weakness in supervisory activities. 58.3% of them claimed that they received no guidance from their supervisors in educational matters, 43.3% of them said no arrangements were made for their involvement in school activities, 48.0% had no idea about the pattern of evaluation and (51.2%) felt there was not enough observation; 19.4% of supervisors agreed on this.

All of these weaknesses in fact, can be attributed to the fact that the supervisors themselves were not qualified trainers; therefore, they did not provide the right supervision. Moreover, 13.6% of teaching staff criticised the assessment card; its limited value has led many of them to create their own criteria.

Regarding the organisation of teaching practice many weaknesses were indicated by student teachers and their teaching staff. Over half the student teachers (54.3%) and 26.9% of staff considered that one semester is not sufficient. This answer is

consistent with the suggestion of some students and teaching staff that the time for teaching practice should be extended to one year. Also, 37.% of the student teachers and 15.3% of staff mentioned the main weakness is that large number of students with each supervisor. However, when supervisors were requested to indicate the number of Arabic and Islamic student teachers supervised by them in the academic year 1995-1996, it was found that that few were charged with supervision of more than five students, so this comment may have reflected the views of a few over-burdened supervisors and their supervisees. The absence of the school teacher in the training process was indicated by only 9.8% of the sample of teaching staff. However, it is worth recalling that the majority of teaching staff and student teachers had earlier suggested that the way to improve the teaching practice process is to give the school teacher his proper role. British teacher training, as Downes mentioned, has developed "a staff-tutor scheme". This type of scheme gives the practice school responsibility for supervising the student teacher under the guidance of the college. There is what is called "a tutor student scheme" to enable students to meet with the college supervisors or school staff and work together. It is strongly believed that as the status of teachers (including Arabic and Islamic teachers) in Saudi is changing, school tutor schemes similar to those organised by teacher training colleges elsewhere should be adopted instead of relying so heavily on the college supervisors. Such schemes have been very successful elsewhere and the evidence obtained from the field work of this study suggests they would be welcomed by Saudi students and teaching staff..

In fact, the relationship and co-operation between the college and practice school is essential. In this regard, Renshaw cited in Al-Shabbi suggested that:

**The closer link between schools and schools and college must assume central importance in the future, not only in the course of initial training but also during the probationary and subsequent in-service training(40).**

In the Teachers' Colleges unfortunately, it was found that over half the teaching staff complained of a lack in co-ordination between school and college. Moreover, the poor choice of practice school was commented by 51.2% of student teachers. The literature review suggested that selected practice schools should be among those which are well-equipped, staffed with qualified teachers to serve as professionally competent co-operating teachers and above all, interested in providing training for student teachers.

The lack of co-operation from the practice school was expressed by 15.3% of teaching staff sample. In this regard, Olaitan and Agusiobo stated that the organiser sometimes may be faced with some schools which may not be willing to participate, for two reasons: firstly, owing to inability to adjust their programme to accommodate the practice teaching. Secondly, some schools may not be willing to participate because of inability of the principal and the members of staff to appreciate the importance of teaching practice to the professional development of the student teacher and the improvement of the teaching profession. In this case, the college co-ordinator or supervisor should visit them and

try to enlighten them about the importance of teaching practice to the professional development of the staff and the schools. Persuasion is a key element in making more schools participate in practice teaching(41).

One of the most important steps in the organisation of teaching practice is visiting the practice school before the teaching practice begins. In this study, it was found that 44.9% of student teachers considered the absence of such visits as a main weakness in their educational preparation. Abdullah has advised that in teaching practice students require explicit information about what they should be doing and specific instruction on how to go about it. This can not be left to chance(42). If teaching practice is to be directly integrated into college courses there must be proper arrangements for preparation and follow up. Preliminary visits have a dual purpose. First of all, they provide the student teachers with an introductory taste of the school, its atmosphere, its geography and its structure; and second, the tutor responsible for the practice will be able to conduct a very informal interview and assess possible strengths and weaknesses of the school.(43)

The lack of teaching aids was recorded as a main weakness in educational preparation by 37.8% of the students. This result is consistent with correspondence in a local newspaper, the Al-Riyadh Daily, in which Al-Anizy reported complaints about the lack of equipment in schools. He was quoted as saying that many schools suffer from a shortage of equipment and some teachers have even supplied the necessary equipment at their own



expense(44). The researcher encountered such problems during his work as a supervisor for Islamic and Arabic teachers during their teacher training programme at the Imam University in Riyadh, over a period of three years. Al-Shafee, similarly, reported that the use of audio-visual aids in the teaching of Islamic subjects was sometimes non-existent and he pointed out that one of the reasons was the shortage of audio-visual materials for Islamic subjects(45).

Regarding education courses, it was found some criticisms were that educational subjects are not connected with the situation in schools. (commented on by 39.6% of the teaching sample) and inadequacy in teaching methods courses for the major subject. These views are consistent with responses to earlier questions. The link between the curricula in the college and in basic education was absent in the opinions of 45.7% of student teachers. Many answers emphasised that students should have a good background about Arabic and Islamic subjects in primary school.

Finally, there was general agreement among most respondents that the course is too theoretical. Many student teachers (58.3%) and teaching staff (49.1%) commented on the lack of field visits. In contrast, the literature emphasises the need for a balance between theory and practice. Downes and Kelly as cited in Al-Shabbi mentioned that several theorists such as Petter, Car, Simon and others have enunciated two fundamental requirements for relating theory to practice.

1. Theory must be based on real classroom teaching.

2. Theory must not depend heavily on other bodies of theory for other purpose(46).

In the case of this study, the preparation provided by the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme in the teachers colleges is made up of general education, professional education and preparation for specialisation. These aspects should be integrated with "direct field experiences" in order to prepare students for their teaching practice and to achieve the goals of Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme.

To end this section, it is worth mentioning here that most of the different participants of this study viewed the teaching practice and the good proportion of the course devoted to educational subjects, as the main strengths in the educational programme. However, teaching methods courses were also mentioned as strengths of the programme, by 40.9% of trainees.

It seems from the above discussion that there is a need to revise the present teacher training programme. Indeed, many participants suggested that the absence of regular evaluation is one of the weaknesses of the present Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme. Accordingly, the researcher believes that the revision of the present Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme, taking into consideration the issues raised above, could help in improving the quality of Arabic and Islam teachers in the primary stage.

## **12.9. Administration and Organisation**

The organisation of the college plays a very important part in achieving programme goals. When the sample were asked to express their level of satisfaction with the organisation of the college, 52.8% were satisfied (very satisfied + satisfied,) though teaching staff were more satisfied than students. This divergence of the opinions may be seen as result of the fact that the supervisors are usually involved more in organising the college than students and therefore most likely to defend the satisfactory standard of organisation.

Views of the college administration were similar. 57.1% of the student teacher sample were satisfied or very satisfied with the administration of the college, while the majority of the teaching staff 66.51% were satisfied or very satisfied. Again, this divergence of opinions may be seen as a result of the fact that the supervisors may be involved in administration and therefore most likely to defend the satisfactory standard of administration.

### **12.9.1. The Problems and Obstacles which Hinder Achievement of Teacher Training Goals:**

Student teachers and teaching staff were asked to indicate if they faced any problem or obstacle which hindered them in the achievement of teacher training goals. In each case, a little over half the sample indicated that they had no problems or obstacles, with the number of students reporting problems, being greater than



that of staff. The student teachers and teaching staff who experienced problems were asked to give brief details of the problem(s) and obstacle(s) they had encountered.

In fact, student teachers and teaching staff agreed on two problems relating to teaching practice. The main one, mentioned by the majority of students(71.4%) and almost half the teaching staff (49.8%), was lack of co-operation from practice schools. This answer supports the teaching staff's view that this sort of lack is a main weakness in educational preparation. The inadequacy of the teaching practice period was identified by a few students and a few teaching staff, consistent with the earlier suggestion that the duration of teaching practice should be extended to one year.

Moreover, as expected, student teachers and teaching staff mentioned some other factors according to their interests and circumstances in the programme. Starting with students, over half of them criticised the organisation of teaching practice because they did not visit the school before starting in teaching practice. Again, this answer is consistent with the suggestion of some students that students should visit the school before teaching practice starts and with the answers of some student teachers who considered the lack of such visits as a weakness in educational preparation. Over half the student teachers claimed that the long distance between school and the college was a problem which hindered them from achieving the objectives of the teacher training programme. In fact, the location of schools has been found to affect the teaching practice in several ways. In a study conducted



to ascertain the relationship between teaching practice assessment and difficulties encountered in the teaching practice school, Hall, as cited in Al-Shabbi, found a significant relationship between the teaching practice placement and the assessment of teaching practice(47).

Moreover, a negative reaction to students' suggestions was considered by 61.9% of the sample as an obstacle which hindered them from achieving training goals. Inadequate attention to students' needs and concerns is also reflected in the absence of counselling and guidance for them during the teacher training programme.

The method of student assessment (which is by examination only, see Chapter Six) was considered a problem by 60.3% of the group. An examination of the regulations and procedures of assessment reveals that there is an absence of individual or group work by students. Apart from mid-term tests, student teachers are not obliged to present long essays, reports or projects. Thus, students are not exposed to learning situations in which they can experience the planning and conduct of research projects. Moreover, as the written examinations are based on the contents of the prescribed textbooks and memoranda, students tend to focus exclusively on these and are deprived of the potential benefits of wider reading on Arabic and Islamic studies, or on education more generally. Thus, it would appear that assessment methods in the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programmes may not be conducive to encouraging a range of work which would form

students' minds effectively. This is the situation not only in the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme or even just in teachers' colleges. It is a common problem that the educational system is geared towards examination system, which is considered the crucial gateway to personal advancement. The system has been described as a "killer of pupils". Teachers and students focus on only one objective: how many pupils will pass? The literature review suggests that student assessment should be conducted using sound instruments if useful information is to be obtained about the student. The assessment process should be concerned with the student as a whole, including his learning, his aptitude and his personality, not only his learning progress. In Saudi Arabia as yet, education is controlled by examinations and as a result of this, both students and teachers in the Saudi schools pay little attention to other aspects of learning.

The use of traditional methods of teaching, mentioned earlier as a weakness in the academic preparation was mentioned here, by 34.9% of student teachers as a problem. As indicated in earlier discussion, teachers' excessive reliance on lecture methods not only detracts from students' learning, but is likely to result in the perpetuation of unimaginative teaching in the subsequent careers of the newly qualified teachers.

The last obstacle mentioned by 24.4% of the student teachers was the poor library facilities. It should be noted that students emphasised this point many times, when asked about lack

of facilities and as a weakness in academic preparation and therefore, many suggestions were made regarding the need to provide a good library. Provision of such facilities would also be an important step in meeting teaching staff's call for the development of students' research skills.

Teaching staff added some problems and obstacles which faced them during the implementation of the programme. The main one mentioned, was lack of visual aids in the college. Accordingly some suggestions were made by many participants that Teachers' Colleges and schools should be provided with teaching aids. Lack of co-operation between different departments was indicated by 49.8%. It is worth mentioning here that some participants believed that there is a separation between academic and educational elements of the programme which may result from the previous problem.

Lack of seminars and scientific journals was considered as a problem by 25.1% of the sample. Many teaching staff believe that the way to improve the ability of teachers is to give them the opportunity to show their products, such as by organising seminars or publishing a journal. It would also be a vehicle for communication of new ideas in education and help staff to keep up to date with developments in their field.



The last problem or obstacle mentioned by 5.4% of the teaching staff was the short length of time of the course. However, as reflected in an earlier answer, the majority of teaching staff believed the time allocated to the teacher training programme is enough.

From the above it seems that there is a crucial need for teachers colleges to deal with a range of problems and obstacles and take them into consideration. Unfortunately, the way college administrations deal with these problem(s) and obstacle(s) was found by over half of the teaching staff sample (51.0%) to be unsatisfactory, while student teachers were only slightly more favourable in their assessment. That means almost half of the whole sample, 49.1%, were not at all satisfied with the administration of the colleges in dealing with these obstacles and problems.

### **12.10. Conclusion:**

This chapter has summarised a number of issues which were raised by the researcher's survey. In general, the present teacher training course is to be considered a major improvement and a positive step towards raising the quality of teacher education in Saudi Arabia, especially when one recalls the state of teacher training in the country some years ago. However, when the course is judged in terms of the standards of teacher education abroad, it is found that the course, as now operated, suffers from a number of deficiencies as preparation for teaching at the elementary stage. The study plan gives the main subject little attention, focusing



more on general education. Moreover, some important aspects of professional education and teaching practice in particular, have not been given the required attention. Thus, the course leaves much to be desired and more efforts are needed to develop the elements of the programme in line with the espoused objectives of education in the Kingdom generally.

The next and final chapter will summarise the main findings of this investigation and make recommendations as to possible further developments and research.

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# **Chapter Thirteen**

## **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **13.1 Introduction**

It is widely believed that teachers are the backbone of any educational system and indeed they make a significant contribution. The quality of education of any society is greatly influenced by the quality of its teachers. In fact, countries throughout the world are making strenuous efforts to improve their teacher training system, in order to raise their standards, and in turn to improve the education of their people. Saudi Arabia is one of those countries which seeks to improve its educational system.

As far as teacher education is concerned, throughout the last three decades, Saudi has made efforts to improve and develop its own teacher education system. One of these efforts was the decision to establish a number of teacher colleges in order to produce well qualified subject teacher for primary school. This study has been designed to analyse and assess the quality of professional preparation in the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme. To achieve this, the researcher has carried out field work and has examined the available official documents and publications related to the teacher training programme in question. As an essential background to the study, the development of teacher training programmes for primary

stage and the present procedures followed in teacher colleges in preparing Arabic and Islamic teachers were traced. Literature concerned with teacher education abroad has been reviewed, to provide measuring tools with which to evaluate the Saudi programme. This final chapter summarises the main findings of the investigation and makes recommendations as to possible further development.

### **13.2. The Main Findings of the Study**

Since the elements of the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme are so numerous the researcher confined himself to study of a limited number of them. Below, the findings related to the chosen aspects are summarised.

#### **1. The Admission:**

-There was considerable inconsistency of practice, with failure to implement the official admission criteria,

-More than half of the students were either not satisfied with the procedure, or expressed only a low level of satisfaction while teaching staff and officials were more satisfied

-The majority of students were studying Arabic and Islamic subjects as this subject of their personal choice. However approximately a quarter of Arabic and Islamic student teachers were studying subjects which were not of their own choosing, and so ones



for which they may not have may not have had real aptitude or interest.

-Students with higher GPA go to universities to follow courses such as medicine or science, while the education department is allocated students with comparatively poor GPA.

## 2. Duration

-Perceptions of the duration of the programme varied. The majority found four years to be satisfactory, but there were advocates for decreasing it to three years, and a few in favour of extending it.

## 3. Teacher Training Curriculum

-Only a moderate level of satisfaction was found with the teacher training curriculum from student teachers and their teaching staff. However, over half the officials were satisfied with it.

-Reports as to who is responsible for curriculum planning were inconsistent, but the main agency was said to be the Ministry of Education

-The majority of participants thought the curriculum paid less attention to the academic specialisation, compared with professional preparation and felt much of the general education component especially science subjects, was irrelevant to their future needs

-Needs were expressed for several courses not currently available, including further specialisation, computers and study skills. Planners' lack of awareness of needs, and the overloaded time-table, were the main reasons suggested for non-implementation of such courses.

-The area of teaching methods was thought not to be given appropriate attention.

-Criticisms were made of lack of co-ordination and integration between academic and educational elements of the programme.

-There is a focus on theory rather than balance between theory and practice in both academic and educational elements.

-Educational subjects are not connected with the situation in schools.

-There is no link between the curricular in college and curricular in basic education

#### 4. Facilities and Teaching Methods:

-Facilities were not highly rated. The greatest deficiency was seen to be in recreational facilities, but libraries and audio visual aids

also met with only a moderate level of satisfaction and in some cases were not available at all.

-The main teaching methods were said to be lecture and discussion. Demonstration, in particular, was little used.

-Due the lack of any course on research skills and inadequate library facilities, some teaching staff saw weaknesses in student teachers' research skills

## 5. Teaching Practice

The findings related to this area have been grouped into three categories and are presented below.

### a) The Organisation of Teaching Practice:

-Despite the benefits which can be gained when student make a preliminary visit to the practice school prior to their teaching practice, many student teachers expressed the lack of such visits.

-Arabic and Islamic student teachers were involved in real teaching situation without enough prior observation.

-The duration of teaching practice was felt to be inadequate.

-Practice schools are selected mainly on the basis of their location and their capacity to accommodate a number of student

teachers, rather than their methods, facilities or interest in co-operating.

-A reasonable number of students is allocated to each supervisor, but there may be a large group of students in any individual school

-Students have no idea about the practice school before teaching practice.

-Most students do not have the opportunity to check and mark classwork during their teaching practice.

-There is a lack of co-ordination between teachers' colleges and schools

-The practice schools are not always able or willing to provide the necessary teaching aids to be used in the teaching practice activity.

-The majority of students received no clear guidance regarding the aims of the observation period, or how they should undertake observation.

-Many students had no opportunity to participate or be involved in activities, or to be given responsibilities other than



classroom observation and teaching, and so were deprived of useful experience.

-Relatively few lessons were observed by most student teachers.

#### b) Supervision

-School teachers were not involved in the supervision of teaching practice.

-There is a need for professionally trained supervisors.

-The regulation does not specify the number of visits that the supervisor should make to his students.

-The number of visits made to the students in the classroom was very limited .

-The majority of the staff surveyed were over 40 and highly qualified academically, but lacked experience in schools, particularly at elementary level. Again, they have been charged with the teaching and supervision of student teachers without themselves undergoing any induction.

-In-service training courses designed for teaching staff in teachers college have not been established yet.

-Students wanted more feedback from the supervisor in teaching practice

-Over half of the student teachers and their supervisors were relatively dissatisfied with supervision provided.

c) Assessment

-The supervisors did not employ widely the assessment criteria designed by teacher colleges, but used their own criteria.

-The official assessment criteria were seen by some supervisors as not covering all aspects of the students' teaching experience or making any provision for assessment of the students' likely professional development as distinct from present performance.

-Staff claimed student teachers were made aware of the assessment criteria employed, verbally or by handout, but many students still felt confused about the evaluation procedure.

-The assessment criteria used by the supervisors were:

1. preparation of the lesson
2. evaluation card
3. student personality and appearance
4. relationships and participation
5. presentation of the lesson

6. using teaching aids
7. fluency in Arabic language, spoken and written
8. students' involvement in the activities
9. students' success in achieving the objectives of lessons

-There were differences among the supervisors concerning the criteria used.

-The criteria used by the supervisors were entirely student rather than class-oriented.

-The official regulations concerning the assessment of student teachers do not specify the required number of assessments, that should be carried out by supervisors.

#### 6. Organisation and Administration

-The majority of participants are satisfied generally with the organisation and administration of the college.

-Student teachers and teaching staff have obstacles and problems hindering them from implementing the teacher training goals.

-The final (end of semester) three hours written examination has continued to be a major element in assessment of Arabic and Islamic student teachers. Such techniques of assessment as open book

tests, tests of creative, diagnostic tests, inventory test etc. are rarely used.

-Some students feel that the training course should include guidance and counselling for students.

-Almost half of the teaching staff claim that there is lack of co-operation between different departments in the college

-A quarter of teaching staff stated that there is lack of seminars and scientific journals.

-The programme lacks guiding principles and clearly defined objectives

-The college was said not to respond to students' suggestions

-The majority of student teachers and teaching staff were not satisfied with the way the college administration deals with problems and obstacles.

### **13.3. Conclusion**

Efforts have been made by the Saudi educational authorities, over a number of years, to improve teacher training courses. The duration of the courses has been gradually lengthened and admission standards



have been raised. However, the focus has been on producing as many teachers as possible, and this may have been at the expense of quality.

Saudi educators, parents and teachers have all expressed dissatisfaction with the general low level of quality of Arabic and Islamic education provided to pupils at the 'primary stage'; and have attributed the low level of attainment of pupils mainly to the quality of teaching provided by Arabic and Islamic teachers.

Now that a sufficient number of teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies and other subjects have been achieved, attention has been directed to improve the quality of the training programme. The old two-year training courses have been phased out and a new unified teacher training course has been established to train subject teachers (including Arabic and Islamic subjects) for primary school. The course is of four-years' duration. Candidates are recruited from those who have completed successfully their secondary education or for those who graduated from the old training programme.

The current course is a traditional one in its structure and content and emphasises general education rather than professional and specialist elements. The main subject and the methodology of teaching are not given appropriate attention. Subjects are taught by staff members recruited from university graduates. Nevertheless, a large number of them have no professional qualification. It is true that the quality of education is affected by the type and quality of

education and training offered to teachers before and after graduation. The type and quality of education and training received by teacher educators will contribute greatly in improvement of teacher education standards. Recruiting well-educated and professionally trained supervisors, as well as providing them with in-service training course, is becoming a global trend in the field of teacher education (see Chapter Four). However, in Saudi Arabia, too little has been done in this respect.

In recent years, the field of teacher education world-wide has witnessed considerable interest in the area of research and innovation such as trying new training courses, developing new teaching techniques, improving the curriculum, linking theory with practice, and the like. Teacher education in Saudi Arabia has continued to be traditional in structure, content, method of teaching and training, and examination. Research and improvements in these and other areas have been rare or non-existent.

Students spend one semester (sixteen weeks) in primary school to practise the different phases of the teaching practice unit of the course (observation, participation and actual teaching). Sixteen weeks is a very little time in which to familiarise oneself with the practice school and develop the ability to transfer teaching theory into practice. The duration of teaching practice in the Saudi programme compares unfavourably with the time allocated to such activities in courses of teacher education elsewhere. Trainees are supervised and

assessed by their supervisors from the college. One of the main characteristics of teaching practice in the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme in teacher college is the absence of the school teacher in the teaching practice process. Moreover, the supervisors themselves lack professional training. There is a growing awareness of the problem of validity and reliability in the assessment of student teachers. Consequently, efforts are needed to improve this element

In short, although the course is to be considered in general, a major improvement and a positive step towards raising the quality the quality of teacher education in Saudi Arabia, especially when we recall the teacher training programme in the country some years ago, when the course is compared with teacher education abroad, it is found deficient in a number of respects. The course cannot be regarded as an adequate professional programme, as professional aspects in general, and teaching practice in particular, have not been given the required attention.

#### **13.4. Recommendations:**

From the information and data presented in the foregoing chapters, certain recommendations have arisen. They are introduced with the hope that they will improve the quality of the Arabic and Islamic student teachers before and after their graduation.

## 1. Concerning the Administration and Training Policy:

(I). The aims of the course, the admission standards, and the selection procedure should be clearly and unequivocally stated by the appropriate authority and taken seriously in practice, so that supervisors and students and administrators are left in no doubt as to where their efforts should be directed.

(ii). Pre and in-service and training should be increasingly regarded as continuous and co-ordinated with a carefully, planned policy.

(iii). Formal and effective arrangements should be made for the care and guidance of beginning teachers.

(iv). The current conditions of admission to the training course, the selection procedure and placement students in the Arabic and Islamic training should be re-examined.

(v). Efforts should be made to attract a large number of students to the teaching profession. This could be achieved by

(a). Organising an orientation programme for them in their final year of secondary education.

(b). Making financial rewards for graduates higher than those of their counterparts who have entered other professional training courses.



## 2. Concerning the Curriculum and Teaching Techniques:

(i). The course should be restructured and study time allocated to main subjects should be increased.

(ii). The methodology of teaching Arabic and Islamic subjects in the primary stage should be given more attention.

(iii). The wide use of various teaching aids should become a major feature of teaching at Saudi teachers colleges.

(iv). If students are to participate actively in the learning environment, methods of teaching for Arabic and Islamic subjects must be shifted from the teacher as the centre of teaching/learning process to the students. This will enable Arabic and Islamic teachers to become facilitators of knowledge, guiding and advising the students when necessary, in their efforts to gain understanding.

(v). Provision should be made for each teachers' college to have a standard library. Each should have an adequate supply of references for teachers relating to the teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies. Other materials, including publications of the professional Arabic and Islamic associations and copies of any teacher guides which relate to texts in use, should also be kept in stock in the library. In addition, periodicals and other conference reports relevant to Arabic and Islamic subjects should be taken, so that Arabic and Islamic student

teachers can become aware of recent developments in their field, both in other Arab countries and in developed countries.

(vi). Teachers' colleges and schools should be equipped adequately with facilities and visual aids. It is recommended that every school and teachers' college should have a specific allocation of funds for buying or producing Arabic and Islamic materials.

### 3. Concerning the Examination:

(i). The use of objective type of question should be increased in the examinations of the Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme.

(ii). Student teachers should be required to present, individually or collectively long essays or research projects, because this will make them use the library and acquire research skills.

### 4. Concerning the Teacher Educators:

(i). Teaching staff appointed to teach at Arabic and Islamic teacher training programme should be among those who have not only high academic and professional qualifications, but also experience in teaching at the primary level.

(ii) Efforts should be made to produce as many trained teaching staff as possible from colleges of education.

(iii). Induction programmes should be organised for new teaching staff before they supervise student teachers during teaching practice.

(iv). Efforts should be made to up-grade the quality of teacher educators by organising in-service courses for both trained and untrained teacher educators.

(v). Regular professional meetings for teaching staff and other educators concerned with teacher training should be held at the national level to discuss aspects and problem of teacher education.

#### 5. Concerning the teaching practice unit of the course:

##### (I). The Element of Organisation:

1. More attention should be given to the orientation phase. Students should be trained to teach, observe events in the classroom, produce and use teaching aids, prepare and assess lessons. This should be achieved not merely through formal lessons, but also by the use of micro-teaching, interaction, analysis, films, video tapes and administration lessons.

2. Students should be allocated to schools in small groups. Where this is not possible because of difficulties in using public transportation, then buses and vans should be provided for students to commute between the college and the practice school.

3. School heads should be invited to teacher colleges or visited in their schools to discuss beforehand the arrangements/requirements of each training phase.

4. The observation period should be lengthened, as well as carefully structured, so that student observations and activities will implement and be consistent with the goals of the teacher education.

5. A Director for teaching practice should be appointed to carry out the tasks of organisation, co-ordination and supervision . Among his main responsibilities should be:

(a). to prepare general information for participants, observation checklists, assessment forms and other materials concerning teaching practice;

(b). to organise workshops, seminars, induction programmes and meetings for supervisors and school heads;.

(c). to solve any problem or disagreement which arises during implementation of the teaching practice programme;

(d). to conduct regular surveys about teaching practice and report the findings to the educational authority;

(e). to experiment with proposals for supervision and assessment of student teachers;



6. The period allocated to teaching practice should be extended to one year.

7. There is a need to introduce a split teaching practice before student teacher starts on the teaching practice itself.

(ii). The Element of Supervision:

1. The priority in allocating the responsibilities for the supervision of Arabic and Islamic student teachers in their teaching practice should be given to Arabic and Islamic teaching staff who have professional training and experience and appropriate personal qualities.

2. The supervisory responsibilities should be clearly defined.

3. Supervisors should provide students with a wide ranging, supervised experience in various school activities.

4. Supervisors and other responsible bodies should contact each other frequently to provide a better basis for establishing a unified supervision and assessment policy directed towards the Arabic and Islamic student teacher's recognition of his strengths and weakness

5. Supervisors' visits to Arabic and Islamic student teachers and individual and group meetings with them should be frequent. In addition, supervisors should carry out regular checks of student teachers' lesson plans.

6. The teachers' college supervisors cannot undertake the full responsibility for Arabic and Islamic student teachers' supervision and assessment, because they are not familiar with the real situation in schools, they cannot spare Arabic and Islamic student teachers much time, and the majority of them are not professionally trained and experienced. Thus, Arabic and Islamic school teachers can play a large part in the supervision and assessment of Arabic and Islamic student teachers, because they see more of the teaching, they know primary school students better, and they are more capable of judging the effectiveness of Arabic and Islamic student teachers. Further, primary school Arabic and Islamic teachers are better able to give the Arabic and Islamic student teacher useful advice and constructive criticism, for they are in touch with the school situation. In view of this, it is recommended that the Arabic and Islamic supervisor from the teacher college, with the assistance of the school heads should choose a number of qualified and experienced Arabic and Islamic teachers to be involved in the teaching practice programme as school based supervisors (co-operating school teachers). The supervisors from Arabic and Islamic departments in teachers' colleges should discuss the arrangements/ requirements of teaching practice with the co-operating teachers. Individual and groups discussions between Arabic and Islamic student teachers, Arabic and Islamic school teachers( school based supervisors) and the supervisors from the teachers' college, should be held on a weekly basis.

### (iii). The Element of Assessment:

1. The current regulations and instruction of teaching practice should be reviewed and improved.
2. Efforts should be made to establish standardised measurements with a well designed format which are understood by the various types of participants including student teachers.
3. Assessment should be continuous and comprehensive. It should continue throughout teaching practice and the final appraisal should be based on many factors and resources.
4. The minimum number of assessments to be conducted by each kind of supervisor should be officially stated.
6. In order to help the student teachers' to recognise and act upon his own strengths and limitations, self assessment should be strongly stressed during teaching practice.

### **13.5. Further Research Priorities:**

Research work in almost all aspects of teacher education and preparation is generally needed, particularly for the present stage of development in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, with regard to preparation of primary teachers in general and Arabic and Islamic

teachers in particular in Saudi Arabia, a number of research priorities can be identified:

- Alternative approaches to, and programmes for the training of primary school Arabic and Islamic teachers.
- Students' attitudes towards teacher education and motivations for choosing a teaching career.
- Factors discouraging Saudi people from joining the teaching profession.
- Performance of Arabic and Islamic teacher training graduates in Saudi primary schools and the impact of their training programmes in their performance.
- Primary Arabic and Islamic teachers and problems of beginner teachers.
- Attitudes of in-service primary Arabic and Islamic teachers towards their initial training programme.
- Possibilities for ways of developing and maintaining co-ordination between teachers' colleges and higher learning institutions.
- Possible links between colleges and corresponding institutions in countries with long experience in teacher education and training.
- The specific contribution of the use of audio-visual aids and practical activities to the learning and teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies.



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# **Appendices**

## **APPENDIX (A)**

# **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENT TEACHERS OF ARABIC AND ISLAMIC STUDIES**

## Questionnaire for Student Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies

Dear student teacher,

I am currently undertaking research for a Ph.D. thesis at the University of Hull, about the professional preparation of elementary stage teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies in Saudi Arabia. The main purpose of the study is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current teacher training programme in general and professional preparation in particular, so that it may be possible to make recommendations for improvement.

In this context, your views and suggestions regarding the issue would be of great value. Your response will be treated in strict confidence, and will not be used for any purpose other than this research. For the purpose of the study there are no wrong or right answers. Your personal, honest opinion is the only required response. I would therefore be very grateful if you could give some of your time to the questions asked below. You can give the completed questionnaire to me when I come to collect it from you on / / 1996 .

Your cooperation would be very much appreciated

I. A. Al-Sadan

Imam Mohammed University

School of Education

Riyadh, P.O. BOX 56 294



## Questionnaire for Student Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies

Please place a tick (✓) in the relevant box, underline or fill in answers, as required.

\* Remember there is no wrong or right response.

### SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Name of Institute: \_\_\_\_\_

1.2 Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

1.3 High school certificate:

- Arts
- Science
- Teacher Training

1.4 Specialist Section:

- Arabic Language
- Islamic Studies.

1.5 Why did you choose this specialist Section (you may tick more than one box)?

- Personal choice
  - Because I was assigned to it by the college.
  - Because my family wanted me to choose it.
  - Other (please specify)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION TWO: ADMISSION**

2.1. By what criteria were you admitted to the teacher training programme at Teachers' College (check as many as apply)?

- Written examination
- Personal interview
- High school grade point average
- Other (please specify)

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2.2 How satisfied are you with this admission procedure?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

**SECTION THREE: DURATION OF THE PROGRAMME**

3.1 Do you think the time of four years allocated to the training programme is:

- Not enough
- Enough
- Too long

3.2 If you are not happy with the current duration of the course, what do you suggest would be more appropriate?

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**SECTION FOUR: THE TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULUM**

4.1 To what extent are you satisfied with the present teacher training programme curriculum?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

4.2 Do you think that the present teacher training programme:

- Provides the student teacher with an adequate knowledge of his academic specialisation
- Provides the student teacher with professional teaching skills
- Provides both of these
- Neither

4.3 Do you think that some of the curriculum content is not related to students' future work as professional teachers?

- Yes
- No

4.4 If the answer to 4.3 was yes, which topics do you consider irrelevant?

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4.5. What do you think of the amount of attention currently paid to each of the following areas?

Area	Not Enough	Enough	Too much
General preparation			
Specialisation (Islam, Arabic Studies)			
General Educational Principles			
Educational Administration			
Educational Psychology			
Sociological and Cultural Issues			
Islamic Education			
Teaching Methodology			

4.6 Do you feel that there is a need for more courses in your teacher training?

Yes

No

4.7 If yes, what courses do you think should be added?

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4.8 Why do you feel they should be added?

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4.9 Why do you think these courses are not taught now?

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## SECTION FIVE: FACILITIES

5.1 What is your opinion of the following facilities at your teacher training institute?

(Tick (✓) in the appropriate column)

Facilities	Very adequate	Adequate	Adequate to some extent	Not adequate at all	Not provided
1. Library					
2. Audio visual aids					
3. Recreational facilities					

## SECTION SIX: TEACHING PRACTICE

6.1 To what extent are you satisfied with the organisation of teaching practice?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

6.2 To what extent are you satisfied with the time given to the teaching practice itself?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

6.3 To what extent are you satisfied with the supervision of teaching practice?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

6.4 During teaching practice, how many visits were made by your supervisor?

- One
- Two
- Three or more

6.5 Do you think that the teacher training programme provides you with enough observation before commencing teaching practice?

- Yes
- No

6.6 Were you made aware of the aims of the observation period?

- Yes
- No

6.7 Were you told what things to observe during the observation period?

- Yes
- No

6.8 Were you asked to write about your experience during the observation period?

- Yes
- No

6.9 If 'yes', were you given any guidance about what you were required to write?

Yes

No

6.10 How many lessons did you observe? \_\_\_\_\_ lessons

6.11 Were you able to discuss the lessons observed afterwards with the teacher(s)?

Yes

No

6.12 How was your observation period arranged?

Observing one teacher with one class

Observing one teacher with more than one class

Observing more than one teacher with one class

Observing more than one teacher with more than one class

6.13 Please give any suggestions you may have as to how teaching practice could be improved.

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**SECTION SEVEN: COURSE EVALUATION**

7.1 What do you consider to be the main weaknesses in your academic preparation?

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7.2 What do you consider to be the main strengths in your academic preparation?

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7.3 What do you consider to be the main weaknesses in your professional preparation?

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7.4 What do you consider to be the main strengths in your professional preparation?

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7.5 In your opinion, what could most usefully be introduced to improve the current teacher training programme?

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**SECTION EIGHT: ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANISATION**

8.1 To what extent are you satisfied with the organisation of your college?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

8.2 To what extent are you satisfied with the administration of your college?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

8.3 Do you face any problem or obstacle which hinders you in the achievement of teacher training goals?

- Yes
- No

If your answer is yes, please answer Questions 8.4 and 8.5.

8.4 Please give brief details of the problem(s) and obstacle(s).

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8.5 To what extent are you satisfied with the way college administration deals with these problem(s) and obstacle(s)?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

\* Would you kindly make sure that you have responded to all items.

Thank you for your help

**APPENDIX (C)**  
**INTERVIEW WITH OFFICIALS ON**  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND**  
**TEACHERS' COLLEGES**

**PAGE  
NUMBERING  
AS ORIGINAL**



Dear Official,

I am currently undertaking research for a Ph.D. thesis at the University of Hull, about the professional preparation for elementary school teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies in Saudi Arabia. The main purpose of the study is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher training programme in general and professional preparation in particular, so that it may be possible to make recommendations for improvement. In this context, your views and suggestions regarding the issue will be of great value. Your response will be treated in strict confidence, and will not be used for any purpose other than this research.

Your cooperation would be very much appreciated

I. A. Al-Sadan

Imam Mohammed University  
School of Education  
Riyadh, PO. BOX 56 294

# Interview with Officials on Ministry of Education and Teachers' Colleges

## SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.2 Your age: \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.3 Your position: \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.4 Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION TWO: ADMISSION

2.1. By what criteria do Teachers' Colleges admit students to the teacher training programme?

- Written examination
- Personal interview
- High school grade point average
- Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

2.2 How satisfied are you with this admission procedure?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

### **SECTION THREE: DURATION OF THE PROGRAMME**

3.1 Do you think the time of four years allocated to the training programme is:

- Not enough
- Enough
- Too long

3.2 If you are not happy with the current duration of the course, what do you suggest would be more appropriate?

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### **SECTION FOUR: THE TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULUM**

4.1 To the best of your knowledge, which of the following are responsible for the planning curriculum?

- College committee
  - Faculty
  - Ministry of Education
  - Others, (please specify)
- 

4.2 Did you have any input into the planning of the curriculum?

- Yes
- No

4.3 To what extent are you satisfied with the present teacher training programme curriculum?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

4.4 Do you think that the function of the present teacher training programme:

Provides the student teacher with adequate knowledge of his academic specialisation

Provides the student teacher with professional teaching skills

Provides both of these

Neither

4.5 Do you think that some of the curriculum contents are not related to students' future work as professional teachers?

Yes

No

4.6 If the answer to 4.5 was yes, which topics do you consider irrelevant?

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4.7. What do you think about the amount of attention currently paid to each of the following areas?

Area	Not enough	About right	Too much
General preparation			
Specialisation (Islam, Arabic Studies)			
General Educational Principles			
Educational Administration			
Educational Psychology			
Sociological and Cultural Issues			
Islamic Education			
Teaching Methodology			

4.8 Do you feel that there is a need for more courses in the teacher training programme?

- Yes  
 No

4.9 If yes, please indicate the courses you feel should be added?

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4.10 Why do you feel they should be added?

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4.11 Why aren't these courses taught now?

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**SECTION FIVE: FACILITIES**

5.1 What is your opinion of the following facilities in the Teachers' Colleges?  
(Tick (✓) in the appropriate column)

Facilities	Very adequate	Adequate	Adequate to some extent	Not adequate at all	Not provided
1. Library					
2. Audio visual aids					
3. Recreational facilities					
4. Other specialist facilities					

**SECTION SIX: TEACHING PRACTICE**

6.1 To what extent are you satisfied with the organisation of teaching practice?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

6.2 To what extent are you satisfied with the time given to the teaching practice?

- very satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

6.3 To what extent are you satisfied with the supervision of teaching practice?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Satisfied to some extent
- Not satisfied at all

**SECTION SEVEN: COURSE EVALUATION**

7.1 What do you consider to be the main weaknesses in the academic preparation of Arabic and Islamic teachers in Teachers' College?

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7.2 What do you consider to be the main strengths in the academic preparation of Arabic and Islamic teachers in Teachers' College?

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7.3 What do you consider to be the main weaknesses in the professional preparation of Arabic and Islamic teachers in Teachers' College?

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7.4 What do you consider to be the main strengths in the professional preparation of Arabic and Islamic teachers in Teachers' College?

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**7.5 In your opinion, what could most usefully be introduced to improve the current teacher training programme?**

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# APPENDIX (D)

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

HULL HU6 7RX • UNITED KINGDOM  
TELEPHONE 01482 465406 • SWITCHBOARD 01482 346311 • FACSIMILE 01482 466133

PROFESSOR V A McCLELLAND MA PhD  
DEAN OF SCHOOL  
DIRECT LINE 01482 465988

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

MR. IBRAHIM ABDALLAH AL-SADAN

This is to certify that Mr. Ibrahim Abdallah Al-Sadan is a *bona fide* doctoral student of the School of Education in the University of Hull. He is a fit and proper person to be granted access to libraries and archival material, which he will be seeking in pursuit of his research project. I shall be grateful for any help or facilities that can be offered to him in this connection.

V. A. McClelland

23.10.95



# APPENDIX (E)

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

HULL HU6 7RX · UNITED KINGDOM

TELEPHONE 01482 465406 · SWITCHBOARD 01482 346311 · FACSIMILE 01482 466133

PROFESSOR V A McCLELLAND MA PhD

DEAN OF SCHOOL

DIRECT LINE 01482 465988

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr. I. Al-Sadan, PhD student in the School of Education at this University, is going to collect *data* in Saudi Arabia.

The field of his thesis is: "An investigative Study of the Present Professional Preparation for Teachers of Primary School in Saudi Arabia, with Special Reference to Islamic and Arabic Subjects".

He will be doing this by interview and questionnaire.



VAM/CVJ  
4.7.96



## APPENDIX (F)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

المملكة العربية السعودية

وزارة المعارف

كليات المعلمين

الرقم : .....

التاريخ : .....

المنشورات : .....

وفقه الله

سعادة عميد كلية المعلمين في

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، وبعد :

إشارة إلى تعميم معالي الوزير ذي الرقم ٢٦/١٢٤ في ٢٥/٢/١٤١٧هـ

وحيث تقدم للإدارة الباحث / إبراهيم عبدالله السعدان بطلب تسهيل مهمته في جمع

بعض البيانات من كليات المعلمين . فأنا نأمل التكرم بأستقبال طلب الباحث

به وتقديم ما يمكنكم من مساعدة له وفق التنظيمات المبلغة لكم .

ولكم تحياتي ،،،

المدير العام لكليات المعلمين



د. محمد بن حسن الصائغ

١٤١٧ / ١٠ / ٢٥

## **APPENDIX (F)**

### **(Translation)**

#### **A letter from Director of Teachers' Colleges in Ministry of Education Regarding access to Teachers' Colleges to conduct the Field Work of the Study**

To The deans of Teacher' Colleges,

After compliments

Mr. Al-Sadan came to me to request access to Teachers' Colleges to conduct his field work. In this regard, please give the researcher any possible assistance, in the light of the instructions of the Ministry of Education.

Please accept my regards

The Director of Teachers' Colleges

Dr. Mohammed Allays.

Signature





# APPENDIX (G)

## (Translation)

### **A letter from the Dean of Social Science College in Imam University Regarding the *Application of the Field Work of the Study***

#### **To Whom it May Concern**

This is to certify that Mr. Al-Sadan, from UK, attended in September /1996 to conduct his field work in Teachers' Colleges affiliated to the Ministry of Education, and he collected the required data over a period of three months.

In his interest, he has been given this certificate.

The Dean of Social Science

Dr. Abdul Rahaman Al-Ojellan

Signature