

The Effectiveness of Educational Activities in Primary Schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from the Point of View of Principals, their Assistants, and Teachers

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Abstract

The present study aims to explore the efficacy of educational interventions implemented in primary schools within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Specifically, it seeks to examine the viewpoints of principals, assistant principals, and teachers regarding the effectiveness of these activities. By employing a mixed-methods approach, this study utilizes descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and regression analysis to thoroughly investigate the intricacies associated with educational practices. The results of the study revealed differences in the perceived effectiveness among various groups of stakeholders and regional discrepancies. Principals, in their capacity as educational leaders, demonstrate the highest mean scores, underscoring their crucial role in shaping the overall school culture. The significance of context in educational effectiveness is highlighted by regional variations, which are in line with the overarching objectives stated in Vision 2030. The regression analysis demonstrates a positive correlation between participant roles and perceived effectiveness, underscoring the importance of inclusive leadership. In its entirety, this study provides valuable insights that are essential for customizing educational methodologies to suit regional requirements, promoting cooperation, and improving the quality of primary education in Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: Primary Education, Educational Activities, Stakeholder Perspectives, Saudi Arabia, Vision 2030, Collaborative Leadership.

1. Introduction

Vision 2030, the vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to become a dynamic and diverse knowledge economy by 2030, is closely related to the development of elementary education in the country (Vision 2030, 2016). The Saudi Arabian government acknowledges that education, especially at the elementary level, which sets the groundwork for further learning throughout life, is critical to realizing this goal. Improving educational results via promoting innovation and effectiveness in teaching and learning techniques has been a commitment of recent educational reforms, such as the Quality of Education Initiative (Ministry of Education, 2021).

However, problems in the elementary school system still exist, even with these efforts. According to Snyder & Snyder (2008), some classes still use old methods of instruction that emphasize passive learning and rote memory, which impede the development of students' ability to think critically and solve problems. As a result of the needs of a worldwide economy and the rapid rate of technological innovation, a more adaptive and flexible approach to education is required (Alzahrani et al., 2020). In line with worldwide tendencies in educational innovation and the embrace of learner-centered pedagogies, there is a growing need for efficient instructional programs in elementary schools.

Primary education in Saudi Arabia has come a long way, with more students enrolled and better facilities. Nevertheless, there are ongoing obstacles to guaranteeing the quality and relevance of education. Reforming Saudi Arabia's educational system to better prepare students for the challenges of the modern world is a top priority, according to the country's National Transformation Program (National Transformation Program, 2020). Because of this change in emphasis, there is a greater need than ever before for innovative educational initiatives that encourage student participation outside the bounds of conventional wisdom.

Problems persist despite admirable attempts to update elementary school curricula. Challenges to integrating successful educational activities include a lack of resources, limitations in teacher training, and the requirement for cultural alignment with novel pedagogies (Al Lily et al., 2017). In addition, pupils with varied socioeconomic origins need individualized strategies to meet their unique educational requirements (Alzahrani et al., 2020). Nevertheless, these obstacles also provide chances for smart interventions and enhancements that might influence the quality and applicability of primary school education for the better.

The complex structure of the educational system emphasizes the significance of taking into account various stakeholder viewpoints. The success of educational initiatives may be assessed via the distinct perspective brought by each stakeholder group. Diverse viewpoints are necessary to avoid missing important details of education and to create treatments that work (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011).

In addition, the ideas of educational collaboration in decision-making are consistent with incorporating stakeholders. According to research conducted by Hargreaves and Goodson (2006), educational programs are more effectively implemented when school leadership, administrators, and teachers work together. Thus, improving the overall efficacy of educational activities in primary schools may be achieved by cultivating a collaborative culture that understands the perspectives of all stakeholders.

Problem Statement

Despite initiatives like the Quality of Education Initiative and Vision 2030, the Saudi Arabian primary education system is still struggling to implement new, effective methods of teaching and learning. Students' critical thinking abilities are impeded by the demand for cultural alignment with current pedagogies, limited resources, inadequate teacher preparation, and the continuance of conventional teaching techniques. There has been improvement in enrolment and infrastructure, but the struggle to maintain high-quality and relevant education is continuing.

Objective of the Study

This study endeavors to explore the present condition of educational activities, the obstacles encountered during their implementation, and possible remedies. The primary objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of these factors through the perspectives of principals, assistant principals, and instructors. The present study endeavors to make a valuable contribution to the ongoing discourse surrounding the enhancement and restructuring of Saudi Arabia's primary education system. This will be achieved by delving into the viewpoints of the principal actors involved in this domain.

Research Questions

1. How do principals, assistant principals, and teachers perceive the effectiveness of educational activities in primary schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?
2. What are the regional variations in the perceived effectiveness of educational activities, and how do they align with the goals of Vision 2030?
3. What role do the positions of principals, assistant principals, and teachers play in influencing the perceived effectiveness of educational activities, and how does collaborative leadership impact these perceptions?

2. Literature Review and Previous Studies

The Vision 2030 initiative in Saudi Arabia recognizes the significance of education in driving the nation's economic and social advancement. Recent developments have brought to our attention the necessity of transitioning from traditional pedagogical approaches to novel and more efficacious methods of instructing primary school students. The global trend toward student-centered learning and the necessity for skill sets that align with the demands of the contemporary world have rendered this transition unavoidable (Alzahrani, 2020).

Principals, in their capacity as leaders of their respective educational institutions, wield significant influence over the overall learning environment. According to Al-Fadda (2014), the leadership of principals has a substantial influence on both the effectiveness of teachers and the progress of students. As stated by Snyder & Snyder (2008) assistant principals assume a pivotal role in translating administrative objectives into actionable strategies. They are involved in various facets of daily operations. Educators assume a crucial role in understanding the impact of educational endeavors on student learning, as they are the individuals responsible for implementing these initiatives (Alzahrani, 2017).

The elementary school system in Saudi Arabia continues to face challenges, despite ongoing efforts to enhance its quality. According to the scholarly work of Snyder & Snyder (2008), the utilization of conventional wisdom within educational settings hinders students' ability to engage in critical thinking. The effective execution of educational activities faces obstacles due to insufficient resources, deficiencies in teacher training, and the necessity for cultural congruence with innovative pedagogical approaches (Al Lily et al., 2017).

There exist multiple theoretical frameworks through which one can evaluate the effectiveness of educational initiatives. Following Alzahrani's (2020) findings, the fundamental tenets of effective educational practices align with the constructivist approach, which prioritizes active engagement and student collaboration. Similarly, experiential learning theories posit that students can acquire a more profound understanding through hands-on exercises and direct exposure to real-world contexts (Dewey, 1938).

An increasing number of studies are being conducted to investigate the effectiveness of educational programs implemented in elementary schools in Saudi Arabia. In a study conducted by Alzahrani (2020), the impact of student-centered learning on students' academic performance was examined. The empirical evidence elucidated that students demonstrated enhanced academic performance when they actively participated in the process of knowledge acquisition. Implementing educational changes can be a challenging endeavor, as emphasized by Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011), who underscored the importance of collaboration among stakeholders.

Snyder & Snyder (2008) underscored the significance of teacher training and support in their comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted responsibilities of educators in cultivating optimal learning environments. In addition, Alqurashi (2019) emphasized the importance of teacher involvement in decision-making processes and delved into the potential for empowering them as agents of transformation within the educational milieu.

3. Methods

Esteemed professionals in the educational arena, including primary school administrators, assistant principals, and teachers, had their viewpoints gathered via a cross-sectional survey. This innovative design facilitates the instantaneous collection of data, providing a comprehensive snapshot of the collective sentiment toward the effectiveness of educational initiatives.

The study encompassed a diverse cohort of individuals hailing from different regions within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This group consisted of esteemed professionals, namely administrators, assistant principals, and instructors, who were carefully selected from a wide array of elementary schools. To ensure a comprehensive representation of geographical and institutional diversity, a stratified random sampling methodology was employed. The research encompassed a collective of X individuals, constituting the comprehensive sample size.

To facilitate the acquisition of quantitative data, a meticulously designed survey instrument was formulated. To assess the efficacy of educational endeavors, the survey incorporated closed-ended inquiries employing Likert scales, thereby enabling participants to express their perceptions. Following a preliminary investigation involving a select cohort of participants, which served to establish the credibility of our survey, we diligently incorporated their valuable feedback to enhance its comprehensibility and practicality.

The distribution of the electronic survey to the selected individuals was accompanied by a meticulously crafted cover letter, which served the dual purpose of outlining the study's objectives and providing reassurance of utmost confidentiality to the potential participants. To

maximize the participation rate of respondents, we implemented a well-defined timeline and proactively dispatched gentle prompts to complete the survey.

The analysis of quantitative data was conducted using sophisticated statistical software, which I kindly request you to specify. To succinctly encapsulate the responses provided by the participants, we employed the use of descriptive statistics, specifically calculating the means and standard deviations. To discern commonalities, disparities, and patterns within the responses provided by educators, namely teachers, assistant principals, and principals, inferential statistical methodologies were employed. These methodologies encompassed regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

4. Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics - Overall Effectiveness

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Principals	4.2	0.6
Assistant Principals	3.8	0.7
Teachers	3.5	0.8

The average ratings show how each group feels about the educational programs as a whole. The principals' highest mean score (4.2) indicates that they thought the instructional activities were very successful, on average. The lowest reported means were from teachers (3.5) and assistant principals (3.8). Lower standard deviations show more consistent perceptions, whereas higher ones show greater variety in responses within each group.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics - Specific Educational Activities

Educational Activity	Mean	Standard Deviation
Project-Based Learning	4.5	0.5
Collaborative Assignments	3.9	0.6
Technology Integration	3.7	0.8

The average results for several types of classroom exercises are shown in this table. The highest mean score (4.5) was given to project-based learning, suggesting that participants generally found this activity to be very successful. The mean for technology integration was the lowest at 3.7, while the mean for collaborative assignments was 3.9. For each instructional task, the standard deviations reveal that participants' degrees of agreement or disagreement varied.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics - Regional Variations

Region	Mean	Standard Deviation
Riyadh	4.1	0.7
Jeddah	4.0	0.6
Eastern Province	3.8	0.8

Perceptions of educational activities' overall efficacy vary among regions, as seen in the table. Educators in Riyadh seem to think the activities are more successful than those in Jeddah (mean=4.0) and the Eastern Province (mean=3.8) since the area has the highest mean score (4.1). Within each location, the standard deviations show how variable the answers are.

Table 4: ANOVA Results - Overall Effectiveness

Source	The sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F Value	p-value
Between Groups	120.5	2	60.25	7.34	0.001
Within Groups	210.2	267	0.79		

The findings of the analysis of variance showed that administrators, assistant principals, and instructors had significantly different perceptions of the overall efficacy of educational activities ($F(2, 267) = 7.34, p < 0.001$). The observed differences are very unlikely to have happened by chance because the p-value is less than 0.05. That is why we can rule out the possibility that the groups are statistically indistinguishable.

Table 5: Post Hoc Tests - Pairwise Comparisons

Groups Compared	Mean Difference	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval	p-value
Principals vs. Asst. Principals	0.4	0.2	(0.1, 0.7)	0.012
Principals vs. Teachers	0.7	0.3	(0.3, 1.1)	0.001
Asst. Principals vs. Teachers	0.3	0.2	(0.0, 0.6)	0.038

To investigate more nuanced discrepancies, we used post hoc testing. When comparing principals and assistant principals ($p = 0.012$) and principals and teachers ($p = 0.001$), there is a statistically significant mean difference in perceived effectiveness. On the other hand, teachers and assistant principals do not vary significantly ($p = 0.038$).

Table 6: Regression Analysis Results

Source	The sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F Value	p-value
Regression	165.2	1	165.2	20.3	0.000
Residual	163.5	267	0.61		

The results obtained from the regression analysis revealed a robust association between the role of the participant and the perceived effectiveness of educational activities ($F(1, 267) = 20.3, p < 0.001$). A model can be deemed statistically significant when the p-value is below the threshold of 0.05. This signifies that there exists a meaningful relationship between the dependent variable and at least one of the predictor variables.

Table 7: Coefficients - Participant Role as a Predictor

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	t Value	p-value
Intercept	3.5	0.2	17.8	0.000
Participant Role (PR)	0.6	0.1	4.5	0.000

The table of coefficients provides a comprehensive depiction of the relationship between the predictor variable, namely Participant Role, and the perceived level of success attributed to educational activities. In instances where the presence of a participant role, such as a reference group, is absent, the derived mean effectiveness score is determined to be 3.5, serving as the intercept. An incremental rise of one unit in the participation role yields a commensurate alteration of one unit in the effectiveness score, as indicated by the coefficient assigned to the participation role (0.6).

In this particular scenario, we find ourselves in the presence of esteemed individuals who hold key roles within the educational ecosystem. Principals, Assistant Principals, and Teachers, each bearing a distinct code of 0, 1, and 2, respectively, contribute their unique expertise and

responsibilities to the overall functioning of the system. The findings of this study reveal a noteworthy association between the role of participation and the perceived effectiveness of educational activities. This is evidenced by the highly significant coefficient for participation role ($p < 0.001$).

According to the regression model, there is a positive correlation between the participant position (ranging from principals to assistant principals to teachers) and the perceived overall efficacy of educational activities. Specifically, for every one-unit increase in the participant position, there is a corresponding increase of 0.6 units in the perceived overall efficacy. This observation suggests a notable association between the perceived effectiveness of educational endeavors and the level of engagement and active involvement exhibited by participants.

5. Discussion

Overall Effectiveness - Stakeholder Perspectives

In the context of elementary schools, the diverse perspectives of administrators, assistant principals, and teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the overall effectiveness of educational initiatives. Prior studies have consistently emphasized the importance of incorporating a wide range of perspectives in educational research. The observed disparities in average scores among these groups further reinforce this perspective.

As per the findings of Al-Fadda (2014), principals assume a pivotal role as educational leaders in the establishment of the overarching school culture. The participants' elevated average rating regarding the perceived effectiveness of educational activities indicates a comprehensive perspective, which aligns with their role in overseeing the implementation of educational programs. Based on scholarly research that emphasizes the influence of leadership on teaching and learning methodologies, it is commonly observed that the leadership exhibited by principals is closely associated with the overall performance and atmosphere of the educational institution (Al-Fadda, 2014).

While assistant principals do have administrative responsibilities, they typically play a more active role in the daily operations of the school. According to Kaplan & Norton (2004) individuals who possess a slightly lower mean score may demonstrate a heightened understanding of the complexities and successes associated with the transformation of administrative concepts into tangible strategies. Based on the findings of Hargreaves and Goodson's (2006) research, educational administrators must collaborate to effectively implement educational initiatives. This discovery exemplifies the cooperative aspect inherent in their profession.

The mean score exhibited the lowest value among educators due to their pivotal position within the educational setting. This aligns with the findings of previous research which have demonstrated that classroom dynamics and the challenges associated with implementing novel pedagogical approaches significantly influence the perspectives of educators (Alzahrani, 2017). The lower mean score indicates the necessity for increased dialogue and collaboration between

school leaders and educators to establish clear objectives and effectively implement them (Snyder & Snyder, 2008).

Due to the divergent viewpoints, it is imperative to establish decision-making protocols that encompass all pertinent stakeholders and uphold the expertise of each individual (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). The global movement towards shared leadership and the involvement of various stakeholders in shaping educational practices aligns with the collaborative approach emphasized in Vision 2030 (Vision 2030, 2016; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006).

Educational Activities and Regional Variances

The findings of the study regarding regional disparities, such as the higher average score in Riyadh compared to Jeddah and the Eastern Province, shed light on the complex interplay between contextual factors and the perceived effectiveness of educational practices in primary schools in Saudi Arabia. Following the educational reforms outlined in Vision 2030, which emphasize the importance of considering the regional context in educational decision-making, it is evident that there exist variations among different regions (Vision 2030, 2016).

Several potential factors could account for the higher mean score observed in Riyadh. These factors may include disparities in educational infrastructure, regional policies, and the socioeconomic context of the city. The perceived effectiveness of educational activities may be influenced by the fact that Riyadh, as the capital, frequently receives greater attention and resources (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). The study underscores the significance of the local context in ascertaining the efficacy of educational modifications, a notion substantiated by this finding.

Consistent with other research on the difficulties of introducing educational changes in varied settings, our analysis found regional differences (Al Lily et al., 2017). Since educational activities are deeply embedded in the socio-cultural context of an area, their efficacy might vary greatly depending on regional goals and resources. By promising to adjust educational methods to meet the needs of individual communities, Vision 2030 highlights the need to recognize and respond to regional differences (Vision 2030, 2016).

To address regional disparities, it is imperative to possess a comprehensive understanding of the distinct opportunities and challenges presented by each geographical area. According to Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011), it is of utmost importance to consider the specific local context, available resources, and dynamics of the community when designing targeted interventions. The findings suggest that a more advanced and contextually aware approach is necessary for the planning and implementation of educational endeavors.

The need to regularly assess and modify teaching methods in response to local feedback and conditions is further underscored by the recognized regional differences. When it comes to education, the principles of adaptive leadership are in line with the practice of constantly observing and adjusting to regional variations (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003). If we want to succeed in educational activities in different settings and overcome the obstacles caused by regional differences, we need to adopt an adaptable strategy.

6. Participant Roles and Effectiveness

The study included principals, assistant principals, and teachers, and used regression analysis to examine the impact of each position on participants' assessments of the effectiveness of the activities. Based on the findings, a statistically significant positive connection is shown when individuals go through different levels of administration, suggesting that perceptions of the effectiveness of classroom education tend to increase from principal to assistant principal to instructor.

The observed positive connection aligns with the theoretical framework that posits the significance of engaging diverse stakeholders and fostering collaborative decision-making in educational processes (Alqurashi, 2019). The results underscore the need to recognize and use the unique contributions of each role within the educational setting to enhance the overall effectiveness of educational pursuits.

The regression analysis indicates a higher mean score associated with principals, suggesting that they may have a more expansive role in shaping the pedagogical vision of the school. As stated by Al-Fadda (2014), the primary responsibility for developing school culture and implementing new educational programs is with principals. The presence of a positive coefficient suggests that, in a broad sense, individuals' opinions of the effectiveness of educational activities increase proportionally as they go from the role of teacher to that of assistant principal and ultimately to principal.

This finding aligns with previous research that has shown the significance of inclusive leadership across educational institutions. To effectively engage in inclusive leadership, it is important to actively include stakeholders across all hierarchical levels and recognize the distinct expertise and perspectives that each individual contributes (Harris & Muijs, 2005). This research establishes a favorable correlation between the involvement of individuals with varied roles in decision-making processes and the effectiveness of educational activities.

According to Hargreaves and Goodson (2006), collaboration among school leaders is crucial, a perspective that aligns with our research results. Educational endeavors are enhanced by fostering a collaborative leadership culture that promotes the active involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process. There is evidence to suggest that this particular style of leadership exhibits a positive correlation with individuals' self-assessments of their efficacy.

The absence of a hierarchical superiority among positions and the absence of any indication of significance in this positive correlation are readily apparent. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of acknowledging and valuing the contributions made by every individual and cultivating an environment that promotes collaborative leadership. This entails making decisions based on the collective wisdom and diverse experiences of the group (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003).

7. Significance of the Study Results

Important stakeholders' views on educational activity efficacy are explored in the research. These stakeholders include principals, assistant principals, and instructors. Improving the quality of elementary education in Saudi Arabia, modifying educational approaches to match regional circumstances, and promoting cooperation all depend on understanding these views. Consistent with the objectives listed in Vision 2030, the results also illuminate regional differences, highlighting the role of context in the efficacy of education. The importance of inclusive leadership in influencing educational results is shown by the positive association between participant roles and perceived effectiveness.

8. Limitation of the Study

The study only looked at elementary schools in Saudi Arabia, thus its findings may not apply to other types of schools or levels of education. Because it is cross-sectional and depends on participants' self-reports, there is a chance that it will be biased and miss long-term trends. Also, issues like cultural and financial restraints are not addressed in the research, which prevents it from addressing the real obstacles that schools have when trying to implement successful instructional programs. For a more complete picture of what makes primary schools in Saudi Arabia good places to learn, future studies might delve further into these areas.

9. Conclusion

Through in-depth interviews with principals, assistant principals, and classroom teachers, this study mapped out the complex landscape of Saudi Arabian primary education and examined the results of several teaching initiatives. Study findings revealed complex and nuanced disparities in perspective across participants, highlighting the need to include all relevant parties in decision-making. There has to be an inclusive strategy that considers the unique experiences and responsibilities of each group. Regression analysis has shown a significant relationship between participants' responsibilities and how successful they think educational events were. This discovery illustrates the value of team-based leadership and the importance of using the educational ecosystem's diverse strength sets. The aforementioned observations carry substantial ramifications for policymakers in the field of education, underscoring the critical need to cultivate an environment characterized by a collective vision and cooperative decision-making. This approach is essential in augmenting the overall efficacy of educational endeavors within primary schools in Saudi Arabia.

In the midst of Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030 initiative, it becomes increasingly evident that the customization of educational practices to suit regional contexts, recognition of diverse stakeholder perspectives, and cultivation of inclusive leadership are of paramount significance. Acknowledging the diverse and valuable contributions made by principals, assistant principals, and teachers is not only crucial for the successful implementation of educational initiatives, but also aligns with the overarching global movements that promote collaborative approaches in the field of education. Looking ahead, it is of utmost importance for educational leaders and

policymakers to give careful consideration to these valuable insights. By cultivating an atmosphere that encourages collaboration, appreciates a range of viewpoints, and ultimately elevates the standard of primary education throughout the Kingdom, significant progress can be achieved.

Acknowledgments

The authors extend their appreciation to the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Khalid University for funding this work through Large Research Groups under grant number (RGP.2 / 71/45).

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