

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANAGEMENT STYLE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN TWO PRIVATE SECONDARY SAUDI ARABIAN SCHOOLS

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There are two types of private international schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – some run by board members and the others by individuals or companies. There seems to exist a difference in the management style and the organizational culture of the two types of schools. Findings from the study indicate that management style is directly related to school organizational culture. The school run by a board following a participatory approach is rated high in creating a positive school culture compared to the school run by an individual. There is a high degree of emphasis on aspects such as 'emphasis on teacher learning, collegiality, collaboration, and transformational leadership' at the school which practices a more participatory approach compared to the one that practices an autocratic style of management. This leads to the conclusion that participatory management style does contribute towards creating a more positive culture compared to the autocratic style.

Keywords: Management style, organizational culture, private secondary school

Private education is a booming industry in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to a 2006 survey by the Ministry of Education, Saudi Arabia, the number of private schools has reached 842, handling around 161,408 students all over the Kingdom. As the curriculum is entirely Arabic-based and English is taught only as a foreign language in all the public schools, the vast majority of non-Arab expatriates usually have no option other than to send their children to the private schools. In general, standards at private schools are considered as high, with small class sizes and modern facilities, but the cost of private education is also much higher.

Most of the private international schools in Saudi Arabia are profit making enterprises. There are two kinds of international schools. Some schools are run by a board and non-profit making; others are run by individuals or companies for profit. Since the management system is different between the two types of schools, there seems to be some difference in the management practices and the organizational culture of the two types of schools.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture, the most complex but an important concept in educational research, can be traced back to Waller's classic work, "The Sociology of Teaching" where he described school culture for the very first time, as a "curious mélange of the work of young artisans making culture for themselves and old artisans making culture for the young". He noted that there are, in the school, complex rituals of personal relationships, a set of folkways, mores, and irrational sanctions, a moral code based upon them (Waller, 1932). "Culture has been referred to as the connecting glue between people that informs a group 'how we do things around here.' One of the most important aspects of culture is that over time, its influence over every aspect of a school becomes invisible and taken for granted" (Goldring, 2002).

School culture is no doubt a recurring theme in educational research but it has long been neglected by educational researchers. According to Maslowski (2006), "Some systematic explorations have only been started in the last decades, most of which were qualitative and interpretative in nature, collecting data from a small sample of schools. Over the past decade, several questionnaires have been developed by different researchers (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1996ab; Grady et al., 1996; Houtveen et al., 1996; Pang, 1995) in order to link school culture to school effectiveness and school improvement,

or simply to gain an understanding of school processes by identifying core values and beliefs that guide the behavior of the school staff. It was not until the early 1980s, that culture became a major theme in organization science and was widely recognized as an important feature in the functioning of schools (Deal, 1985; Deal & Kennedy, 1983; Kottkamp, 1984). Deal and Kennedy (1982) argue that culture is the single most important factor accounting for success or failure in organizations.

The role of leadership in relation to school culture is central and very important. Leaders have been described as the culture founders and their contribution and responsibility in building, nourishing and changing the school culture by installing new values and beliefs is considered as very essential. According to Barth (2002), "Nothing is more important about a school than its culture. And no one occupies a more influential position from which to influence a school's culture than its principal".

It is the role of the principal to promote and develop the school's culture in a given direction. Principals' influence is exercised through actions and deeds that express the vision of the school as well as through their management style and the values and symbols put forward (Deblois & Corriveau, 1994). According to Schein (1992) a leader's success depends, to a great extent, upon understanding the organizational culture. He believes that understanding of culture, and how to transform it, is a crucial skill for leaders trying to achieve strategic outcomes (Schein, 1992). Culture provides school leaders with a powerful intuitive method for understanding their school's own "unwritten rules and traditions, norms, and expectations that seem to permeate everything: the way people act, how they dress, what they talk about or avoid talking about, whether they seek out colleagues for help or don't, and how teachers feel about their work and their students" (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Weller and Weller (2002) elaborate that to a large extent; culture contributes to the school's effectiveness or ineffectiveness and is a product of the school's leadership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of the leadership / management style on the organizational culture of two private international secondary schools in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The focus of this research is to identify the extent to which the six important cultural elements, namely 1) *teacher efficacy*, 2) *emphasis on learning*, 3) *collegiality*, 4) *collaboration*, 5) *shared planning*, and 6) *transformational leadership* emphasized in the research of Cavanagh and Dellar (1996b) exist in the selected two private international secondary schools in Jeddah. Two medium sized schools (with 800-1000 student population), situated at the heart of the city were focused for this research; one managed by an authoritative principal (also the owner of the school), and the other managed by a board of directors consisting of eight members, following a much more participatory approach in its management style, in an effort to ascertain whether there is any significant difference in the organizational culture of the two schools.

The study will be helpful for the principals and managers of private schools in contemplating about their schools' culture and effects of the leadership / management style on the teachers' professional career and school effectiveness. Findings of the research could assist the administration of the private educational institutions in considering their leadership role and style in order to improve organizational productivity. The study could provide better assistance to the expatriate population of Saudi Arabia as well as the foreigner parents who are very concerned about the quality of the private educational institutes their children attend.

The following research questions were developed to determine the significance of the independent variable (the management style) and its effects on the dependent variable (organizational culture). Thus the study seeks to answer:

1. To what extent do the six organizational cultural elements that is teacher efficacy, emphasis on learning, collegiality, collaboration, shared planning and transformational leadership, exist in the selected two private secondary schools in Jeddah?
2. Is there any significant difference in the organizational culture and the management style of the school leadership in the selected two private secondary schools?

3. Is there any significant relationship between the school organizational culture and the school management style?

Methodology

The design of the study was quantitative (survey) in nature where the aim was to determine the strength of the organizational culture of the two selected private international secondary schools having different management styles. The culture was measured by identifying the main six most important elements of culture: 1) *Teacher efficacy*, 2) *emphasis on learning*, 3) *collegiality*, 4) *collaboration*, 5) *shared planning*, and 6) *transformational leadership* that contribute to enhancing student learning mentioned in the organizational cultural research done by Cavanagh and Dellar (1996b). According to Cavanagh and Dellar, these six factors are closely interrelated and together form the culture of the school.

Population and Sample Selection

Jeddah, second largest and the most cosmopolitan city, also considered as the commercial capital of Saudi Arabia has the largest number of private institutions due to the huge number of foreign residents. The population of the city currently stands at over 3.4 million. Nearly half of the population are foreigners.

For this study, two private international secondary schools located in the Al-Aziziah district of Jeddah were identified; Al-Basim International School, having an authoritative management style and Al-Amr International School, having a more participatory management approach. The total teaching staff of the above mentioned selected schools served as the sample. Both schools selected were similar on the basis of school size or student population ranging from 800-1000, having nearly equal life span of seven to ten years in the education industry, similar socio-economic background, and having nearly equal diversity of students and teachers. This is important for minimizing the variability and making comparison between the two schools.

The questionnaires were mailed to the selected schools' principals and the assistant principals and they were requested to provide cooperation from their staff. The population of the teaching staff in both the schools was eighty five ($N=85$). Al-Amr International School has 38 teachers ($n=38$) and Al-Basim International School has 47 teachers ($n=47$). A total of 60 completed questionnaires (30 from Al-Basim International School and 30 from Al-Amr International School) were received, representing a return rate of 70.6 percent.

Instrumentation for Data Collection

The research instrument selected for the study was the "School Cultural Elements Questionnaire" (SCEQ) developed by Cavanagh and Dellar (1996a). The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part comprised 42 items with six scales: *teacher efficacy*, *emphasis on learning*, *collegiality*, *collaboration*, *shared planning*, and *transformational leadership*. And each scale has seven items. The questionnaire uses a five point Likert scale that includes 'strongly agree' (5), 'agree' (4), 'uncertain' (3), 'disagree' (2) and 'strongly disagree' (1). Scale mean scores above 3.5 indicate an aggregated response level in the 'agree' range while mean scores in between 2.5 and 3.5 indicate overall uncertainty. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the six scales of the SCEQ range from .70 to .81 (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1996b). Since every item in the SCEQ was usable in the Saudi Arabian context, the validity was maintained.

The second part of the questionnaire contained the demographic questions related to the respondents' academic qualifications, professional experience (total years of experience), and their service (number of years) with the current organization.

Results

Both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were employed to analyze the data obtained. More specifically, means and standard deviations were calculated. T-tests were carried out using the significance level of .05 in order to identify the significant differences in the mean scores of both the schools' teachers' perceptions on each of the six cultural elements of SCEQ. Pearson Chi-square tests of independence using the significance level of .05 were performed to assess the relationship between the independent variable (school management style) and the dependent variable (organizational culture).

Demographic Findings

Table 1 shows the demographic data of both the organizations. From the preliminary research, it was found that the management style of Al-Amr International School was participatory in nature. The school was administered by an eight-member board of directors including the principal, the vice principal, a controller, head teachers and the parents of the students. Most of these board members were also stakeholders of the institution. Every important organizational decision required acceptance by the majority of board members. The principal alone could not make the important organizational decisions and she was answerable to the board for her actions. On the other hand, the management style of Al-Basim International School was quite bureaucratic and authoritative. The administration consisted of a principal and an assistant principal. The principal was the owner of the organization. She alone makes all the important decisions regarding her school. Although she encouraged her staff to participate in the decision making process the final decisions were always hers.

Table 1
Demographic Data of the Organisations

School	Management Style	Type of School	Year of Establishment	Student Population	No. of Teaching Staff	Student Teacher Ratio	Members in Admin.
Al-Amr Int'l School	Participatory	Private Int'l Secondary School	2000	870	38	22:1	Board of eight members
Al-Basim Int'l School	Autocratic	Private Int'l Secondary School	1998	985	47	20:1	Principal & Asst. Principal

School Cultural Elements

The teachers' responses on the six cultural elements 1) teacher efficacy, 2) emphasis on learning, 3) collegiality, 4) collaboration, 5) shared planning, and 6) transformational leadership from both schools were analyzed by calculating their frequencies and percentages. The mean and standard deviation were calculated and an independent sample *t*-test was performed to compare the means of the two independent groups. Out of the six cultural elements, 'emphasis on learning', 'collegiality', 'collaboration', and 'transformational leadership' scales showed significant differences in the two schools as presented in Table 2. The overall results indicate that the organizational culture of Al-Amr International School that follows the participatory management approach is found to be more positive than that of Al-Basim International School which has an authoritative management style.

Table 2
Mean and Standard Deviation of the Two Schools' Teachers' Perceptions on SCEQ

School Cultural Elements	Organizational Management Style	Mean	<i>n</i>	<i>SD</i>
1 Teacher Efficacy	Participatory	23.23	30	2.955
	Autocratic	21.63	30	3.863
2 Emphasis on Learning	Participatory	26.53	30	2.556
	Autocratic	22.70	30	2.351
3 Collegiality	Participatory	25.23	30	3.380
	Autocratic	20.87	30	3.683
4 Collaboration	Participatory	24.73	30	2.852
	Autocratic	22.03	30	3.124
5 Shared Planning	Participatory	21.63	30	3.368
	Autocratic	20.80	30	3.134
6 Transformational Leadership	Participatory	23.80	30	3.188
	Autocratic	19.50	30	2.583

Comparison between Two Schools on Six Organizational Cultural Elements

Table 3 shows the *t*-test results carried out to compare the means of the teachers' perception from the two schools on the six cultural elements. The overall results showed statistically significant differences for four of the six cultural elements namely. 'emphasis on learning', 'collegiality', 'collaboration', and 'transformational leadership'. The *t*-test results for the "teacher efficacy" scale showed no significant differences between the two groups, $t(58) = 1.801, p = .077$. Similarly, the results for the cultural element, "shared planning" also exhibited no statistically significant differences in the perception of teaching staff members of the two schools having different management styles.

Table 3
T-Test to Compare Means of the Two Schools' Teachers' Perceptions on Six Organizational Cultural Elements

School Cultural Elements	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	<i>p</i> <.05
1 Teacher Efficacy	1.801	58	.077	N.Sig
2 Emphasis on Learning	6.046	58	.000	Sig.
3 Collegiality	4.784	58	.000	Sig.
4 Collaboration	3.496	58	.001	Sig.
5 Shared Planning	.992	58	.325	N.Sig
6 Transformational Leadership	5.740	58	.000	Sig.

Relationship between School Management Style and Organizational Culture

In order to assess the relationship between the school management style and the organizational culture, Pearson chi-square test of independence was performed. The four organizational cultural elements namely 'emphasis on learning', 'collegiality', 'collaboration', and 'transformational leadership' that showed statistically significant differences in their mean scores comparison (*t*-test) were examined to assess their relationship trend to find out which school showed more positive response for the SCEQ items. The overall results of Chi-square tests proved that the school having participatory management style had a more positive and healthy organizational culture. Results of Chi-square tests for 'emphasis on learning', 'collegiality', 'collaboration', and 'transformational leadership' are presented in Table 4, 5, 6, and 7 respectively.

Emphasis on Learning

According to Cavanagh and Dellar (2001), "An emphasis on learning produces a learning community in which there is a commitment to professional growth and improved outcomes for the students". In this study, the relationship between school management style and the cultural element 'emphasis on learning' was found to be statistically significant, $X^2(1, N = 60) = 26.667, p < .05$. Participatory management style was positively associated with 'emphasis on learning'. Therefore, the school that practices participatory management approach like Al-Amr International School is more likely to show better results on organizational commitment towards teacher growth and student learning as compared to its counterpart Al-Basim International School that uses an autocratic management style.

Table 4

Relationship between School Management Style and Organizational Cultural Scale 'Emphasis on Learning'

		Management	Style	χ^2	Sig.
		Participatory n (%)	Autocratic n (%)		
Emphasis on Learning	Low	5 (16.7)	25 (83.3)	26.667	<i>p</i> < .05
	High	25 (83.3)	5 (16.7)		
	Total	30 (50)	30 (50)		

Collegiality

Collegial practices in schools are considered as activities that enhance culture development, and pave the way for teachers to spend time both socializing and working together (Jarzabkowski, 2002). The study found a significant association between school management style and organisational cultural element, 'collegiality', $X^2(1, N = 60) = 9.643, p < .05$. Participatory management style was positively associated with strong staff collegiality. Al-Amr International School with its participatory approach can be promoting teacher sharing and providing more opportunities for learning from each other compared to Al-Basim International School with an autocratic focus.

Table 5

Relationship between Management Style and Organizational Cultural Scale 'Collegiality'

		Management	Style	χ^2	Sig.
		Participatory n (%)	Autocratic n (%)		
Collegiality	Low	10 (31.3)	22 (68.8)	9.643	$p < .05$
	High	20 (71.4)	8 (28.6)		
	Total	30 (50)	30 (50)		

Collaboration

Collaboration refers to the interaction between teachers in which information is shared on school operational matters including the instructional programs. In the long run, teacher collaboration can lead to team efficiency and organizational productivity. In this study, the relationship between school management style and organizational cultural element, 'collaboration' was found to be statistically significant, $X^2(1, N = 60) = 8.297, p < .05$. There was a positive association between management style of a school and staff collaboration. Participatory management style was positively associated with strong staff collaboration. Al-Amr International School with its participatory approach can be creating a school climate that promotes teacher interaction and information sharing compared to Al-Basim International School with an autocratic management style.

Table 6

Relationship between Management Style and Organizational Cultural Scale 'Collaboration'

		Management	Style	χ^2	Sig.
		Participatory n (%)	Autocratic n (%)		
Collaboration	Low	7 (28.0)	18 (72.0)	8.297	$p < .05$
	High	23 (65.7)	12 (34.3)		
	Total	30 (50)	30 (50)		

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and the mission of the group, and stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group. Transformational leaders share their power with colleagues and facilitate in the development process of the organization that involves the human potential and staff commitment (Bass, 1990).

Results for the 'transformational leadership' scale presented in Table 7 show statistically significant association between school management style and cultural element, 'transformational leadership', $X^2 (1, N = 60) = 17.143, p < .05$. Participatory management style was positively associated with strong transformational leadership. Al-Amr International School with its participatory approach seems to be successful in inspiring the shared vision, enabling the teachers to act and encouraging their hearts to pursue excellence. Comparatively, Al-Basim International School, a school having autocratic management style, is less likely to show positive trend on this cultural element. The study indicated that a school adopting a participatory management approach had stronger transformational leadership.

Table 7

Relationship between Management Style and Organizational Cultural Scale 'Transformational Leadership'

		Management	Style	χ^2	Sig.
		Participatory n (%)	Autocratic n (%)		
Transformational Leadership	Low	6 (21.4)	22 (78.6)	17.143	$p < .05$
	High	24 (75.0)	8 (25.0)		
	Total	30 (50)	30 (50)		

Discussion of Results and Suggestions for Leadership Innovation

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between management style and the organizational culture in two private international schools in Saudi Arabia. Findings from this study indicate that management style does play an important role and contributes to a positive school culture. The findings also indicate that a school practising a more participatory approach in its management does achieve a higher degree of emphasis/focus on learning, collegiality, collaboration and transformational leadership compared to a school that emphasizes a more autocratic management style. This leads to the conclusion that management style is directly related to school organizational culture that celebrates learning, collegiality, and transformation (Barnett et al., 2000; Morgan, 1997; Stewart, 2002).

A participatory management approach is highly regarded for it creates opportunities for professional development of every member of the organization. At schools, teachers will be provided with the opportunities for shared learning and reflection. They will be encouraged to work as a team sharing ideas, views and perspectives, helping each other in professional endeavors, maintaining a caring and trusting work relationship, participating in decision making, and collaborating at work.

Management will provide sufficient time and mental space for improving teachers' work, encourage professional growth, and provide continuous administrative support.

Based on the information gathered from this study, suggestions can be made that school management should practice a more open, participatory management approach to gain the support of the members and maximize the human resource output. School management should also think about some innovative and creative management ideas that would enhance staff motivation and morale. For example, the management team should focus on shifting from the bureaucratic, psychological, technical-rational, professional authority to a moral authority paradigm (Sergiovanni, 1992).

In the bureaucratic authority paradigm, school management uses the "expect and inspect" as the overarching rule where teachers are considered as subordinates in a hierarchically arranged system. In this paradigm, teachers with proper monitoring respond as technicians, executing predetermined tasks and their performance becomes narrowed. On the other extreme, in the moral authority paradigm, the leadership team strives to establish the school as a community. It tries to identify and make explicit the values and beliefs that can be translated into informal norms that govern behavior. In this paradigm, collegiality is promoted as an internally felt and morally driven interdependence. Teachers working under moral authority respond to community values for moral reasons, their practice becomes collective, and performance becomes expansive and sustained.

With changing times and democratic expression of people, it will be helpful and healthy if school leadership could shift gear and move swiftly into the practice of moral leadership that would encourage productivity.

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