Difficulties of Educational Planning of Primary Public Schools in Riyadh: Female Principals Perspectives

By

Nourah Mohammad Abdullah Alazzam
Department of Administration and Educational Planning/ College of Education/ Imam Muhammad bin Saud University
Email: alazzam.noura8@gmail.com

Abstract

The study aimed to identify the difficulties of educational planning among the primary public schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from the point of view of female school principals. The study used cross a cross-sectional quantitative research approach to achieve the research objective by using a self-administered questionnaire to collect data. A total valid 294 responses were considered in this study. Through the descriptive statistics using SPSS program, the results found that the different educational planning domains achieved high importance level, and domain of the teachers ranked first with a mean of (4.03) with a high importance level, and the local community relationship field ranked at last with a mean of (3.93) with also a high importance level. The study recommended to overcome educational planning difficulties in the primary public schools in Riyadh providing various material as well moral capabilities to education teachers and leaders, with necessity to communicate with the local community for more participation in the development of educational plans, and strengthen the partnership between teachers, students and school management.

Keywords: educational planning, primary public schools, female principals, Riyadh.

Introduction

Educational planning is an element of the educational and leadership management in educational institutions that includes ambition of both general and specific objectives, and identifying priorities from educational strategies and existing resources to predict the future different circumstances. This is indicated by (DeMatthews et al., 2020) that the main beliefs, values, knowledge, teaching and educational management practices by the school administration reflect their educational effects and the outcomes on its educational institutions (Kaufman, 2020). The effective communication strategy in the field of education is a continuous and developing process, which includes areas with many processes of operations, and their transition from the traditional educational stage to the stage of educational innovations, through communication between management and educational structures, educational planning (Ghassan & Fdiya, 2014). In addition to the local community, and the reflection of the positive effects on its educational outcomes in its various educational stages. Haumer and his colleagues (2021) characterized the educational strategies by building cognitive capacities in cultural changes. And it is linked to a variety of goals and ethics to meet the needs of administrators and teachers for the transition to educational competencies through good communication.

The world is currently facing huge trends that may be the most dangerous in the current era. As of March 2020, the emerging Corona virus pandemic has caused the interruption of education all countries, especially for those enrolled in educational institutions, amounting to of (6.1) billion students (Ogunode et al., 2021). Approximately (80%) worldwide, and this

came at a time when the educational institutions are suffering from a global educational crisis like a lack of financial capabilities, and there are many students in schools, where they do not receive the basic skills they need to develop their attitudes and creativity in practical and educational life (Jacob et al., 2021). During the evidences in the public schools in Riyadh city in Saudi Arabia, it was found that there are many obstacles that have emerged in light of this pandemic, and there are obstacles that face the Ministry of Education in general, and public primary schools in particular, and there are studies that have shown that educational planning suffers from negative aspects such as their inability to provide the capabilities of their administrative and technical nature (Alyami, 2014). Because of these obstacles which are general educational nature in the most educational schools, and to help the schools to overcome the emerging obstacles and the similar conditions that they face in the educational environments (Dammas, 2020). Thus, the current study formulate the following research study question: What are the obstacles of educational planning in the public primary schools in Riyadh city from the point of view of female principals?

Literature Review

Planning is considered one of the basic processes that importance in improving the policies, ways, and means, which are organized to choose the best possible solutions to reach certain objectives in light of the different organizational resources (Orefice & Guraziu, 2018). The concept of educational planning has developed within a comprehensive framework of the steps, procedures and methods used to achieve these objectives, and to ensure the degree of achievement of the objectives in the process of a comprehensive pre-vision of all the elements of the educational process (Ismail et al., 2021). And it was not on a specific aspect of the educational process, but rather it concerned with the educational aspects in the educational institutions (Yemini et al., 2018). Furthermore, it is applied to education at all levels and its forms and stages, regular and non-formal, and addresses the categories of society in educational institutions, educational curricula, effective teaching methods, teacher preparation, technological means and others (Kaufman et al., 2002). Therefore, educational planning is continuous mutual relation that leads to the achievement of educational goals.

Boluwatife et al. (2019) defined the educational planning as a future reflection on the systematic processes of the educational reality, which leads to development in the educational future, and it is linked to the principles of the development. However, it also indicates to a comprehensive, organized, practical unit with a specific period of time in drawing the educational systems in an orderly manner to restructure the educational, economic and social life with distinct and high efficiency and the lowest material cost (Chance, 2010). In order to invest its reliable results to build appropriate educational plans, this concept has been seen also as an administrative planning which is affected by a number of factors to great extent, and prevail the conditions within the health educational environments (Chang, 2008). In addition to the economic, social and educational interactions, there are direct effects that hinder and increase the obstacles to educational planning in the school management and education in general, which appear within the educational institutions (Birley, 2017).

The literature provided some of these obstacles and issues related to the education planning in the study. Students' failure to acquire the most basic skills in education, with inequality in the educational systems in most countries (Sulandjari, 2021) and these effects negatively and directly affected the educational strategies in light of the emerged crisis, and the crisis also highlighted some weaknesses in education and training systems in the technical fields. The relevant literature further indicated among the unaware educational planning in the

crisis times include the low levels of interaction in developing an alternative educational plans, and a decrease in the structural deficiencies of the educational planning and management (Otu & Vivian, 2022). And the disruptions in the workplaces made it difficult to implement educational systems in educational platforms, which is one of the most important elements and application in the basic teaching methods of any educational system (Abasi, 2022). Due to the poor of information technology infrastructure necessary for each of the students, teachers and school management, and how to harmonize between the educational plans that were successfully implemented while others could not be implemented for different reasons (Eid, 2017).

There is no doubt that educational planning in general is one of the duties of educational institutions, because the lack of planning means chaos and confusion in the failure to complete tasks regarding educational reform (Salem et al., 2021). As it is considered one of the important matters in terms of long and medium term planning, the educational planning can ensure better quality of school planning and produce the full planning process, and it is one of the organized educational process (Mahmoud, 2003), and the various methods to reach the general outcomes to confront the educational obstacles and reach effective solutions through educational projects and educational programs. The objectives of the educational planning include seeks to achieve the best that can be done in all educational elements and aspects such as cultural, economic, social and political. Also it determines the reality and the data it contains, and then adopting these goals on the basic pillars of educational planning (Hassanein, 2021). In several fields, the most important are the needs and the progress of society within a civilized manner characterized by flexibility. It also aims to establish the effective participation of educated people and their harmony with the educational factors (Abu Shannar, 2022). It preserves all the gains in society from a cultural point of view to transfer them across generations, pay attention to educational development, and eradicate illiteracy.

Planning is one of the most important functions of educational management, and it is a comprehensive and continuous process that includes charting the path into achieving goals and predicting threats and risks, and how to manage and deal with them (MC, 2022). The current educational environment strives to find appropriate alternatives, and this process is based on and anticipates developing the goals and strategies, making plans and constantly following up on their implementation (Douse & Uys, 2018). The management of many educational institutions must think in a way that these institutions deal with any crises that may arise strategically, efficiently and effectively. The educational plans in addition, by including educational planning for a long-term and permanent plan, would lead to any crisis or sudden situations to add flexibility to the educational plans and allow it to contain the potential stimulating motives (Fathi & Dakhil, 2022). On the other hand, the educational planning aims to receive the students in an effort and activity, which makes it clear the goals that it seeks to achieve and helps direct the efforts by clarifying the path for its teachers, and choosing the appropriate and effective methods to achieve the goals (Balsam, 2004).

Educational planning in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, the educational planning has begun recently, which can be traced back to after 1962. As in most Arab countries, there are many problems are facing the educational planning process in the kingdom that suffer from economic tough situations and social disintegration which has negative effects on the educational process as a whole, and one of these problems is the lack of plans for the correct census of the population (Al-Olayani, 2016). The plans also characterized with correct and complete data and information on the economic

and social aspects with incomplete educational planning tools and their effectiveness, as well the scarcity of various kinds of resources. On other hand, a little available of basic data for educational planning with little confidence in this data and information and the limited numbers of specialists with international experience in the technical staff for educational planning (Al-Manea, 2020).

Scarcity of financial resources allocated to educational plans also is a reason for the failure of educational planning in the Saudi Arabia. The reality of the educational plans are still partial and incomplete, and they can be described with lack of comprehensiveness plans for all learning issues, which led to a loss of balance between the different stages of education (Al-Khelaiwi et al., 2017). The quantitative aspect and neglect the qualitative aspect of curricula, teaching methods, means, management styles, school, students and buildings. Moreover, paying attention to one type of education only which led to a loss of balance between the types of education, so the theoretical education prevails over vocational and technical education and on scientific education (Al-Dhubyani, 2021). A loss of balance in educational services between rural and urban areas, and between males and females also one of these issues that face the educational planning process in the kingdom.

Method

The current research is a cross-sectional quantitative study method adopted to achieve the research objectives. The research was conducted and targeted the participants of female principals of the primary public schools in Riyadh city about the difficulties of educational planning. A self-administered questionnaire was designed rely on the relevant literature and then distributed to the sample. The questionnaire includes key parts of demographics about the sample e.g gender, age, and experience. Then a section about some measuring factors with items to measure the difficulties that are facing the educational planning in the respective. A total of valid 294 responses of female principals in the primary public schools in Riyadh city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were targeted in this study for with a response rate of 79% of the actual distributed questionnaires (370 copies), and the sample represented different primary public schools in Riyadh to get different perspectives. The validity process was conducted for the respective research measurements through reviewing them by panel of experts in the research area. In addition, the research instrument was written and edited in both Arabic and English for easy understanding and participation among the sample. The study conducted some key statistical analyses like demographics frequency, descriptive statistics of the items, and reliability. By using the Statistical Package for the Social Science SPSS, the study conducted these analyses and provided the major results.

The study measurements include several difficulties in the educational planning in the primary public schools in Riyadh. The research prepared its study factors for educational planning by referring to the theoretical literature of previous studies; the scale consisted of (25) statements, the responses to the statements were given five-scale ranks (strongly agree, 5) to (strongly disagree, 1); and the opposite of negative expressions, and the high degree indicates the high degree of the educational planning difficulties in the respective context, while the low degree indicates the low degree of the difficulties in the educational planning which it divided into five domains. The first is the administrative difficulty, and educational planning is the integrated and coordinated operations, directing, organizing, and controlling, and then defining a set of clear goals, and working to coordinate the efforts of a group of people to achieve these goals; and the number of items of this factor (5) represented by (Q1-Q5). The second domain is the financial capabilities, which providing financial support to meet educational needs to

carry out cultural activities and events, and providing classroom aids; and the number of items of this factor (5) represented by (Q6-Q10). The third domain is teachers; it is the one who gives the educational outcomes to the students, provides supervision and takes into account individual differences; and the number of items of this factor (5) represented by (Q11-Q15). The fourth domain is the students; which they are the core and main focus of the instructional process; and the number of items of this factor (5) represented by (Q16-Q20). The fifth domain is the relationship with the local community; as it is the process of direct communication with the school administration to identify the needs provided by the school to its employees; and the number of items of this factor (5) represented by (Q21-Q25).

Moreover, the results regarding the reliability scale of this variable by using Cronbach alpha showed as stated in Table 1 a great reliable result which also confirmed the ability of the associated items to represent this construct

Table 1. *Reliability Results*

Construct	No of items	Reliability	Result
Administrative	5	0.79	Reliable
Financial capabilities	5	0.79	Reliable
Teachers	5	0.86	Reliable
Students	5	0.86	Reliable
Local community relationship	5	0.83	Reliable
Overall scale	25	0.94	Reliable

Results

The demographics profile of the study participants as given in Table 2 included their educational level, type of school and experience. The results showed that the majority of the study participants were bachelor holders about (58.8%) (173 respondents), and the results of the type of school which has been categorized into three groups (only male school, only female school, mix gender school) showed the most of the participants work at female schools about (49%) (144 respondents) and the results regarding the experience revealed the most of participants experienced above 10 year about (43.9%) (129 respondents). Through these demographics results, the study can infer diversification of the sample participated in this study with different personal demographic characteristics which enrich the perspective of the study results.

Table 2. *Profile of Demographics*

		Frequency	Percent
Educational level	Educational diploma	82	27.9
	Bachelor	173	58.8
	Higher studies	39	13.3
Type of school	Male school	56	19.0
	Female school	144	49.0
	Mix gender	94	32.0
Experience	Less than 5 years	90	30.6
	5-10 years	75	25.5
	Above 10 years	129	43.9

It was taken into account that the Likert scale used in this study that graded according to the scale, as follow: Maximum value minus minimum value of the alternatives divided by

the number of levels (5-1/3) = (4/3) = 1.33, therefore this value is equal to the length of the category. So the low level is from1.33-2.33, and the medium level is from 2.34-3.67, the high level is from 3.68-5.00. The descriptive statistics results revealed high relative importance for all study factors with a mean and standard deviation ranged (3.93-4.00) and (0.62-0.69) respectively as stated in Table 2 which indicated greater agreement of the sample about the several difficulties as key challenging factors encounter the educational planning in the primary public schools in Riyadh. Furthermore, the descriptive statistics results revealed high relative importance for all study items with a mean and standard deviation ranged (3.77-4.10) and (0.76-0.96) respectively as stated in Table 3 which indicated greater agreement of the sample about the study items while representation the respective factors. The results found the domain of the teacher ranked first with a mean of (4.03) with a high importance level, and came the field of administrative ranked second with a mean of (4.00) with a high importance level, the financial capabilities field ranked third with a mean of (3.99) with a high importance level, and the student field ranked fourth with a mean of (3.95) with a high importance level, and the local community relationship field ranked fifth with a mean of (3.93) with a high importance level.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics*

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Importance level
Q1	3.98	0.80	High
Q2	4.10	0.88	High
Q3	4.06	0.84	High
Q4	4.08	0.82	High
Q5	3.82	0.96	High
Q6	4.01	0.85	High
Q7	4.01	0.86	High
Q8	4.00	0.82	High
Q9	3.93	0.90	High
Q10	4.01	0.82	High
Q11	4.10	0.87	High
Q12	4.01	0.79	High
Q13	3.98	0.89	High
Q14	4.04	0.83	High
Q15	4.02	0.89	High
Q16	3.95	0.76	High
Q17	3.84	0.89	High
Q18	4.06	0.81	High
Q19	3.90	0.94	High
Q20	4.03	0.87	High
Q21	4.02	0.83	High
Q22	4.04	0.83	High
Q23	3.85	0.91	High
Q24	3.77	0.94	High
Q25	4.00	0.88	High
Administrative	4.00	0.63	High
Financial capabilities	3.99	0.62	High
Teacher	4.03	0.69	High
Student	3.95	0.68	High
Local community relationship	3.93	0.68	High

Discussion

This study aimed to identify and estimate these problems for the principals of primary public schools in in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia within the main planning areas (administration, financial capabilities, teachers, students, relationship with the local community). The results showed that the degree of estimation of educational planning difficulties for the principals of primary public schools in Riyadh was high importance level. The results also provided some important insights regarding the study topic. The discussions infer that the educational planning difficulties have grown due to the rapid progress of in the field of education which imposes on the education many important tasks and dictates it to achieve the changes and respond to the requirements of the successful educational planning. The results found that the disclosure of educational planning difficulties will contribute to the development of the strategic remedial plans to confront the difficulties and problems, reduce and overcome them. The results clearly indicated in terms of the area of management in these schools, the schools principals feel a delay in the field of school books in their arrival and distribution to the students, which this may negatively affects the educational process.

The results of financial capabilities indicated also that the school principals still suffer from this problem to a great extent. This may be due to the scarcity and lack of financial resources allocated to the development of education, as indicated in the measurements of this domain which stated limited financial support available to the schools, and it is considered high domain within the study factors. The high degree of feeling about this problem may be due to the weakness and lack of communication of the principal with members and bodies of the local community, or to the distress and economic situations that the schools are going through. This clearly indicates that an appropriate portion of the government budget must be deducted to support the principal in developing the educational planning process, expanding school facilities, and paying attention to activities and events which this agreed with Al-Manea study (2020).

As a result of the difficult socioeconomic conditions that the teachers suffer from, the study pushed the teachers away from the tendency to develop themselves and this had the effect of decreasing their motivation for self-development and training. The indicators of this domain indicated the teacher's low motivation for training that obtained a high degree of appreciation in this field. And the lack of incentives, both material and moral play a major role in the weakness of teachers' affiliation with training courses or their knowledge of advanced technological means to enrich the teaching processes, in addition the resistance some of them to innovation and changes in their methods used at the schools. And the study through this result match with Boroma (2019) that confirmed the role of educational planning in improving the educational process from the point of view of teachers which assumed that planning has a positive role in improving the various elements of the educational process such as teachers and students.

The students' role in the educational planning process also has a role in this issue. For example the increase in the number of students who have dropped out of school, and the decrease in students' motivation to learn, or the lack of communication between teachers and students were the difficulties in this process. The findings also during which this study was conducted and the schools witnessed at the end of the semester resulted in students a decrease in their motivation towards education and an increase in their dropout, in addition to the prevailing bad economic conditions of some students and the desire of parents not to send students to the schools and send them to labor market which states that there is little interest in

psychological counseling for students, which was highly appreciated, and this means the weak role of the educational counselor in the school which this result in line with Juma (2022). The results indicated which means that attention should be paid to develop the role of the educational counselor in a better way.

Hence, the financial problems that arise once again in the financial support that the public schools in the kingdom, and the reason is due to the weak connection and communication between the school management and the local community, in particular the supporting bodies of municipalities, private institutions and local councils, but in the circumstances in which the study took place. The reason may be in addition to the economic conditions that prevailed and the changes due to the COVID-19 that affected all society and limit the social personal communication. The research pointed to the many burdens that fall on the teachers and the lack of time available to them, in addition to assigning them many formal written matters that take them time, except for the schoolwork that pursues them at home. It is almost entirely on the school and its body to take care of the students' affairs and follow up on their school and social issues, and perhaps the reason for this may be the occupations of the parents which often end after the end of school hours which consistent with Abu Aisha (2007).

Conclusion

In view of the reality of the planning process in the educational field in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it lacks many components and needs to be prepared to consider how to implement it. In fact, there are several difficulties and problems that play a major role in impeding the better implementation of the planning process in the educational field. The most important of them is the lack of specialized expertise in educational planning and preparation of plans. Perhaps this shortcoming is due to the fact that many educational authorities do not give enough attention to preparing their members to practice the planning process, as they need long-term training programs to prepare them on how to prepare educational plans and how to follow up and strengthen their implementation And directing its implementers, this lack contributed to finding a weakness in planning awareness and its importance.

Despite this, the kingdom took serious steps to adopt a better planning methodology at the level of the country as a result of the increased interest in the future vision of the kingdom of all sectors, including the education sector which confirms the increased attention to the issue of planning and its importance. At the executive level in the Ministry of Education, there are several effective measures have been taken like establishing a department specialized in educational planning, which one of its main tasks is develop a long-term plan for the educational activities in the ministry with detailed plans. In light of the foregoing, the study noted the need in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to develop and modernize in all educational planning and processes aspects, and the efforts should made towards this development to be above the expectations, and the necessity of having a higher will and more effective measures and support from those in authority and the decision makers to put these policies into practice, with follow-up, accountability and continuous development.

Based on the research results, the study recommends sets of suggestions. Providing material and moral capabilities for leaders in educational institutions to provide basic necessities. There must be an educational oversight body in the primary public schools that has oversight authority, and its decisions are binding, and neglects to evaluate the educational planning, and that educational planners should be qualified for educational planning and have higher academic qualifications. The necessity of communicating with the local community and

exchange the participation in the development of educational plans between the school administration and the local community in terms of defining the competencies and capabilities that must be available at the educational levels with providing the available capabilities. Paying much attention to the educational planning, especially within the crises and tough circumstances times, as they reflect on education field.

In addition, strengthen the partnership between teachers and school administration in public schools for the continuous development of educational planning and study the subject of educational planning to provide sufficient difficulties to the management of primary public schools in Riyadh in the light of the study results. Adopting system of incentives for teachers on a regular basis, distinguishing between them on professional grounds, and adopting the distinguished among them in scholarships and reducing the burdens placed upon them. Taking care of students and guiding them psychologically and guiding them professionally, in addition to activating the role of the educational counselor in schools and assigning many tasks related to supervising students' problems and working to increase their motivation to learn.

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