Saudi Arabian Secondary School Leaders and Subordinates' Preparedness for Change into Transformational Leadership: an exploratory study of the teachers' perceptions

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Abstract:

This study aims mainly to explore Saudi secondary schools' preparedness for transition into the 'transformational' style of school leadership. As school preparedness is reflected in the *extent of the transformational school leaders' characteristics possess,* and the school teachers' views concerning *the need for and acceptability of change,* the study gauged teachers' perceptions on those two issues. The study is also concerned with exploring whether the need for change at the secondary schools correlate with acceptability of change expressed by the staff. The study assessed the impact of some demographic variables (age, qualifications, years of experience, and job position) on their views about the characteristics of transformational school leaders their school principals possess. A questionnaire was adapted to achieve such aims. This was responded by a sample # 100 school teachers randomly selected from different (Madinanah-centred and rural) secondary schools in the Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, KSA. Analysis of the overall responses of participants indicated that their principals have got a great deal of the characteristics of transformational school leaders. The vast majority (88%) of participants feel necessity of change in their schools. Findings concerning the participants' perceptions of the extent of change acceptability have shown a variety of perceptions: that is change would be *rejected* or *humbly accepted* (44% and 36% of the participants respectively). Only 16% of the respondents thought that change attempts would be moderately or greatly accepted. No significant correlation was found between participants' feeling about their schools' need for change, and the level of change acceptability/welcome by staff. No significant differences were found between the participants' perceptions of the extent of transformational school leaders characteristics the school principals possess on the one hand, and variables of age, qualifications, or teachers' position at school, on the other hand. 'Years of experience' also indicated no significant difference, with one exception related to one band of the four transformational leadership concepts. The findings carried

implications and posed suggestions for further research in school leadership / administration in Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: transformational leadership, change, preparedness, acceptability, principals, subordinates.

مدى استعداد المدارس الثانوية وقيادتها في المملكة العربية السعودية للتحول نحو القيادة التحويلية: دراسة ميدانية من وجهة نظر المعلمين

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ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسه الى الكشف عن جاهزية المدارس الثانوية السعودية للانتقال الى اسلوب القيادة التحويلية للمدارس. لتحقيق هذا الهدف قامت الدراسة باستطلاع افكار وآراء المدرسين عن مدى ما يتمتع به ويمتلكه مدراء المدارس من مواصفات القيادة التحويلية. كما تهتم الدراسة بالكشف عن العلاقة بين الحاجة للتغيير في المدارس و مدى تقبل القائمين على المدارس لهذا التغيير. وأخيرا تقوم الدراسة بتقييم تأثير بعض المتغيرات الشخصية (السن، المؤهل العلمي، سنوات الخبرة، المنصب الذي يشغله)على آراء المرؤوسين في مدراء مدارسهم حول ما يتصفون به من مواصفات القيادة التحويلية. ولجمع المعلومات اللازمة للدراسة تم استخدام نموذج استبانة تم تطبيقها على عينة عشوائية مكونة من (١٠٠#) مدرسا من (١٢#) مدرسة مختلفة في المدينة المنورة (مركزها وريفها)، المملكة العربية السعودية.وأظهر تحليل المعلومات المتعلقة بـ الحاجة الى التغيير، النتائج التالية: أن ٤٤% ممن اجابوا على الاستبانة رافضون للتغيير؛ أن ٣٦% بالكاد يتقبلوا التغيير. فقط ١٦% من المشاركين في تطبيق الاستبانة يتقبلون بقوة أو بشكل متوسط فكرة التغيير؛ و لا توجد اية علاقة دالة احصائيا بين مفاهيم المشاركين حول حاجة مدارسهم للتغيير ومدى تقبل وترحيب هؤلاء بمبادرة التغيير. كما أظهر تحليل اجابات المشاركين على أن مدراءهم يمتلكون قدرا كبيرا من مواصفات القيادة المدرسية التحويلية.ولا توجد أية علاقة دالة إحصائيا بين مفاهيم المشاركين حول مدى ما يمتلك مدراؤهم من مواصفات القيادة المدرسية التحويلية وكل من متغيرات السن و المؤهل العلمي و المنصب الذي يشغله. وكذلك كان شأن سنوات الخبرة باستثناء ما يتعلق ببند واحد من مفاهيم القيادة التحويلية. وأوصت الدراسة بالمزيد من البحث حول الادارة المدرسية في المدارس السعودية.

كلمات دالة: القيادة التحويلية؛ التغيير؛ الاستعداد/ تقبل التغيير؛ قادة / مدراء؛ مرؤوسين.

1. Introduction

The greatest leadership challenge facing organizations in Saudi Arabia and worldwide is a basic obsession for all nationals to maximize the development of human potentials. Current literature in the area of organizational behavior reveals that we are experiencing significant global changes that are reflected in all levels of society. In this respect, encouraging individuals to examine their thinking about leadership and the continual process of change is of great importance. This would enable us, practitioners in the educational community, to create new systems instead of struggling with old-fashioned styles that do not cope with modern life and subsequent changes. Contemporary educational reform places a great premium on the effective school leadership and management (Al Johani 2011). The logic of this position is that an orderly school environment efficiently managed with efficient leadership, provides the preconditions for enhanced student learning: the outmost goal of education. Empirical backing for such a relationship between leadership and higher levels of student outcomes is often claimed; and the school effects research is usually cited in support for this relationship. Leadership (style and practices) are effective driving forces that directly influence the smooth run of work. Hence, leadership changes in this rapidly evolving world is a must, otherwise we are kept in the back of the coach of development. A view of praxis in the Saudi Educational setting reflects Instructional Leadership and Transactional types (Aldawsari, 2016: 19-20). The leadership realm is of rapidly non-stoppable changing nature. There developed several leadership models that critique the Instructional Leadership and Transactional types as restricting the subordinates' freedom: having no role in decision making, and no choice but to implement such decisions. In addition, such styles prevent the subordinates' potential inspiration and innovation, major principles for leadership reform (Hargreaves and Shirley (2009; in Alnahdi, 2014). A problem that emerges in the educational leadership status (in KSA) is embodied in centralization of leadership power. As such the demand for changing the leadership style and practices with such severely criticized characteristics seems necessary.

Having a wide range of leadership models such as: Teacher Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Distributed Leadership, Strategic Leadership, Authentic Leadership, Visionary Leadership, and Servant Leadership, Pioneering Leadership, …etc" (Gumus et al, 2016: 17) the researcher wonders about the most appropriate model to adopt

as to remedy the demerits and bad practices of the current leadership style. Definitely, there isn't one-size-fits-all. In addition, there is some overlap between the concepts of the various models. However, focusing on the centralization of power (leadership authority), as the core of the problem, the 'transformational leadership' characterized by decentralization of power, has attracted us and many other researchers (e.g. Gumus et al, 2016; Hallinger, 2003) to suggest as educational reform. For Hallinger (2003), transformational leadership has the advantage of focusing on developing the organization's capacity to innovate. Instead of focusing specifically on direct coordination, control and supervision of curriculum and instruction, transformational school leadership seeks to build the school's capacity to select its purposes and to support the development of changes to practices of teaching and learning.

In short, the leadership status quo in the Saudi educational setting is restive. The situation demands radical changes. Burns, 1978; Caldwell, 1999; Chirichello (1999); Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000; Hallinger, 2003; Gumus et al, 2016; and many others strongly support 'transformational leadership' style. Hence, this study nominates this model as a style that (in addition to the above highlighted advantages) focuses on the people involved and their relationships: an approach that seeks to transform feelings, attitudes and beliefs. Transformational leaders do not only manage structure, but they purposely seek to impact the culture of schools in order to change it. This research paper comes to investigate the school community's (leaders and teachers') preparedness for change into transformational leadership in their subordinates' point of view.

2. The research problem

Many challenges are facing modern societies in today's world. These include the challenge of ensuring both social and economic developments for the citizens and raising their welfare. The state bodies with their bureaucratic systems and the private sector with the paucity of its resources make them unable to achieve the public projects that require special resources. Saudi Arabia, as a state aspiring to achieve high levels of development in all sectors in general and in education in particular, has been trying to introduce change in all sectors of life. A sector of paramount importance in the daily lives of citizens is education. This is currently faced by a bulk of various challenges

imposed by the worldwide surge of educational and pedagogical development, (Idrees, 2017).

The country's need to cope with these challenges as to: adopt (more appropriate) educational policies and pedagogical practices (at schools in particular), and facilitate change processes is encountered by some resistance somewhere in the educational system (Alharbi, 2018), or the society as a cultural factor. Paper-staff procedures/change schemes in relation, …etc. have hardly been the essence of the problem; but practical adaptation of action as to implement such loud voices for reform is the question.

Higher-level (governmental) leadership is sparing no efforts as to ensure the desired development, e.g. the Saudi government's 'Vision 2030' launched in 2016 with its 'National Transformation Programme'. The real challenge is for the administrative and instructional staff members at schools. The problem seems to be in the 'middle leadership': abilities of schools, school leaders, and teaching workforce to accommodate vital changes in the system encountering the 'instructional/transactional top-down styles.

Aldawsari (2016) and Palaiologou et al. (2015) criticize the Saudi educational leadership context as "formal leaders do not see a decision-making role for themselves. They tend to act only as managers not (creative, inspiring) leaders, tying themselves with the higher leaders' instructions. Hence, their preparedness for change is restricted by non-flexibility of the (old-fashioned) laws and regulations: i.e. effective aspects of creativity and innovation, (of 'transformational leadership', in particular) emphasized by Alarifi (2014) and Noruzy et al (2013) are frozen. (See detailed explanation of the educational leadership praxis in the Literature review section).

The Saudi government's 'Vision 2030' launched in 2016 with its 'National Transformation Programme' has made quality improvement and progress of education a top priority. A core aspect of the programme is 'reform': implying radical changes in the structure and function of the education system and, more importantly, in schools, embodied in management style changes first (Alharbi, 2018). Strategies, detailed plans, …etc. were designed and action/change started, but still change did not occur and is unlikely to occur, as preliminary requirements/pre-requisites for positive change (discussed above), dictated by the approach, as transformational in nature, are not fulfilled. National Transformational Programme strongly suggests and

clearly affiliates to the transformational model of leadership. With its core assumption: implementing desired change agenda, are senior management – school principals – quite ready for such ambitious change initiative (implying radical changes)? Would teachers accept such fundamental changes? Were there any plans for *"enhancing the school workforce – educational leadership and followers' – abilities through knowledge and experience".*

Such vital elements of a successful transformational leadership raised by Alharbi (2018: 46) must have research-evidenced answers. This study gauges the school community's preparedness for such radical change as a key factor is acceptance of both leader and subordinates (Aziz et al, 2015; Brown and May, 2012; and Bernstrøm and Kjekshus, 2012). Thus, conception of preparedness (as adopted in this study) is reflected in and measured by the extent of the transformational school leaders' characteristics possess, and the school teachers' views concerning the need for and acceptability of change (see definitions below). This issue is operationalized in the following questions.

3. The research questions

Adopting an exploratory notion, this study aims to find answers to the following research question:

1. *"To what extent are secondary school principals prepared for transition into transformational leadership, reflected in and measured through the extent of the transformational school leaders' characteristics they possess?"*

2. *"To what extent do secondary school teachers view the need for change at their schools and how much is change welcome/ acceptable by the staff members?"*

3. Does the need for change as seen by the school teachers correlate with the extent of the teachers' acceptability/welcome to such changes?

4. Are there statistically significant differences amongst secondary school teachers' views about their school principals that can be attributed to variables of age, qualifications, years of experience and their position at school (a supervisory or otherwise)?

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4. Definition of terms

In this study:

- § **Preparedness refers to the school community's practical readiness (reflected in and measured by how much of the transformational leadership characteristic a school principal possesses; and the teachers' (psychological) acceptability: how change will be a welcome initiative.**

- § **Leadership model = leadership approach / style;**

- § **School principal / leader refers to the head of the school;**

- § **Position refers to a leading/supervisory or teaching position.**

5. Purpose of the study

The study aims mainly to explore Saudi secondary schools' preparedness (as conceptualized in the 'Definition of Terms' for transition into the 'transformational' style of school leadership.

This can be achieved through tracing the secondary school teachers' perceptions concerning the extent of transformational school leader characteristics the school principals possess; detecting the teachers' viewpoint concerning the extent of the need for school change; and how much such changes are to be welcome/accepted by staff.

To go deeper in the issue the study is concerned with uncovering some correlational matters. These are: to explore whether the need for change at the secondary schools correlates with the acceptability of change expressed by staff. Moreover, the study is concerned with assessing the impact of some personal variables, namely age, qualifications, years of experience, and job position (supervisory or otherwise) on their views about the characteristics of transformational school leaders' style; and the characteristics of such leadership approach their school principals possess.

6. Significance of the study

Significance of the study stems from the following points:

- **Reviewing literature revealed that experimentation of the leadership models is not quite readily apparent in the Arab world and Saudi Arabian research; the fact that necessitates research of this type.**

- **Serious attempts of reform/change have been continually endeavoured; more seriously since 2016 when the government's 'Vision 2030' was launched, and the 'National Transformation Programme' was designed, but they don't seem to be working well – 'why', we wonder. This attempts /serves as to find answers.**

- **The results of the study can inform educational administration specialists and educational policy makers in Saudi Arabia about the status quo of school administration and school principals; and how any kind of change initiative is received: the extent change would be accepted/unaccepted; and how 'workforce factor inabilities', just in case, can be treated.**

- **Investigating 'the extent of the transformational leadership characteristics the school principals possess' inform higher educational supervisors about the quality of principals; and gives school policy-makers a full portrait of the school leaders' approach followed and empirical practices. The fact that help in future plans for quality assurance.**

- **The results of this study would help draw the stakeholders' attention to the requirements of the current secondary school administrative system, as to adopt a more progressive transformational leadership approach when defaults are detected and certain changes are not warmly accepted.**

Additionally, the literature review section is tailed with shedding more light on the significance and necessity of conducting this research; along with emergence of the research inquiry.

7. Scope of the study

The study investigates a phenomenon: 'School Leaders and Subordinates' Preparedness for Change into Transformational Leadership', tracing opinions of an all-male target population in 25 secondary schools in Al Madeenah Al Munawwarah educational zone. Though other areas/Saudi contexts are quite similar, they were not included in this study. According to the interpretive paradigm adopted in this study 'reality is multi-layered and complex': as the phenomena (subject of this study) were viewed in the viewpoint of Al Madinah teachers' lenses, 'they are non-generalisable', Cohen et. al. (2006): The scope of this study, and the study results were restricted to Al Madinah secondary male school leaders in the academic year 2017/2018. Further research is required to cover other school types (or school community types): preparatory, intermediate, female schools and leaders; and schools in other Saudi zones in KSA.

8. Literature review

Although modern studies contributed strongly to the development and sustainability of this domain (leadership: effect, importance of change, …), old ones like Burns (1978) Bass (1985), Hellriegal et al. (1992), Bass and Avolio (1993, 1995), Bass (1999), Chirichello (1999), Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), Hallinger (2003), Leithwood and Riehl (2003), and Bass and Riggio (2006), are also of great importance as they are either founders of the theory and approach (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), establishers of concepts in relation (Bass, 1999; Bass and Avolio, 1993, 1995), or/and they contributed in the development of the transformational leadership model (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood and Riehl, 2003; Bass and Riggio, 2006). Thus, both are necessary research: this study made a balance as to appropriately utilize both categories each in the appropriate place: i.e. old studies, for example, are utilized to give a solid background knowledge; and Hellriegal et al.'s (1992) questionnaire is used as a data collection instrument in this study. Meanwhile, modern studies are reviewed (more) carefully with some focus on Saudi-context-related research, as to them belongs the virtue of highlighting those scholars (founders and establishers of the approach) and developing the concepts in relation; as such, making as integrated portrait of the issue as possible.

Selection of studies to review among the abundance of research in this area was principled on prioritizing research that gives deeper understanding of the issue in hand (e.g. studies on concepts, assumptions, effect, … of leadership), and focusing on relevant research in the Saudi Arabian contexts. Thus, as long as a study produces rigorous (well-evidenced) results and presents novel insights, (e.g. Chirichello,1999), it is chosen for review. This is associated with detailed discussion that led to the story of emergence of the research inquiry and rationalization of it. As such the literature reviewed tends to establish a panoramic view incorporating:

- The concept of leadership/transformational leadership;

- Leadership and its effect on the organization's outcomes;

- The transformational leadership: founders, theory/approach developers;

- Saudi-context-related studies: review of praxis of the Saudi secondary schools' preparedness for change.

The concept of leadership/transformational leadership:

Kruse's definition of leadership as: *"a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal"* (Kruse, 2013: 2) and other definitions (e.g. Chirichello,1999) denote and emphasize the two principles of leadership: *"providing direction"* and *"exercising influence"* (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003: 4). As for 'Transformational leadership', a model suggested for reform in a restive environment like the educational Saudi setting, Brown and May (2012) conceptualize it as a set of managerial techniques incorporating supervision that leads the followers (the organization's workforce) to enhance readiness for change; and consequently, endeavor considerable pre-determined changes to occur. Hellriegal et al. (1992) and Bass (1999) conceptualized transformational leadership in terms of four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. The same dimensions were adopted by Sosik and Godshalk (2000); and Alharbi (2018) in his investigation in the Saudi context. The questionnaire used in this study also reflects these dimensions.

Transformational leadership: founders, theory/approach developers:

The history of the 'transformational leadership' started with its founder: Burns (1978), who described it as a leadership model where both organization's partners – leaders and subordinates – interact as to raise one another's extent of morality and level of motivation. The leadership's 'interaction inspiration, stimulation, capacity development, impact on followers (of any authority) into leadership' were conceptualized (later) by Bass (1985), Bass and Avolio (1993,1995) and Bass and Riggio (2006) as theoretical assumptions of the approach.

Researchers like Al Harbi (2016), Aziz et al. (2015), Bernstrøm and Kjekshus (2012), and Nytrø et al. (2000) tackled 'transformational leadership': its main assumption and agenda: 'causing change' in the organization. They particularly discussed those pre-requisites necessary for change occurrence: in the whole they constitute integrated core elements of the (school) 'transformational leadership'. Alharbi (2018) highlighted factors like the principals and followers' attitudinal position, style, readiness to adopt a change initiative. Aziz et al (2015) emphasized acceptance of both leader and subordinates; while Nytrø et al. (2000) focused on the organization's principal and followers' ability as workforce to change. Thus, it is essential to investigate the principals' and teachers' perceptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs and commitment to change. In line with this Bernstrøm and Kjekshus (2012) corelated organizational transformation with cultural factors as they make/enhance the staff's readiness for a change initiative and decrease possibility to resist it. Bernstrøm and Kjekshus (2012) particularly assured the necessity for an (educational) organization to design managerial techniques to oversight application of the change initiative(s) and follow up results.

Leadership and its effect on the organization's outcomes:

A bulk of effective school research over the past two decades has concentrated on examining the relationship between the leadership behaviour of school principals and the enhancement of organizational performance (Shum and Cheng, 1996). Of particular interest are studies that have highlighted the mediating role principals can play between teachers and learners (Silins and Murray-Harvey, 1999). Interestingly, results have suggested that school principals have the ability to directly/indirectly effect student achievement by improving the tone or

learning environment of a school (Johnson, Livingston, Schwartz and Slate, 2000). Cheng (1997) claims that transformational leadership is crucial to meeting educational challenges in a changing environment. Berg and Sleegers (1996) and Wang and colleagues (1993) found that transformational school leadership plays a particularly crucial role in the development of the innovative capacities of schools. According to Leithwood (1992), principal leadership has a strong influence on planning, structure and organization, as well as on school mission and school culture. It has been widely argued that complex and dynamic changes, such as the "cultural" changes required for sustained school improvement are more likely to occur as a result of transformational leadership.

Chirichello (1999) suggests transformational leadership (as a reformative approach), as it provides influencing relationship between inspired, energetic leaders and followers with a mission of empowering the members of an organization to effect lasting change. Hence, 'transformational school leadership' is an approach of management / a principal's style that has a strong impact on the school staff to mutually adopt a mission and look forward to the vision with purpose of achieving the goals of the school as an organization; and empowering its staff to effect sustainable change: what the school leadership in KSA is missing and strongly demanding. Transformational leadership' has other core elements. In addition to the emphasis on the influential and inspiring management aspects, the model is featured by strong influence of the principal's style that should make effect on the staff for adopting a mission and vision with the purpose of achieving the goals and empowering staff to cause change (Ibid).

In the same vein, modern studies tackled aspects of "Transformational leadership' at schools. Chandrashekhar and Varghese (2018); Alharbi (2018), Gumus et al (2016), and Day et al. (2016) were famous researchers in the field. Alharbi (2018), for example, praised the virtue of involving the school staff in the potential change-making decisions and views related to mission, vision and other issues. Hence, a transformational leader is "a change agent" committed to prepare his/her subordinates for the change, and oversee change-related behavior/implementation of change until objectives are achieved. This and the educationalists' realization of the great role leaders play "on

organizational behaviors/conditions and on student achievement (Gumus et al, 2016: 1 and 17) caused 'Transformational Leadership' (and its effect on the organization's outcomes) to gain prominence over other models; and to emerge as one of the models most researched in education (Gumus et al, 2016; Karadag, 2015). Gumus et al (2016: 1 and 17), in particular has shown the "decentralization of power", typical of the 'Transformational Leadership'.

Saudi-context-related studies

In the Saudi Arabian context Alharbi (2018); Almudarra (2017); Alghamdi et al. (2017); Aldawsari (2016); Alarifi (2014); Algarni and Male (2014); and Khan and Varshney (2013) were common scholars in the field of (transformational) leadership, here is a review of (some of) these:

Review of praxis of the Saudi secondary schools' preparedness for change

The status quo of the Saudi educational context generally affiliates to the 'instructional' and 'transactional' leadership styles. It is best described by Aldawsari (2016: 18) as depending (mainly) on leaders giving orders and followers translating the orders into actions". The pedagogical system is no exception: "a principal would receive orders…, teachers would receive orders from the principal to translate them (literally) in their daily Work" (ibid). Aldawsari (2016: 18) ascertains that "change and reform rarely occur" in such a context, because neither the principals nor the teachers share decision-making or any change initiative. Implicitly, Aldawsari criticizes this as assuming capability, power, and authority on the topmost leader, when these should be confidently tasked to the senior leader(s) – school principal as school leader, and to the teacher as pedagogical/class leader –, as the 'transformational school leadership' assumes. Unlike the 'transformational school leadership' the 'instructional and transactional approaches' major concern (typical of the Saudi educational context) is students' (mostly fabricated) "achievement and performance" (ibid: 19; see also Wright, 2007). 'Fabricated' because schools are competing on which to get the highest 'passers' percentage', regardless of the real quality level of the school provisions or students real standard. These aspects of central directive leadership policy (widely spread in the Saudi educational setting and culture) have led into "a dysfunctional environment for the leaders, and followers" – teachers and students

(Aldawsari, 2016: 19). In the same vein, Palaiologou et al. (2015: 123) criticizes the educational setting status within the Saudi educational context that it *"leads to a situation where formal leaders do not see a decision-making role for themselves and revert to managerial activity"*. A healthier situation is that where effective transformational leadership aspects of creativity and innovation are emphasized (Alarifi, 2014; and Noruzy et al, 2013).

The Saudi government's 'Vision 2030' launched in 2016 with its 'National Transformation Programme' has emphasized on strategies, and even detailed plans concerning radical changes in the structure and function of the education system, but change did not occur (Alharbi, 2018).

This is where the research inquiry has emerged: inquiring about preparedness and acceptability of the main practitioners: principals and subordinates for change, reflected in and measured through the extent of the transformational school leaders' characteristics they practically possess. Teachers' perceptions and views to gauge readiness for action suggested in this study support and confirm practicality of the 'change/reform' tendency desired in the Saudi educational context.

9. Methodology of the study

The methodology and the conceptual research framework underpinning the study will be highlighted in this section. Data collection instruments, appropriateness of it for this study and research questions, and sampling were also vital parts in this section. Procedural details of conducting the study and analyzing the data were essential and were given due care.

9.1 The paradigm adopted in this study

A paradigm for Cohen et. al. (2006) constitutes such lens through which a researcher examines the practice of research: i.e. the way the world is understood and viewed by him; through which his judgements are guided. With the researcher's belief and satisfaction with the interpretive-constructivist mode's premises (ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions), concerns, approaches and techniques, the interpretive-constructivist mode of inquiry (paradigm) is adopted for examining the phenomenon in hand: 'school

principals/teachers' preparedess for transition into transformational leadership'. A summary of these assumptions is shown in Figure (1) below.

- phenomena should be viewed through the participants' lenses as reality i multi layered;

- the world is seen by the participants, and the inquirers' subjectivity must b taken for granted;

- the researcher is a primary data collecting instrument;

- participants are active contributors to the interpretive process; and

- data are collected in a natural setting: dialectically constructing a synthesis of the experience out of different voice.

*Based on Guba and Lincoln (1991), Ernest (1994), and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2006)

Figure (1). An overview of salient features/assumptions of the interpretive-constructivist mode

Thus, the research main inquiries, namely "school principals' preparedness for transition represented in the extent of the transformational school leaders' characteristics they possess" and "how much is change welcome/ acceptable" are investigated in the participants' (teachers') point of view, in the natural setting (schools). The researcher was a data collector and a major contributor to the interpretive process, tracing beliefs of the practitioners (teachers) and constructing a synthesis of the experience out of different voice.

9.2   Data collection instrument

Hellriegal et. al (1992) questionnaire was utilized for the data collection process. This was adapted as to serve the purpose of the study. The questionnaire consisted of three sections (see Appendix: 1):

The first section incorporated personal/demographic data: i.e. data needed for the correlational part of the study and comparisons such as age, qualifications, years of experience, and position at school (whether teaching position, supervisory or otherwise).

The second section aimed to detect data on respondents' feelings/perceptions whether there was a need for change in their secondary schools and whether they think change/change conception would be welcome/accepted by staff members when suggested.

Consisting of 24 items, all delving into the characteristics that an administrative leader should possess, the third section aimed to collect data on the extent of transformational a school principal possesses. These are pooled into four dimensions of transformational leaders as coined by Hellriegal et al. (1992): Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, and Individualized consideration. Each dimension was addressed by six items. A five-point Likert-type scale was used in this section as follow: (5 = Very much, 4 = Much, 3 = Average, 2 = A little, and 1 = Very little or none). The theoretical range of the scale was from 24 to 120. The questionnaire was administered in Arabic and translation was crosschecked by two professional translators at Taiba University.

9.3 Sampling

A sample of (# 107) teachers was randomly selected from a target population: teachers (of different specializations) in twelve secondary schools belonging to Al Madinah Al Munawwarah Educational Zone as to respond to the above-set questionnaire questions. Tested against Cohen et al.'s (2006) procedures for representativeness, the sample size was quite appropriate.

9.4 Validity and reliability tests

To attain a satisfactory degree of "honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, participants approached, and the researcher's objectivity" (Cohen et. al., 2006: 106) face validity of the questionnaire was utilized. It was handed to # 19 university professors specialized in both public administration and school management. They gave valuable suggestions that helped to refine the layout of the questionnaire. For reliability, the test-re-test method was used. The questionnaire was administered twice with

a five-week interval to a sample of 30 teachers similar to those of the main study sample. Responses were compared and an Alpha correlation co-efficient of (.92) was recorded. On the other hand, the internal consistency amongst the items of the scale was statistically assessed yielding an alpha Cronbach correlation coefficient of (.922).

The questionnaire was piloted to a similar sample of respondents selected from public secondary schools based in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah Educational Zone, KSA. The aim was to assess applicability of the questionnaire and the readability of its items.

9.5 Procedure

When the above validity and reliability measures were assured, administration of the questionnaire was empirically carried out with a sample of (# 107) secondary school teachers randomly selected, as described above, from different schools in Al-Madinah Munawwarah Educational Zone. Different appointments were assigned to the different school teachers: so, the sample was divided into twelve sub-groups. Each at their determined time, participants were given full and clear instructions concerning how to respond to the items of the questionnaire.

Confidentiality, disclosure and privacy matters were assured: sufficient time was spared for this purpose to reassure the participants before the commencement of the data collection process (questionnaire administration).

Thus, all data needed to answer the research questions: "secondary school teachers' perceptions/beliefs of transformational school leader characteristics possessed by their school principals" and their "views about the need for change and how change is received", in addition to the "demographic data needed for the correlational part of the study" were collected (using sections 3, 2, and 1 of the questionnaire respectively). The questionnaire was completed over fifteen days as some schools needed more than one visit.

As few as # 7 questionnaires were invalid; but we had # 100 valid questionnaires returned, making a response rate of 93.45%. Data is now ready for analysis.

9.6 Data Analysis

Statistical processing of the quantitative questionnaire data was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), (Bryman & Cramer, 2001). Both descriptive statistics (e. g. frequencies, means, standard deviations, medians), and inferential statistics (e.g. t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)) were used to answer the research questions (set in section 4 above).

10 Findings of the study

Demographic characteristics as detected by the first section of the questionnaire has shown the variety indicated in Tables (1) below.

Data in the table indicate that a considerable majority of respondents (72%) belong to the age group (35 - 40). This could have implications for the years of experience participants have had as school teachers. Qualification data indicate that 60% of the participants were 2-year Teachers Colleges graduates; while 40% of them were graduates of the Faculty of Education. However, none of the participants had a higher degree.

Table (1). Demographic characteristics of the participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	30 – 34	28	28%
	35 – 40	72	72%
	Total	100	100%
Qualification	2-years Teachers' College	60	60%
	4-years university	40	40%
	Higher studies	0	0
	Total	100	100%
Years of experience	7 - 11	76	76%
	12 - 16	16	16%
	>16	8	8 %
	Total	100	100%
A supervisory/leading position?	Yes	16	16%
	No	84	84%
	Total	100	100%

In respect of experience, the data collected has shown that the vast majority of participants (76%) have had 7 - 11 years of experience compared with 16% of them who belonged to experience group 12 - 16. Only eight teachers have had more than 16 years of work experience.

As for position taken at school, data has shown that the vast majority of participants (84%) did not occupy a supervisory or leading position while a minority (16%) did.

Presentation of the findings follows the same order of the research questions (section 4 above).

Research question # 1:

"To what extent are secondary school principals prepared for transition into transformational leadership, reflected in and measured through the extent of the transformational school leaders' characteristics they possess?"

By obtaining the average mean score for each statement, the 24 statements were found to be above the middle point: 3.00. Figures in Table (2) indicate that all participants' mean scores were higher than the middle point of the individual scores of the 24 items of this section of the questionnaire; as well as being higher than the overall mean score of the questionnaire. Only one item scored below the middle point; with a mean of 2.48. This is item no. 5: that is the essential characteristic of *'avoiding using power and authority to achieve personal interests and using them for work sake'*.

Table (2). Mean scores and SDs of respondents' perceptions of their school principals

	How do you describe your School Principals? I think my School Principal …………………	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Behaves in an ideal way admired by staff who believe in his ideas and support him.	3.52	.82	10
2	Builds confidence and trust and provides a role model that staff seek to emulate.	3.60	1.08	8
3	Enjoys a high level of values and ethics that his behaviour reflects.	3.80	1.29	4
4	Prioritizes others' needs over personal needs.	3.68	.99	7
5	Avoids using power and authority to achieve personal interests and uses them for work sake.	2.48	1.16	11
6	Exhibits behaviour that makes of him a model to be followed by staff.	3.52	1.19	10
7	Inspires school staff and motivates the school staff to adopt new and innovative ideas.	3.56	1.35	9
8	Exhibits behaviour that is so inspiring that it makes staff feel that their work is worthwhile	3.76	.97	5

	How do you describe your School Principals? I think my School Principal ……………………	Mean	SD	Rank
	which motivates them to perform better.			
9	Involves staff in building up a future vision of the school and updates them with what is expected to do in the future.	3.84	1.21	3
10	Shows loyalty to the realization of the school's goals and future vision.	4.20	1.00	1
11	Works to raise the morale, enthusiasm and optimism of staff by focusing on the positives and enhancing teamwork.	3.20	1.22	13
12	Shows loyalty and commitment to the goals of the school that it motivates staff to make more effort.	3.72	1.14	6
13	Seeks to increase staff's awareness of the problems facing the school.	3.92	.95	2
14	Encourages staff to innovate through tackling old problems with innovational solutions.	3.72	1.06	6
15	Encourages staff to pose new ideas.	3.36	.995	12
16	Avoids directing criticism to staff who make individual mistakes in front of other staff members.	3.56	1.19	9
17	Actually raises staff 's awareness to solve problems in the school.	4.20	.92	1
18	Encourages staff to pose unconventional solutions for problems without fear of criticism.	3.48	1.15	11
19	Considers individuals' needs to develop their performance.	3.80	1.00	4
20	Tries to provide educational and training opportunities for staff in an atmosphere that attends to individual differences amongst them.	3.76	1.05	5
21	Delegates authorities parallel with mentoring.	3.80	.91	4
22	Encourages staff to continue achievement and	3.80	1.04	4

	How do you describe your School Principals? I think my School Principal …………………	Mean	SD	Rank
	professional growth.			
23	Deals with followers in a way that respects their privacies and that differs in accordance with their skills with the propose of securing higher levels of achievement.	3.12	1.36	14
24	Seeks to achieve high level of cooperation among staff and raises their morale through listening to and respecting all different viewpoints.	3.80	1.38	4

Concerning the scores obtained in the sub-scales constituting the overall scale (Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation and Individualized consideration), these were, in the whole, higher than the mid-point of each sub-scale.

The above results suggested that the respondents to the questionnaire considered their leaders as 'having the characteristics of transformational': almost all mean scores (that ranged between 3.12 and 4.20, with the one exception mentioned above) indicated that participants viewed their school principals positively. Namely, they believed that their school principals possessed the characteristics of transformational school leaders. The two characteristics that equally occupied the first rank were the principal's behaviors of 'showing loyalty to the realization of the school's goals and future vision' and 'raising staff's' awareness to solve problems in their schools' (items no. 10 and 17 respectively) with a mean score of 4.20. Second rank was 'Seeking to increase staff's awareness of the problems facing the school', (item no.13) with a mean score of 3.92.

As for responses to items in the first sub-scale: 'Idealized influence', these were ranked according to the level of endorsement respondents gave to these items. Results indicate that respondents ranked highest their leaders' 'enjoyment of high levels of values and ethics, things that their behaviour reflects' (item no. 3) with a mean score of 3.80. Second in rank came the principal's characteristic of 'prioritizing others' needs over personal needs (item no. 4) with a mean score of 3.68. The third rank was given to the characteristic of 'building confidence and trust and providing role models that staff seek to emulate' (item no. 2) with a mean

score of 3.60; while the others – behaviours in items no. 1, 6, and 5 were ranked fourth (recurring) with a mean score of 3.52 and fifth with a mean score of 2.48, respectively (within the six-items band of 'Idealized influence'), first component of the transformational leadership.

Standard deviation average of this band is 1.088; meaning that most of the values are close to the average, which indicates considerable homogeneity of the participants responses.

Responses to the second six-item band, sub-scale of: 'Inspirational motivation' indicated that the participants ranked highest their school principals' 'showing loyalty and commitment to the realization of schools' goals and future vision' (item no. 10) with a mean score of 4.20. This was seconded by the participants' views of their principals as 'involving staff in building up a future vision of the school and updating staff members with what is expected to do in the future' (item no. 9) with a mean score of 3.84.   In the third rank came participants' view of their school principals' tendency to 'exhibit behavior that is so inspiring that it makes staff members feel that their work is worthwhile, something that motivates staff members to perform better' (item no. 8) with a mean score of 3.76; while the others – behaviours in items no. 12, and 7 and 11 were ranked fourth with a mean score of 3.72, fifth with a mean score of 3.56, and sixth with a mean score of 3.20 respectively (within this band, second component of the transformational leadership). Standard deviation average of this band is also as low as 0.981; meaning that most of the values are close to the average, which (once again) indicates homogeneity of the participants responses.

Responses to the third sub-scale: "Intellectual stimulation", have shown that the participants ranked highest the view that their school principals seek to 'raise their school staff's awareness to solve the problems in their schools' (item 17) with a mean score of 4.20. This was followed by their view that the school principals 'seek to raise staff's awareness of the problems facing their schools' (item 13) with a mean score of 3.92. They ranked third the view that principals tend to 'encourage staff members to tackle old problems with unconventional and innovative solutions' (item 14) with a mean score of 3.72; while the others – behaviours in items no. 16, 18 and 15 were ranked fourth with a mean

score of 3.56, fifth with a mean score of 3.48, and sixth with a mean score of 3.36 respectively (within this band, the third component of the transformational leadership).

Standard deviation average is also as low as 1.044; meaning that that most of the values are close to the average score of the participants' responses to this band of questions. Homogeneity of the participants responses is assured.

Responses to the fourth sub-scale: "Individualized consideration", indicated that participants put in the first rank four characteristics of transformational school principals collectively. These were their views that school principals tended to 'consider individual' needs of staff to develop their performance, (item 19); 'delegate authorities parallel with mentoring' (item 21); 'encourage staff members to continue achievement and professional growth' (item 22); and 'achieve high level of cooperation among staff members in their schools and raise their morale through listening to and respecting all different viewpoints' (item 24), all with a mean score of 3.80. These were followed in the second rank by the view that school principals tend to 'provide educational and training opportunities for staff in an atmosphere that attends to individual differences amongst them' (item 20) with a mean score of 3.76. The third and the last rank in this band – component of the 'transformational leadership' – was given to the view that principals tend to 'deal with staff members in a way that respects their privacies and that differs in accordance with their skills with the propose of securing higher levels of achievement' (item 23) with a mean score of 3.12. Standard deviation average of this band is also as low as 1.123. meaning that most of the values are close to the average score of the participants' responses to this band of questions: the fact that assures homogeneity of the participants responses.

The overall standard deviation average (i.e. of all four bands) is 1.059. This indicates little dispersion among all participants responses: i.e. all are close to the overall average score: the fact that assures homogeneity of all participants responses to the questionnaire questions.

Research question # 2:

"To what extent do secondary school teachers view the need for change at their schools and how much is change welcome/ acceptable by the staff members?"

Data revealed in Table (3) below show that the vast majority (88.3%) of the teachers feel the need for a change initiative at their schools. On the other hand, only 1١.7 % of the participants think there is no need for change.

Table (3). Participants' perceptions of the need for change at their schools' system/sub-systems/processes

Perceptions of the need for change	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	88	88%
No	12	12%
Total	100	100%

As for the extent change (in the schools' administrative systems) would be welcome by staff members in these schools, responses given in Table (4) indicate that change would be rejected (44%), humbly accepted (36%), moderately accepted (16%) or greatly accepted (4%) by staff members in their respective schools.

Table (4). Participants' perceptions of the extent/degree of change acceptability

Extent of staff members' acceptability for a change initiative in their schools	Frequency	Percentage
Greatly	4	4%
Moderately	16	16%
Humbly	36	36%
Will be rejected	44	44%
Total	100	100%

Research question # 3:

Does the need for change as seen by the school teachers correlate with the extent of the teachers' acceptability/welcome to such changes?

Using correlation analysis, as indicated in Table (5) below shows no statistically significant correlation at any level in this respect.

Table (5). Correlation between the need for change and degree of change acceptance *Correlation sig at 0.01 level

		School's need for change	Staff's acceptability of change
School's need for change	Pearson Correlation	1	–.377
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.063
Staff's acceptability of change	Pearson Correlation	–.377	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.063	.

Research Question # 4:

Are there statistically significant differences amongst secondary school teachers' views about their school principals that can be attributed to variables of age, qualifications, years of experience and their position at school (a supervisory or otherwise)?

In order to assess the impact of the above independent variables in their views of their school principals both 't-test' and 'One Way Analysis of Variance' (ANOVA) were used. Based on the data collected in section one of the questionnaire, participants were pooled into two age-groups. These are 30-34 and 35-40.

Data analysis shown in Table (6) has shown that all correlation coefficients related to the four dimensions/components of the 'transformational leadership' are ($p > 0.05$), indicating that there are no statistically significant differences amongst secondary school teachers' views about their school principals that can be attributed to the age group variable in the light of Hinkle et al.'s (2003) interpretation of correlation

values. **This reflects an agreement between both age-groups in this respect.**

Table (6). Differences between the two age groups in the 'transformational school leadership' characteristics principals possess

Transformational Leadership Sub-scales	Mean		SD		t-value	Df	Sig.*
	Age group 30-34	Age group 35-40	Age group 30-34	Age group 35-40			
Idealized influence	19.75	21.00	3.36	3.90	-.912	23	.403
Inspirational motivation	20.86	22.83	4.98	5.38	-.84	23	.409
Intellectual stimulation	20.86	22.78	3.02	4.11	- 1.12	23	.275
Individualized consideration	21.00	22.50	4.80	5.73	-.612	23	.547

*Alpha level: 0.05

As for qualifications, participants were pooled into two categories of qualification: two-year 'Teachers' College', and four-year 'University'' graduates. Figures in Table (7) have shown that all correlation coefficients related to the four dimensions/components of the 'transformational leadership' are (p > 0.05), indicating that there are no statistically significant differences amongst secondary school teachers' views about their school principals that can be attributed to the qualification variable, in the light of Hinkle et al.'s (2003) interpretation of correlation values.

Table (7). Differences between the two qualification categories in the 'transformational school leadership' characteristics principals possess

Transformational Leadership Sub-scales	Mean		SD		t-value	df	Sig.*
	Teachers' College	University	Teachers' College	University			
Idealized influence	20.53	20.70	4.10	3.33	-.111	23	.916
Inspirational motivation	22.67	21.70	5.31	5.37	.442	23	.662
Intellectual stimulation	22.07	22.50	3.63	4.40	-.269	23	.791
Individualized consideration	22.53	21.41	6.16	4.33	.503	23	.620

 *Alpha level: 0.05

Data related to the teachers' years of work experience (Table 8 below) has shown that three correlation coefficients related to the first three dimensions/components of the 'transformational leadership' are ($p > 0.05$), indicating that there are no statistically significant differences amongst the three groups of secondary school teachers' views about their school principals in the first three sub-scales – components of the overall scale – that can be attributed to the years of experience variable (in the light of Hinkle et al.'s interpretation of correlation values, 2003). These were: 'Idealized influence', 'Inspirational motivation' and 'Intellectual stimulation'. On the other hand, statistically significant differences at (sig. 0.05) were indicated: ($p = .017$) amongst the three groups of participants in their perceptions of the transformational school leadership characteristic their principals possess, represented in the fourth band/sub-scale; namely 'Individualized consideration'.

Table (8). Variances among the three experience categories of participants in the 'transformational school leadership' characteristics principals possess

Transformational Leadership Sub-scales	Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Df	Sig.*
Idealized Influence	Between Groups	69.97	34.99	2.89	22	.077
	Within Groups	266.03	12.092			
Inspirational motivation	Between Groups	108.62	54.31	2.16	22	.139
	Within Groups	552.42	25.11			
Intellectual Stimulation	Between Groups	30.152	15.08	1.00	22	.383
	Within Groups	330.41	15.02			
Individualized consideration	Between Groups	194.66	97.33	4.17	22	.017
	Within Groups	513.18	23.33			

*Alpha level: 0.05

Applying Scheffe's (1954) test indicates that this variance is basically due to differences between participants having 7 - 11 years of experience and those having >16 years of experience, as well as differences between the former group and those having 12 - 16 years of work experience.

To find out whether there are any differences between the two groups of participants' positions at school {supervisory (leading); or non-supervisory (teaching)} on the 'transformational leadership characteristics their principals possess, t-test for differences was used. Figures in Table (9) has shown that all correlation coefficients related to the four dimensions/components of the 'transformational leadership' are (p > 0.05), indicating that there are no statistically significant differences amongst secondary school teachers' views about their school principals that can be attributed to their years of experience variable (in the light of Hinkle et al.'s interpretation of correlation values, 2003).

Table (9). Variances among the two categories of participants' position (supervisory or non-supervisory) on the 'transformational school leadership' characteristics principals possess

Transformational Leadership Sub-scales	Mean		SD		t-value	Df	Sig.*
	Occupying supervisory positions	Only teaching position	Occupying supervisory positions	Only teaching position			
Idealized influence	20.25	20.66	3.30	3.89	–.200	23	.843
Inspirational motivation	23.25	22.09	5.56	5.31	.396	23	.696
Intellectual stimulation	24.50	21.81	5.07	3.60	1.29	23	.210
Individualized consideration	24.50	21.62	6.81	5.20	.971	23	.342

*Alpha level: 0.05

11 Discussion

This study mainly investigated the schools' preparedness for shifting from such central directive leadership policy, typical of styles common in the educational setting. to the 'transformational school leadership model; newly introduced and hardly applied in Saudi Arabia. The study gauged the educational practitioners' readiness for radical action/change): namely, principals' readiness reflected in how much of the transformational leadership characteristic a person possesses; and staff members' through their views about the need for change and how much is this welcome/ acceptable by them, all through their own perceptions, views, and some correlational tests. Discussion in this section tackles the significant phenomena revealed in this study following the same order of sequence of the findings presented above.

If the school community – school principals and staff – do have a great extent of such characteristics, then we have got an important preliminary step (a pre-requisite basis) for establishing such approach. This is, of course, not enough: higher educational authorities' will is paramount as well. Here is a discussion relating our findings with this.

Findings in this study have shown favourable aspects of their schools' principals in terms of having 'transformational leadership' characteristics. Most of the participants opinions/responses about their principals indicated that schools' principals do possess a great deal of the transformational leadership characteristics representing the four categories in Bass' (1990) model adopted by Hellriegal et. al (1992) for organizational behaviour. This finding is a solid ground for founding 'transformational leadership' at schools highlighted by Alharbi (2018), considering factors like the principals and followers' attitudinal position essential in this respect. So, schools' preparedness for transformation into the new leadership model has an element of practicality; that is availability of potentially capable leaders: other sectors in KSA, e.g. the Health Care, do not (Al Harbi, 2018). The above is confirmed by the findings which indicated that the vast majority (88%) of participants had a strong feeling to see change in their secondary schools. This ascertained Saudi schools need of their institutions for change. This constitutes a second important foundational element for a successful transformational leadership: the first being the school principals' capability having reasonable extent of 'transformational leadership' characteristics. Such calls for change have been numerously repeated but there had been no true intention and practical steps for such change (reasons are to be detailed below).

Inconsistently with this study findings, Al-Amri (2001) found out that leaders in public institutions possessed a very low profile of transformational leadership characteristics. Aldawsari's (2016) portrait about the Saudi educational setting and the way it is led also indicated similar results.

This long phase (between the two studies: 2001 to 2018, the time when this study was conducted) could have affected the situation in many ways. The commencement of 21st century has brought about some global changes in relation: i.e. development plans and reform visions. It has always been claimed that "Saudi authorities are strongly concerned in social/educational reforms…" (Idrees, 2017: 26) that "one feels the "fast pursuing (social and educational) reforms" (Al Johani 2011: 27). Actual implementation to this vision is the ambitious educational reform programme sending (149,742) scholarship students abroad over thirty educationally developed countries, over the last five years (Idrees, 2017), realizing that any development or reform initiative should start with the teachers: the 'school goods' providers and major source or facilitators of knowledge. These are today's school leaders: the workforce that has

empowered our schools, and conveyed the advanced countries' educational leadership models.

At the higher authorities' level, serious attempts of reform/change have been continually endeavoured: 'Vision 2030' (launched in 2016), with the 'National Transformation Programme' interpret a deep desire and loud call for radical changes required in KSA. Thus, we can comfortably say that willingness to CHANGE exists: at the school level, as this study findings confirm; and at the higher authorities'/political level, as 'Vision 2030' assumes.

Findings also indicated that only 4% of them saw that if introduced, a change initiative would be greatly accepted. 16% of the participants thought change would be moderately accepted; and 36% think it would be humbly accepted. A state of contradiction is apparent in the findings, as 'how the vast majority strongly feel change is desperately needed (Table 3), and as great percentage as 44 reject such an initiative; only 4% to 16% are expected to accept it?' (Table 4). No statistically significant correlation existed between participants' perceptions of their schools' need for change and their perceptions of the extent change would be welcome/unwelcome: a result that reflects the 'instructional and transactional approaches' nature: a non-influencing relationship: a non-energetic leadership who are not (fully) committed to a mission of empowering the subordinates of an educational organization (school) to effect change. It ascertains Aldawsari's (2016) description of the status quo, strictly concerned with the routinely tasks; with hardly any change/reform to occur. Formal leaders reverted to managerial activity Palaiologou et al. (2015): an educational setting and culture that led over time into a dysfunctional environment for the school principals and teachers; and even students. This contradiction of thought findings can also be interpreted in the light of the participants awareness of the complexity of the change/reform issue: e.g. some cultural factors referred to by Bernstrøm and Kjekshus (2012), and are composing obstacles affecting the smooth run of the reformative movement in KSA.

This implies the desperate need for a serious attempt to accommodate school community – leaders and teachers – as to re-examine their thinking about leadership: to enhance change acceptability and decrease change resistance; in line with Colella and Chirichello (1998), Chirichello (1999) and particularly a number of comparatively modern studies; namely: Aziz et al (2015) who focused on acceptance of both leader and subordinates; Brown and May (2012) and Bernstrøm and

Kjekshus (2012) who emphasized having a set of managerial techniques to enhance the organization's workforce readiness for change.

More importantly, this call for change/reform is more demanding as it is the essence of the government's 'Vision 2030'. The 'National Transformation Programme' has made 'reform' its core aspect. Such finding revealed in this study constitutes a kind of resistance for the government vision and relevant development movement, and the subsequent change/reform agenda in the structure or function of the education/school system; and management style as well. Alharbi (2018) ascertained that pre-requisites for positive change should be fulfilled: thus, priority should be given to enhancing the workforce abilities through knowledge and experience: the transformational school leadership model assumes, suggests and translates such pre-requisites as vital elements.

In this respect, the study finding that 60% of the participants, are holders of two-year Teachers' Colleges certificate is so informative. It carries implications related to the (moderately qualified) quality of teachers tasked to teach at high schools: if this was acceptable thirty years ago it is not in the 21st century in the light of the (claimed) development plans and reform visions, and the global changes in relation. Attention should be drawn to the importance of reconsidering recruitment standards in the educational field in Saudi Arabia.

Results related to the impact of participants' demographic background variables, such as age, qualifications, years of work experience, and whether tasked a supervisory or teaching position indicated, no statistically significant differences amongst the respondents' perceptions of the transformational leadership characteristic their school principals possessed due to ages or qualifications, or teacher's position at school. Findings in relation to the respondents' 'years of experience' variable have shown the same results with one exception: statistically significant differences attributed to the years of experience variable could be observed in perceptions about the concept of 'individualized consideration'.

These findings (existence of no significant correlations) reflect consistency of responses/perceptions, as teachers of all age groups, whatever qualification they hold, position they occupy, or years of experience they have revealed very similar (semi- identical) responses. The standard deviation (within each six-item band of the questionnaire questions, or the whole questionnaire items) also confirms that responses had little dispersion. This implies that they share collective

and coherent understandings on the range of concepts conceived about their principals as represented in their responses related to the 'transformational leadership'. 'Collectivity and coherence' in the results reflect agreement of the participants: the fact that denote trustworthiness of the study findings. The exceptional case of variations among the teachers' responses in one band of the four concepts of the transformational leadership is quite natural, as different experience categories represent different generations; hence fluctuating thoughts: the mature logical mentality of experienced teachers must be different from the (comparatively) immature thoughts of the less experienced teachers.

In short, the Saudi school setting has some points in favour of 'transformational school leadership' transition:

- Principals' possession of good extent of 'transformational leadership' characteristics;
- Teachers thoughts in support of the need for change; and
- Worries of authorities at the highest level; and readiness adopt (and fund) transformational programmes/change plans.

However, we are still far behind achieving this kind of transition as a lot of preliminary requirements/pre-requisites are demanding:

- Teachers are not yet prepared to accept change (for some cultural reasons, or otherwise);
- School principals are not committed to their role in empowering/inspiring their subordinates for change acceptability;
- Cultural obstacles exist, sensitivity against utilization of developed countries for renewing the leadership styles;
- A big gap between theory (intention to reform) and reality (occurrence of action) exists;
- …etc.

12 Conclusion

The 'instructional and transactional leadership' styles are the models prevailing in the Saudi educational context. The study's main concern was to explore Saudi secondary schools' preparedness for transition to the 'transformational' style of school leadership, through practitioners' acceptability for vital change/reform tendency desired in the leadership style in the educational context, and practicality of such change initiatives. The study revealed that practitioners (teachers and

principals) have some potential, but are not yet quite ready to accept such changes unless a lot of pre-requisites are fulfilled.

Findings of this study are by no means generalizable to all secondary schools in Saudi Arabia/ within Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah Educational Zone due to the fact that the study did not include teachers working in other school types: preparatory of intermediate, female schools and leaders; and schools in other Saudi zones in KSA. This limits generalizability of the findings of this study. In this respect, the study recommends:

- further studies encompassing schools belonging to more various worksites and school types; along with utilizing more informative data collection instruments (interviewing, for example) might yielded more in-depth information and insights into why things are the way they are.

- further research to determine a complete package of context-dependent components/requirements of the transformational leadership as to design a training programme ahead of transformational processes.

- more correlational investigations to explore more factors' relationships to the successful implementation of (transformational) leadership; especially the state of contradiction in the result as 'how the vast majority strongly feel change is desperately needed, and as great percentage as 44 reject such an initiative'.

In conclusion, the participants' desire to see change in their schools reflects a feeling of dissatisfactory status prevailing. Eliminating the obstacles and change resistance; and improving the atmosphere into a better one could be the reform agenda suggested: change of the leadership styles.

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Appendices

Appendix (1)

Transformational School Leadership Scale

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is part of an academic assignment. It aims to ascertain your perceptions of your school principals' leadership style. It consists of three sections. The first section collects some personal data. The section aims to ascertain whether respondents felt there was a need for change in their respective secondary schools and whether they think change would be welcome by staff member in their schools if suggested. The third section aimed to ascertain from the secondary school teachers' perspective the extent to which their school principals possess the characteristics of transformational school leaders.

Your responses to this questionnaire will be used for by the researcher for research purpose only and will never be accessed by anyone but the researcher and will be confidential.

Section: one

1. **Age**

    a.　　　　**< 30 (　　)**

    b.　　　　**30-34 (　　)**

    c.　　　　**35-40 (　　)**

2. **Qualifications**

    a.　　　　**Teachers' College (　　)**

    b.　　　　**University　　　(　　)**

    c.　　　　**Higher studies　(　　)**

3. **Years of Experience in Job**

    a.　　　　**7 - 11 (　　)**

    b.　　　　**12 - 16 (　　)**

    c.　　　　**>　16 (　　)**

<p style="text-align:center">−٨٤٤−</p>

Section: Two

4. **Do you occupy a supervisory/leading position at school?**

a.   **YES ( )**

b.   **NO ( )**

5. **Do you think that the school you are working in needs change in its system and processes?**

a.   **YES ( )**

b.   **NO ( )**

6. **If the school you are working in undergo some change in the systems, procedures, or in different organizational processes, do you think that the teachers in the school will accept this change?**

a.   **They will accept it strongly ( )**

b.   **They will accept it moderately ( )**

c.   **They will accept it humbly ( )**

d.   **They will reject it. ( )**

Section Three:

School teachers' perceptions of their school principals' leadership

(please put X where you think appropriate)

	How do you describe your School Principals? I think my School Principal….	Very much	Much	Average	A little	Very little	None
1	Behaves in an ideal way admired by staff who believe in his ideas and support him.						
2	Builds confidence and trust and provides a role model that staff seek to emulate.						
3	Enjoys a high level of values and ethics that his behaviour reflects.						
4	Prioritizes others' needs over personal needs.						

	How do you describe your School Principals? I think my School Principal….	Very much	Much	Average	A little	Very little	None
5	Avoids using power and authority to achieve personal interests and uses them for work sake.						
6	Exhibits behaviour that makes of him a model to be followed by staff.						
7	Inspires school staff and motivates the school staff to adopt new and innovative ideas.						
8	Exhibits behaviour that is so inspiring that it makes staff feel that their work is worthwhile which motivates them to perform better.						
9	Involves staff in building up a future vision of the school and updates them with what is expected to do in the future.						
10	Shows loyalty to the realization of the school's goals and future vision.						
11	Works to raise the morale, enthusiasm and optimism of staff by focusing on the positives and enhancing teamwork.						
12	Shows loyalty and commitment to the goals of the school that it motivates staff to make more effort.						
13	Seeks to increase staff's awareness of the problems facing the school.						
14	Encourages staff to innovate through tackling old problems with innovational solutions.						
15	Encourages staff to pose new ideas.						
16	Avoids directing criticism to staff who make individual mistakes in front of other staff members.						
17	Raises staff 's awareness to solve problems in the school.						
18	Encourages staff to pose unconventional solutions for problems without fear of criticism.						
19	Considers individuals' needs to develop their performance.						

	How do you describe your School Principals? I think my School Principal….	Very much	Much	Average	A little	Very little	None
20	Tries to provide educational and training opportunities for staff in an atmosphere that attends to individual differences amongst them.						
21	Delegates authorities parallel with mentoring.						
22	Encourages staff to continue achievement and professional growth.						
23	Deals with followers in a way that respects their privacies and that differs in accordance with their skills with the propose of securing higher levels of achievement.						
24	Seeks to achieve high level of cooperation among staff and raises their morale through listening to and respecting all different viewpoints.						

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