

**Educational Leadership Development in USA and Arabian Gulf Countries:
Preparing Effective School Leaders**

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this comparative case study is to provide insight into the educational leadership preparation program that is provided at ABC in Arabian Gulf Country and XYZ in the United States to prepare educational leaders. The goal of this research is to understand the implications of any similarities or differences in the way that these leading universities prepare educational leaders as well as to identify opportunities for these universities to learn from each other in the spirit of continuous improvement.

The primary data sources for this study were 45 minutes of personal interviews with four academic faculty and ten master's students from educational leadership preparation programs at ABC and XYZ, and available documents about the master's educational leadership program from both universities' websites. The conceptual framework that I used to guide my research is a combination of the *Analysis of Principal Preparation Programs* (Webber & Scott, 2010) and the *Participants' Model for Developing Principals as Supervisors and Instructional Leaders* (Taylor-Backor & Gordon, 2015). In addition to combining these two frameworks, I also included factors such as mission, vision, challenges, goals, areas of strengths, and areas of growth.

The results of this research indicate that there are several similarities and differences between the two universities from both the academic faculty and graduate students' perspectives in terms of (a) admission requirements, (b) curricula, (c) areas of strength and areas for growth, (d) challenges, as well as (e) opportunities for improvement, and (f) delivery modes of the educational leadership preparation program at their universities.

In addition, there are opportunities for learning for ABC university like a partnership. A partnership would be a good way for ABC university to visit XYZ university and learn from its experience in the activities that were given to students to do and even saw the designing of the schools. Moreover, it should include courses related to law and ethics in the master's program that is offered at ABC university.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Scholars have acknowledged that school principals make a significant and measurable contribution to school improvement and student achievement (Fuller & Hollingworth, 2018; Jason, Mitani, & Woo, 2019). Where countries make the commitment to improve learning outcomes, the preparation of principals becomes a focal point. The importance of the principal's role has resulted in jurisdictions and administrative groups creating many sets of standards, domains, competencies, and/or proficiencies for principals in the United States and worldwide. This study focuses specifically on the perceptions of the professors and masters students in respective educational leadership programs at XYZ and ABC who are responsible for preparing school principals for their role. In addition, it will analyze leadership preparation program documents used at both universities. To open, this chapter will provide the context of the study with an explanation of the problem statement and a brief overview of the colleges of education at both ABC and XYZ universities. Then the chapter will provide an overview of the purpose of the study as well as the research questions that will guide this research. Next, the research design will illustrate followed by the conceptual framework. Finally, this chapter concludes with the significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, and organization of the chapters that follow.

Problem Statement

Educational leadership is the most significant aspect of effective school reform (Onorato, 2013). Researchers and teacher-practitioners generally have described the ways principals have positively impacted the learning climate, instructional programs, and overall performance of schools (Fuller & Hollingworth, 2018; Jason et al., 2019). In order for the sphere of instructional leadership to be the most effective, it is imperative that practitioners look inward while considering what would make them be the most successful (Slater, Boone, Price, & Martinez,

2002). Reflective practice and an awareness of leading practice in other countries is vital for emerging countries like ABC university country, which seeks to improve educational outcomes through enhanced school leadership. One of the best ways to do that is learning from countries which have a long experience preparing educational leaders (Levine, 2005) like the U.S.

The United States has a long history of preparation programs for principals and educational leaders. Various scholars have claimed that the history of principal preparation programs in the U.S. dates back to the late 19th century (Levine, 2005; Silver, 1982). However, in the ABC university country, the Ministry of Education and its directorates are responsible for preparing school principals through the Educational Leadership Program. In order to implement the executive plan of the program for its first cohort, a team of experienced trainers from X International Company coordinated with the Ministry of Education to train 24 principals. These two dozen principals then went to their respective regions and trained the rest (Ibrahim & Al Qatabi, 2017). In order to develop educational administrative programs, the Ministry of Education in ABC university country cooperated with the Educational Foundations and Administration Department at the College of Education at ABC university to prepare principals, assistant principals, and administrative supervisors without bachelor's degrees. In addition, the Department offers a master's program in educational administration. Students enrolled in the program may select one of four streams: Educational Planning, Higher Education Administration, School Administration, or Educational Supervision. Each track is comprised of eight courses and a dissertation, with an aggregate of 24 credit hours (Educational Foundations and Administration Department, 2019).

Background of the Study

This study has been developed in response to the limited evidence of any literature in the field of comparative education whereby attention is focused on leadership programs in higher education in ABC university country and elsewhere (Ibrahim & Al Qatabi, 2017). Using a cross-cultural, comparative lens, this research seeks to highlight ways in which programs in the College of Education at ABC university country in administrative and school leadership may be enhanced, by comparing the programs in ABC university country with leading higher education programs in the U.S., such as those currently offered at XYZ university. In order to provide further context for the problem identified, as well as background on the two locations to be studied, the next few sections describe the locations and the schooling contexts that used for this research.

ABC University

ABC university was founded in 1986 in Arabian Gulf Country. Initially comprised of four faculties, including the College of Education, the institution has grown to include nine colleges,¹ though it is still the only government university in the country. The university has developed its education program in order to meet the required standards of country Ministry of Education as well as the needs of society by linking its programs to serve the social and economic development of country (ABC University, 2019). The university currently has four primary areas of focus, three of which are scientific research, community development, and cooperation with scientific institutions, both within and outside the country (ABC University,

¹ The other eight colleges at ABC university are Medicine and Health Sciences, Engineering, Science, Agriculture and Marine Sciences, Arts and Social Science, Law, Economic and Political Science, and Nursing.

2019). The fourth of the four focal areas, education, is of importance to the institution as a whole; however, the College of Education is of particular importance.

The College of Education

ABC University's College of Education, subsequently referred to as the College, opened in 1986 along with the university as a whole. The College has eight departments: Educational Foundations and Administration, Psychology, Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional and Learning Technologies, Physical Education, Art Education, Early Childhood Education, and Islamic Sciences. The College of Education not only intends to provide the best education to its graduates but also allow alumni opportunities to stay up to date with the most recent instructive advancements, both territorially and globally. For students training to be teachers, the College aims to develop profoundly qualified instructors to work at continually extending the General Education framework while utilizing the most recent strategies and systems. Moreover, the institution aspires to become an expert and contemporary focal point of the country, improving the lives of all citizens (College of Education, 2019). In addition, the College's strategic plan focuses on having recognized alumni instruct, direct, and be exemplars of greatness that serve the world and community, thereby cultivating the program's qualities and standards (College of Education, 2019). To that end, the College of Education received accreditation for a six-year period (2016-2022) under the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards. NCATE's exhibition-based accreditation framework for instructor arrangement guarantees that educator applicants are set up to succeeded as teachers in PK-12 settings. Receiving NCATE accreditation was an enormous achievement in ABC's history (ABC University, 2019).

XYZ University

XYZ University is located in the southeast of the United States. Initially founded in the mid-1800s, due to financial concerns, the Church transferred ownership of the institution to the state of Alabama in 1872, making it the first land-awarded school in the South to be built up independently from the state college. At this time, the institution was renamed the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama (XYZ University, 2017).

XYZ University has five colleges across campus including the College of Agriculture; the College of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture; the Raymond J. Harbert College of Business; the College of Education; and the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering. Its foundational ethos are XYZ Spirit, organizational culture, inclusion and diversity, partnerships, technology, marketing and communications as well as accountability and measurability (XYZ University Themes, 2020).

The College of Education

The College of Education at XYZ was established in early 1900s (The History, 2020) and aims to “prepare competent, committed, and reflective professionals to help build a better future for individuals, our state, our nation, and our world” (College of Education, 2017, para.1). It achieves this aim through undergraduate and postgraduate programs in the Departments of Curriculum and Teaching; Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology; School of Kinesiology; and Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling (XYZ College of Education, 2017). According to their website, the College of Education is “NCATE-accredited and is listed as a top-25 percent U.S. News school of education offering degrees in teacher certification degree areas. We also offer degrees to prepare professionals in school administration, counseling, and health professions” (About the College, 2020, para1).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this comparative case study is to provide insight into the educational leadership preparation program that is provided at ABC in Arabian Gulf countries and XYZ in the United States to prepare educational leaders. The main focus for this research is gauging the academic faculty members' and masters students' perspectives of these programs as well as reviewing publicly available documents from both universities. To guide my research I am using a hybrid conceptual framework built off of the *Analysis of Principal Preparation Programs* (Webber & Scott, 2010) and *Participants' Model for Developing Principals as Supervisors and Instructional Leaders* (Taylor-Backor & Gordon, 2015), which I explore in more detail in Chapter 2. The goal of this research is to understand the implications of any similarities or differences in the way that these leading universities prepare educational leaders as well as to identify opportunities for these universities to learn from each other in the spirit of continuous improvement. My choice to use the perspective of the program's academic faculty members is based on the knowledge that these individuals served integral roles in teaching within, as well as the redesign of their respective programs. Furthermore, the professors subsequently encouraged their corresponding university administrations to develop a high-quality preparation program. In addition, I chose the students because they are the receivers of the knowledge who study the program and know it will help them to be effective leaders. With these elements in mind, I developed four research questions for my study which are outlined below.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of the university leadership program professors' and graduate students at XYZ University and ABC University in terms of the (a) program's mission and vision, (b) program's aims, (c) curricula, (d) areas of

strength and areas for growth, (e) challenges, as well as (f) opportunities for improvement in the way that the educational leadership programs prepare principals to become effective leaders?

2. What are the perceptions of the university leadership program professors' and graduate students at XYZ University and ABC University in terms of the (a) client group, (b) structure, (c) delivery modes, (d) credentialing, and (e) pedagogy of the educational leadership preparation program at their universities?
3. What are the similarities and differences that exist between ABC and XYZ?
4. What can American and Arabian university professors learn from each other?

Research Design

The research design for this investigation was comparative qualitative case study. Merriam (1998) conceived a qualitative case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (p.21). She identified it as “the systematic comparison of two or more data points (cases) obtained through use of the case study method” (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999, p. 372). She also mentioned that a researcher majoring in the qualitative case study cannot conduct interviews more effectively, carefully make observations, and successfully mine data without possessing necessary skills and keenly following certain procedures (Merriam, 1998).

This comparative case study is to determine the perceptions of academic faculty staff at XYZ university and ABC university and graduate students from XYZ and ABC. I will recruit one program coordinator and one clinical professor from XYZ, and as well one program coordinator and one clinical professor from ABC. The faculty are from Educational Leadership departments in both universities. I will also recruit six masters students from each university.

Moreover, I will analyze the document about educational leadership preparation program at both universities to answer my research questions. The case also studies the similarities and differences between XYZ and ABC in the way of design of the program and how can XYZ and ABC learn from each other at this point. A comparative case study method design is the most appropriate for a variety of reasons. First, it allows the investigation of how the educational leadership program was developed from the perspective of the educational leadership professors. Then, it allows the researcher to obtain information from a wide variety of sources such as documents related to the programs and professors' opinions in both countries.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that I used to guide my research is a combination of the *Analysis of Principal Preparation Programs* (Webber & Scott, 2010) and the *Participants' Model for Developing Principals as Supervisors and Instructional Leaders* (Taylor-Backor & Gordon, 2015). In addition, to combining these two frameworks I also included factors such as mission, vision, challenges, goals, areas of strengths, and areas of growth. Figure 1 outlines the conceptual framework that I used to guide my research, a design that I will explore further in Chapter Two.

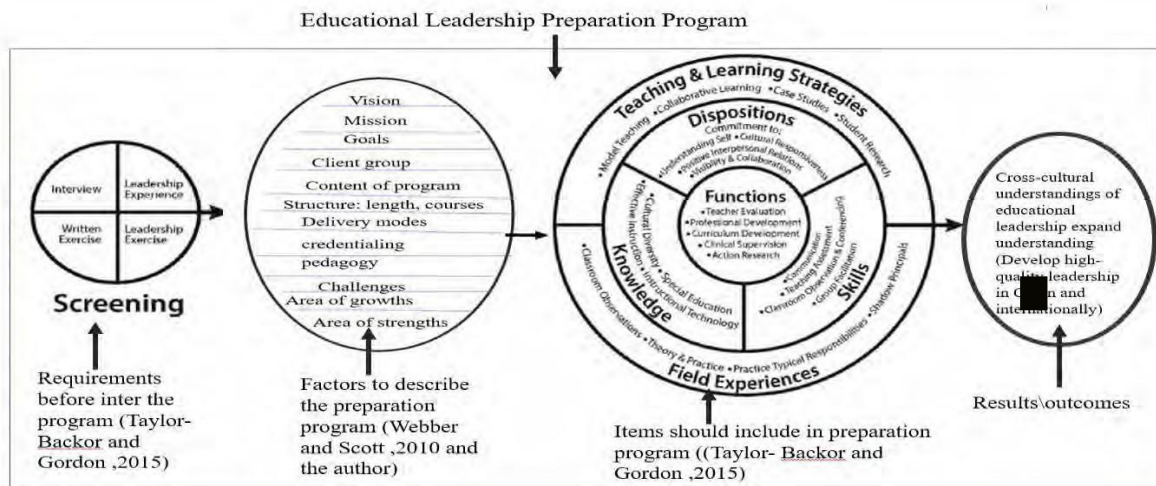


Figure 1: Conceptual framework – Educational Leadership Preparation Program (adapted from Taylor-Backor & Gordon, 2015 and Webber & Scott, 2010).

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will contribute to a better understanding of school leadership preparation programs at both universities. A portion of this result will be based on the ability for both XYZ and ABC to learn from the practices and programs of the other university through the comparative nature of my research. Additionally, this study will add to the literature on the development of educational leadership internationally, largely because it is the first known study that compares educational leadership programs between the U.S. and Arabian countries. Moreover, by focusing on the NCATE-accredited Educational Leadership Programs I will be able to highlight the difference between the standards as they are applied in an emerging as compared to a developed country. Finally, by centering the voices of academic faculty, as opposed to K-12 school principals, this study adds a much needed perspective on leadership from those who create, teach, and evaluate principal preparation programs.

Assumptions

- **Ontological assumption:** Relative to educational leadership development, the participants provided information that is both truthful and accurate as depicted by their perceptions.
- **Epistemological assumption:** Given that it is only the professors who knew this process, studying on their experiences had to be captured by hearing what they had to say in their own words in order to record more accurate information
- **Axiological assumptions:** The worldviews of the researcher, which ultimately influenced the questions asked throughout the process, also played a role in analyzing findings and extrapolating themes. Further to this, when the values, experiences, and worldviews of both the participants and researcher interacted, it provided a further depth to analysis.
- **Methodological assumptions:** Using the comparative case study methodology, it will be possible to determine and understand deeper what these professors and students experienced since they are the people who design and teach the programs. As well, the students are the receivers of the program. This can be attained through Zoom interviews and having open-ended questions combined with the approach used by me to analyze data.

Limitations

A limitation of this case study research may be the subjectivity or the bias of the researcher who is a student in the educational leadership program at XYZ University and an academic staff at College of Education at ABC. Also, since this case study only highlights the professor and master students experience at XYZ and ABC, the research conclusions may not be generalizable elsewhere.

Organization of the Study

This chapter provided an overview of the study on educational leadership professors' and graduate students' opinions at ABC and XYZ regarding the development of the educational leadership program. It included a presentation of the problem statement, some context behind the two universities that are the focus of this study, as well as the research questions that are guiding this research. Going forward, Chapter Two first provides an outline of my conceptual framework followed by a review of the literature and related research about the educational leadership preparation programs in the U.S. and ABC University country as well as a look at standards used for the field and ends with a spotlight on internationally comparative studies. This is followed by Chapter Three, which introduces the methodology and procedures used in data collection and analysis and Chapter Four which offers a summary of the results derived from the interviews and analysis of documents. Finally, this study concludes with Chapter Five, which contains a summary and discussion of the findings well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The preparation of educational leaders is considered the foundation stone of the success of the educational process that most educational policies across the globe mainly aim at improving education quality by preparing good leaders (Slater, Garduno & Mentz, 2018). Slater et al. (2018) added “One of the daunting peculiarities of the job is that principals have to deal with many stakeholders: staff, parents, students, community, educational authorities, and local authorities. School principals usually act as a ‘buffer’ by absorbing shocks from one or more stakeholders at the same time” (p. 126). Bush (2009) asserted that “Given the importance of educational leadership, the development of effective leaders should not be left to chance. It should be a deliberate process designed to produce the best possible leadership for schools and colleges” (p. 386). To begin this chapter I provide a detailed description of my conceptual framework. From there, this chapter provides a synthesis of research concerning the landscape of educational leadership preparation programs in the U.S. and abroad in an effort to provide the groundwork for my comparative analysis of similar programs in ABC university country. Given that principal effectiveness can be used to measure school reform and student achievement, the literature review presents the relationship between student achievement and school improvement. This is followed by a historical overview of principal preparation programs in the U.S. including the professional standards for educational leaders. Third, I provide a review of the literature which outlines the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Program Standards and offers some criticisms of the standards. Next is a section which sheds light on traditional and non-traditional principal preparation programs followed by an overview of the characteristics of effective principal preparation programs. Sixth, I examine comparative studies between

American principal preparation programs and those from elsewhere, specifically the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, China, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia. Finally, the chapter ends with a synthesis of relevant empirical research highlighting the principal preparation programs in ABC university country. This review gives the readers a clear picture of the education system and how the educational leaders are prepared in ABC university country since the study aims to compare the preparation program there with the U.S. However, before delving into my review of the extant literature, it is first important to articulate the details of the conceptual framework that will guide me throughout the remainder of this study.

Conceptual Framework

As mentioned in the previous chapter, my conceptual framework is actually the combination of two frameworks since neither of them alone were able to comprehensively address the needs of my study. The two I combined were *the Analysis of Principal Preparation Programs* (Webber & Scott, 2010) and the *Participants' Model for Developing Principals as Supervisors and Instructional Leaders* (Taylor-Backor & Gordon, 2015). The Webber and Scott (2011) framework looks only on the mapping for the preparation program which is the part of my study, while Taylor-Backor and Gordon's (2015) framework contained the first step of preparation principals at universities which is the screening process and how it is important as admission requirements. Based on my study aims, I saw those two conceptual frameworks complete each other and they will guide me to analyze my data since I am looking at comparing the principal preparation programs in Oman and U.S. Webber and Scott (2010) believe that principal preparation can be described in terms of "intended audience, content, structure, delivery modes, credentials, and pedagogy" (p. 77). Some of the factors examined based on this framework included:

- Client group which are the program participants (principals);
- A content with preparation programs;
- Structure representing program lengths;
- ABC university and XYZ Universities identified as the deliverers;
- Modes of delivery which included distance learning and face-to-face;
- Credentialing, either degree or certificate; and
- Scholarly or practice oriented pedagogy.

The participant model of Taylor-Backor and Gordon (2015) for preparing effective instructional leadership contains several functional elements which are: instructional leadership functions, dispositions, teaching strategies, skills, applicant screening, learning strategies, and induction. Figure 2 shows the model.

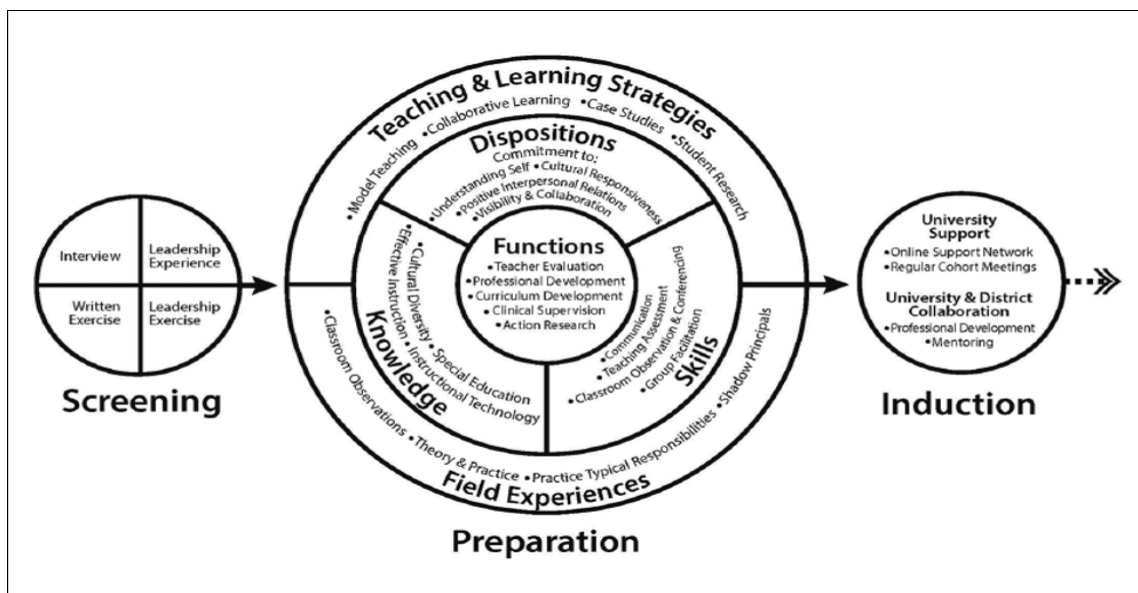


Figure 2: Participants' model for developing principals as supervisors and instructional leaders (Taylor-Backor & Gordon, 2015, p.119).

As mentioned above, I combined these two conceptual frameworks to create the hybrid model displayed in Figure 3.

Graphical Representation of Conceptual Framework

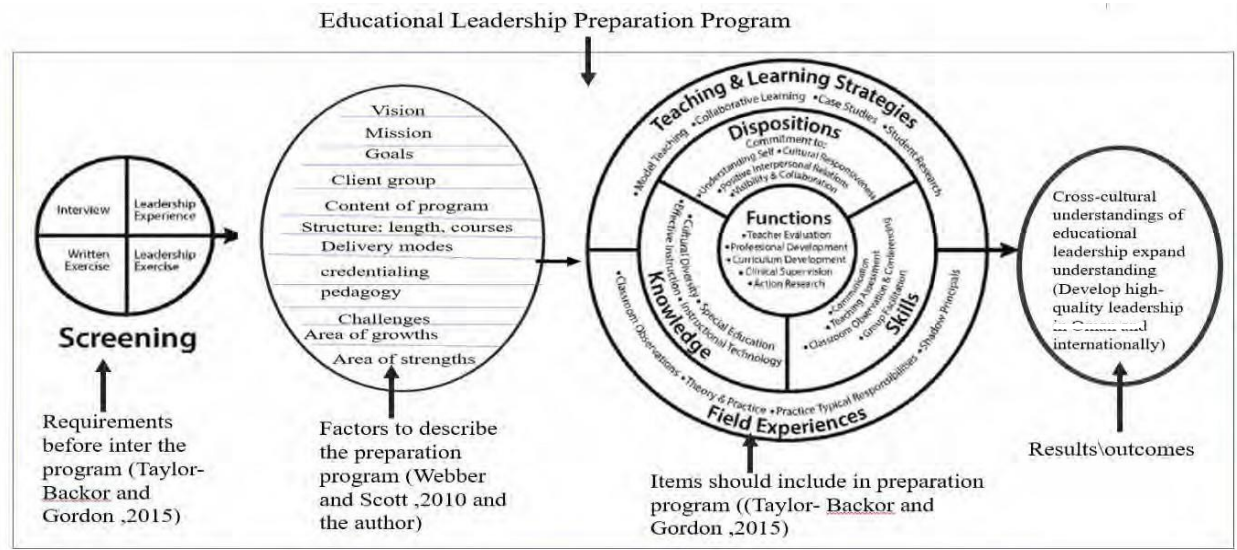


Figure 3. Combined Conceptual Framework – Educational Leadership Preparation Program

(adapted from Taylor-Backor & Gordon, 2015 and Webber & Scott, 2010).

To create a more robust model, I added some factors for the program such as vision, mission, areas of growths, areas of strengths and challenges. In addition, the intended result or outcome of my study is the development of a high-quality leadership program internationally. Webber and Scott (2010, p. 82) also argued that, “More effective leadership development is needed across the countries studied by the International Studies of Principal Preparation collaborators.” Additionally, they view cross-cultural understandings of educational leadership as “critical in an era of globalization when people and ideas migrate throughout the world” (Crossley, Bray, & Packer, 2009 as cited in Webber & Scott, 2010, p. 80).

The Relationship Between School Leadership and Student Success

Given that the conceptual framework focuses on the importance of school leadership, I reviewed how leadership can impact student success as seen in the literature. One aim of principals is to encourage their students to be academically successful. The interrelation between the leadership abilities of principals and student success has been researched and studied extensively. Elmore (2006) concluded that the goal of the principal was to raise scholar studying and performance. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) stated that useful principals are those “who can have an impact on pupil achievement through vital pathways: the assistance and development of powerful instructors and the implementation of effective organizational techniques” (p.1). Due to the ongoing changes in the practices of teachers, school leaders will always remain studied and tested in order to establish their impact on scholarly excellence. As an example, the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) tried to uncover the link between principals and student achievement in 2003. The research produced a framework of 21 management skills crucial for school leadership. The study examination was considered a pioneer in the field because of its statistical evaluation of the trends and properties that affect student achievement.

Likewise, Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) made two important claims about how administrators can promote pupil success. The first claim was a declaration about the simplicity of leadership, while the second claim indicate how management can influence skill assessment. Nevertheless, according to Maxwell (2005), the influence of principals in their schools determines how they are seen as leaders; this claim was also made by Donaldson (2001). School leaders affect classroom results through two ways linked to student outcomes. The first involves the connection between leadership practices directly as well as

teaching, and the second comprises how in-school activities create organizational conditions for positive change (Leithwood et al., 2004).

There are three dimensions in the conceptual development of instructional administration (Hallinger, 2005) which are the description of a school's mission, management of instructional programs, and the promotion of a conducive learning climate. The above-mentioned functions incorporate the following nine segments: (a) framing of a school's objectives, (b) communication of the framed school's objectives, (c) supervision and latter evaluation of instructions, (d) curriculum coordination, (e) monitoring of students' progress, (f) protection of instructional time, provision of professional development, (h) maintenance of an elevated visibility within the community, (i) provision of incentives for the teachers, and (j) provision of incentives for the learners to create a motivating school climate (Hallinger, 2005).

The general job description of a principal in the 21st century entails a broad scope of administrative role prerequisites and other daily responsibilities, creating a window for a high probability of distraction for the modern day principal from the core objective of the promotion of high-grade instruction (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Fostering learning that is socially responsible, equitable and successful, including accountability strategies for the entire student fraternity, requires the making of substantive changes in preparation programs towards educational administration (Brown, 2006, p.705). Thus preparation programs are meant for the sole purpose of equipping principals with the essential skills required to propagate students to promising attainments before they become fully operational within their respective school jurisdictions.

The Relationship Between Leadership Development and School Improvement

Another area of research that is important to understand is the relationship between leadership development and school improvement. This led to the conclusion that the most successful leadership learning experiences occur when there is a connection between the learning situation and personal learning needs. To add to this topic, Lewis and Murphy (2008) indicated that the essentiality of customized and work-based encounters upheld by top-notch input should give school leaders the chance to reflect on their skills. In a U.K. study, Pegg (2007) showed how the application of practical learning by students offers an interface between hypothesis and practice. She reasoned that “understanding how instructive pioneers learn and how they can be best upheld to keep learning in the working environment necessities that instructive scientist give specific consideration to the way that pioneers associate hypotheses learned through preparing customized to rehearse” (Pegg, 2002, p 265).

In addition, Liebowitz and Porter (2019) synthesized 51 studies of principal behaviors of student, teacher, and school outcomes in order to conduct a meta-analysis of these relationships. They suggested evidence of the relationship between principals’ behavior and student achievement, teacher well-being, teacher instructional practices, and school organizational health. In the end the authors contended that “our discoveries feature the basic significance of extending the information base about procedures principals can take to improve learning in schools, and the benefit of putting resources into school initiative limit” (p. 32). Furthermore, they conducted a meta-examination that looked at the five components of principal job descriptions (instructional administrators, school relations, authoritative administrators, school organization, and community relations) and their potential impacts on student results (evaluations and conduct), teacher effectiveness (prosperity, consistent standards, instructional

practices), and school results (school organizational wellbeing, teacher retention). While the field has underscored principals' jobs as instructional pioneers, Liebowitz and Porter (2019) concluded "key practices other than instructional administration might be similarly significant systems to improve understudy results. The discoveries recommend that putting resources into principals may improve learning" (p. 31).

Historical Overview of Principal Preparation Programs in the U.S.

In order to fully understand the current iteration of preparation programs, it is very important to first recognize the history of this profession, especially in the U.S. which research suggests has the longest standing programs of most countries around the world. Principal preparation programs began in the United States during the last quarter of the nineteenth century in response to coursework in administration moving to graduate-level programs. Although there were fundamental conflicts of interest between groups calling for such programs, the principal preparation programs successfully commenced for two reasons. First, the programs met the educational needs of schools they would be serving. Second, the programs allowed for collaboration with the respective state boards of education, which helped develop state curriculum and design the programs within the universities (Levine, 2005).

In the early stages of principal preparation programs there were two main schools of thought that differed on how these programs would operate and what they would focus on, which was a matter of some contention. One school of thought relied on a practitioner-based program with a practically based program for experienced school leaders. A second school of thought was based on a more scientific approach to educational research which relied more on literature to prepare aspiring principals for the education programs. At this point in the history of educational leadership training, no common agenda was agreed upon between the two groups about the start

of the program, whom the programs would enroll, what students should be prepared to do, or even how educational administration related to teaching and learning (Levine, 2005).

Initially, the proposed scientific approach to school administration preparation came from the business sector. This attitude toward principalship preparation had the objective of training aspiring administrators on the technical and mechanical aspects of their jobs, which would thereby further their understanding of the tasks they would face in the field. As interest in this method grew, it led to the formation of the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), which positively influenced the emerging concepts of the profession and the administration training program. Years later, the creation of the Cooperative Project in Education Administration, together with the final establishment of the Committee for the Advancement of School Administration (CASA), and the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), instituted changes to the principal preparation programs which improved and enhanced the programs from their early stages (Murphy, 2006b).

By the end of World War II, there were 125 institutions in the U.S. that had begun to offer principal preparation programs (Levine, 2005; Silver, 1982). By 1947, the professors of the principal preparation programs were linked by the National Conference of Professors of Education Administration (NCPEA). This nation-wide network of educational administration professors allowed for more conversation between the individuals responsible for training principals and thus developing standards of the profession and the training programs. In 1950, the Cooperative Project in Educational Administration, a consortium of eight universities financed by the Kellogg Foundation, was created with a primary goal of instituting changes in preparation programs, expanding upon initiatives espoused by the NCPEA, and encouraging a multidisciplinary approach to analyses of administration and the education of school leaders.

Lastly, the establishment of the Committee for the Advancement of School Administration (CASA) in 1955 and the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) in 1956 represented the final milestones that helped shape the evolving concepts associated with school administration during these early stages (Murphy, 2006).

By the mid-1980s, the administrators of principal preparation programs in UCEA-affiliated faculties recognized that the discipline had little-to-no realistic experience concerned with the scholarship components of the profession (Murphy, 2006). As a way of dealing with these proficiencies, various reports were pulled together. The most pivotal of these studies was the publication of *Leaders for America's Schools* (1987), which outlined the way forward for developing instructional leaders (Hoachlander et al., 2001; Levine, 2005). Another report that outlined changes was published in 1989 by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) which initiated a schedule for reforming principal preparation programs. This program reiterated the need to revise core curricula to emphasize academic practice while focusing on field-based preparations (Hoachlander et al., 2001).

Despite the fact that formal education programs, operated with the aid of universities, can efficaciously transmit the knowledge that aspiring principals need to know, it is likely “that most leadership abilities—the sincerely essential understanding and competencies that make it possible to lead and control a corporation correctly—are discovered in the main from experience and best rarely in the lecture room” (Hoachlander et al., 2001, p. 3). Accordingly, since experience is more probable than theory to shape good school leaders, the focus on professional standards for educational leaders is crucial.

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

Research has shown that the effectiveness of principals has an impact on the overall performance of teachers and students (Onorato, 2013; Orphanos & Orr, 2014). Efficient principals can lead teachers in enhancing their pedagogical skills and nurturing their students while also establishing a school's collective mindset for success and belonging, becoming a spokesperson for their institution, functioning as ambassadors day-to-day in the community, and overseeing operations (Superville, 2017).

Precipitated by this notion in addition to a call for the sphere of tutorial leaders day-to-day undertake requirements, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards were created in the mid-nineteenth century through the Countrywide Coverage Board for Educational Administration (Reyes-Guerra & Lochmiller, 2016). The ISLCC standards were set to be a basis for defining what an effective administrator must realize and be able to do. The primary purposes of the consortium involved developing standards for a day-to-day manual in order for educational administrators at the college level to be able to reshape practice programs for school leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013). As a result, many states tailored licenses, in addition to the accreditation rules that were developed by the ISLLC, in order to be effective for their specific contexts (Pannell, Peltier-Glaze, Haynes, Davis, & Skelevery, 2015).

However, the ISLLC 2002 standards were also criticized by many researchers. For Example, English (2003), Hess (2003), and Murphy (2005) asserted that there are shortcomings of the ISLLC requirements, including a lack of an ideal research technique. Objections are seemingly inevitable since ISLLC requirements use most of the educational framework as expectations for know-how, abilities, and tendencies required of faculty administrators (Davis,

Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). Murphy (2005) insisted that the requirements listed in the ISLLC standards are not practical because they entail an unnecessary evaluation of how school leaders' value "competency," which is undetermined by research.

Furthermore, Hale and Moorman (2003), supported by Murphy (2005), argued that the ISLLC standards are unclear on what the school principals should understand and what they need to do to guide the schools. More specifically, Murphy's (2005) work elaborated that the standards had an inadequate focus on what responsibilities of a principal would be best for improving both the schools and the performance of students. By the end of the 20th century, researchers including Hess (2003) and Marshall and McCarthy (2002) determined that the ISLLC principles were no longer effective and subsequently no longer impacted administration practice. As a result, some doubt arose on whether or not the ISLLC standards could effectively help leaders in 21st century institutions. Further, as English (2006) outlined, the ISLLC requirements were ambiguous and did not simplify the bureaucracy of administration programs.

Continuing in this vein, English (2006), questioning the validity of the ISLLC standards, indicated that the requirements of administrators had changed and stated that "the ISLLC were not what studies and practitioners had advised the ISLLC representatives vital additives of effective management" (ETS, 1997, as cited in English, 2006, p.195). More simply, the ISLLC standards contained a number of internal contradictions which would impact their application throughout the U.S. and affect the day-to-day practices of school leaders. Despite it having numerous critiques, the ISLLC standards were expected to "provide a clean organized set of curriculum content material and performance standards that could be used to drive preparation, expert improvement and licensing of principals" (Jackson & Kelley, 2002, p. 194). Most states currently depend on exams to certify principals in order to assess their effectiveness in their roles

(Sanders & Simpson, 2005), largely based on the ISLLC requirements. Due to this, it is necessary to amend principal preparation programs in addition to the ISLLC standards in order to provide school administrator candidates opportunities that aid them in running the 21st century schools (Grogan & Andrews, 2002). However, to reflect the development of the position of the administrator, revisions have been made to the ISLLC requirements several times. In 2008, the ISLLC standards changed the day-to-day expectations of training leaders to elevate pupil success (NPBEA, 2015). This revision meditated the shift in leadership expectation including that of tutorial leaders in higher education classrooms. A part of the 2008 ISLLC changes encompassed the overarching features of leader collaboration, to be executed in two ways. The first aim was to create an imaginative space for pupil success, through the creation of a school subculture that was conducive to daily achievement for all college students. The second goal was to strategically mobilize management roles and the obligations for teachers and other directors as a mechanism that would assist students in their achievement (NPBEA, 2018). In 2015 when the ISLCC standards were revised again, the revision covered the expert requirements for instructional leaders (PSEL, 2015). Moreover, the new revision emphasized the pivotal want for human relationships in leadership and teaching as well as scholarly learning (National Policy Board for Academic Management, 2015). This modification redirected the focal point of academic rigor to everyday student care and aid.

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) in 2015 organized each characteristic of school principals to identify and define the work of powerful educational leaders through key values, cultural responsiveness, and investing in continual college development. After every defining statement, an elaboration of the work needed to fulfill each competency is listed. Similarly, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL)

standards set the expectations for the implementation, training, and evaluation of college leaders. In particular, these criteria focused on foundational principles of management that are of vital importance for school leaders in their day-to-day lives while aligning consequences more equitably (NPBEA, 2015). As articulated by Reyes-Guerra and Lochmiller (2016), “The 2015 requirements paint a rich portrait of this type of leader, one whom our college students are relying on every day to help them reach their complete potential” (p. 7). Consequently, these requirements function in the middle of what educational applications principals try to teach daily (Reyes-Guerra & Lochmiller, 2016).

National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards

The Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC), in a move to improve leadership in colleges and universities, had its guidelines merged with those of the ISLLC in 2002. Yet, in 2011, the ELCC requirements were revised again based on the 2008 ISLLC standards developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA). This revision addressed the middle values, expert norms, ethics, and fairness required to enhance understanding and skills needed in college leaders (NPBEA, 2018). The 2011 ELCC requirements were subsequently amended by the Council for Chief School Officers (CCSO) and the policy board for academic administration due to changes to trends in education (Council for Leader Country College Officials, 2013; NPBEA, 2018). This study focused on the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) building level standards because they are appropriate for advanced programs at the master, specialist, or doctoral level that prepare assistant principals, principals, curriculum directors, supervisors, and other education leaders in a school building environment. Rooted in both research and effective practice, these standards

provide a framework for understanding how to best prepare, support, and evaluate education leaders in their efforts to help every child reach his or her fullest potential. (NELP, 2018, p.1)

More recently, NELP developed standards in 2018 that would advance school leader instruction programs, and accreditation of principals (NPBEA, 2015). These eight standards from NELP (2018), which are intended for post-secondary institutions seeking Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accreditation and NELP program review, are outlined in the sections that follow.

Standard One: Vision, Mission Statement, and Core Values

Candidates who complete principal leadership programs under the building-level requirements are those who are able to show how they will encourage the achievements of learners by using “the knowledge, skills, and engagements gained to collectively and collaboratively design, offer leadership and initiate implementation of the school’s mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement” (NBPEA, 2018, p. 11). At the same time, candidates will illuminate a core set of values while prioritizing “data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community” (p.11).

Standard Two: Norms of Professionalism and Ethical Concerns

Candidates in educational leadership preparation programs at the building-level that have met all necessary requirements comprehend and hold the ability to display the capabilities needed to offer positive input to the contemporary and future accomplishments and well-being of minor and adult learners “by applying the skills, knowledge, and commitments” needed for comprehending and exhibiting the ability and willingness to champion for ethical decisions while cultivating and enacting professional norms (p.13).

Standard Three: Leadership in Equity, Inclusivity, and Cultural Responsiveness

Successful candidates in the building-level program in educational leadership have the capabilities needed to encourage the present-day and future success and well-being of adults and children “by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive school culture” (p. 15).

Standard Four: Instructional Leadership

Those candidates that complete the building-level of school leader preparation programs are able to make evident their ability to foster the present-day and future successes and well-being of individual students and adults pertaining to the “knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to evaluate, develop, and implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, data systems, supports, and assessment” (p. 18).

Standard Five: Community and External Leadership

Candidates in the building-level of administrator preparation programs who have met their requirements will hold the capacity to advocate for the well-being and success of child and adult learners through involving families, the community at large, as well as school staff “in order to strengthen student learning, support school improvement, and advocate for the needs of their school and community” (p. 21).

Standard Six: Operations and Management

Accomplished candidates in the building-level of principal preparation programs are capable of promoting and showing the current and future well-being and success of learners through the skills, expertise, and commitments essential for effectual “management, communication, technology, school-level governance, and operation systems” aimed at

improving data-informed and equitable resources based on an individual school's resource plans and the application of applicable laws, regulations, and policies (p.24).

Standard Seven: Leadership in Human Resources

Following the conclusion of the building-level educational leadership program, candidates will be able to encourage child, youth, and adult students in their current and future accomplishments through the application of the knowledge, endeavors, and skills needed to nurture and develop the professional capacity of the school, involving the staff in the creation of a collaborative professional culture, while initiating processes “improve systems of staff supervision, evaluation, support, and professional learning” (p. 27).

Standard Eight: Internship Practices

Those candidates who are able to finish an internship under the supervision of skilled and expert administrator-practitioners “that engages candidates in multiple and diverse school settings and provides candidates with coherent, authentic, and sustained opportunities to synthesize and apply” what was outlined in NELP standards 1–7 in strategies that approximate the complete range of responsibilities that are necessary in building-level leaders, and equipping them with skills “to promote the present-day and future success and well-being for every student and adult in their school” (p. 30). Universities designed the preparation programs offered for educational leaders based on those standards above, and the following section will present the two types of preparation programs in U.S.

Types of Principal Preparation Programs

Since a large focus of my research is comparing principal preparation program, it is first important to recognize the types of programs that already exist in the extant literature. Leadership training programs are designed to put together talented potential principals with the

essential knowledge needed to effectively run schools. For this reason, according to Taylor, Pelletier, Trimble, and Ruiz (2014), principal education courses should be seen as an investment in schools and students. Additional studies suggest that in order to supply the required number of effective and highly-trained principals needed, school management programs have to be viewed by potential students as providing worthwhile instruction that will help administrators in their roles (Superville, 2017). According to Superville (2017), there are over 800 principal training programs throughout the U.S. which rely on various in the methods to certify principals who can effectively lead faculties of teachers. Throughout the literature there was a clear divide between research on what is termed traditional and non-traditional programs. In order to maintain that distinction, the following two sections elaborate on the research while continuing this divide between traditional and non-traditional principal training programs.

Traditional Principal Preparation Programs

Traditional preparation programs for principals prepare leaders without considering the existing variations in state and institutional structures (Hale & Moorman, 2003; McCarthy & Forsyth, 2009). Individual states formulate respective program approvals at universities as well as creating certification standards to better benefit the children residing within their jurisdictions (Preis, Grogan, Sherman & Beaty, 2007). Curricula within this type of program is based on a combination of strategies and theories that originate from the behavioral and social science disciplines, as well as corporate management (Lamagdeleine, Maxcy, Pounder & Reed, 2009, p. 129). Consequently, students in traditional programs end up being exposed to more theory, as opposed to logical practical approaches to administration, creating a contradictory argument against the survey that insists on training within the schools (Lamagdeleine et al., 2009). There is, therefore, an unclear understanding on the very nature of traditional preparation programs

towards educational administration, and the structures, instructional methods and contents that are to frame them (Lamagdeleine et al., 2009, p. 130).

According to Hess and Kelly (2007), who analyzed various syllabi from different principal preparation programs across the U.S., the most common elements of traditional programs were resource supervision after prior planning, instructional leadership, and school budgets (as cited in Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012). Additional research has shown that there are four crucial administration strands that are often elements of programs including management of students' results, development of technical knowledge with regards to administrator roles, values, and assessment criterion (Davis et al., 2013; Jonson, 2016). As Levine's (2005) work demonstrated, many traditional principal preparation programs are seen as inadequately to poorly preparing school administrators. The reason for this, as a number of scholars concluded, was due to a lack of competent programs (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Johnson, 2016; Levine, 2005; Superville, 2017). More specifically, these shortcomings included a curriculum unable to point out the expectations of principals and inadequate in-school experience (Levine, 2005; Superville, 2017; The Wallace Foundation, 2016). Furthermore, these programs have not necessarily changed much in order to combat the issues of adequately describing the principal role and offering internship opportunities (Levine, 2005; Superville, 2017; The Wallace Foundation, 2016). However, Prothero (2017) challenged these claims as inadequate. Similarly, a UCEA research study identified several good programs within the traditional model that outlined what an efficient principal was in addition to providing sufficient in-school mentoring options, while simultaneously some researchers acknowledging that programs still required changes including the importance of involving states legislators to

improve programs moving forward (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015, Crow & Whiteman, 2016; The Wallace Foundation, 2016; Tucker, Young, & Koschoreck, 2012).

Consequently, proposals for reviewing and ratifying university-based programs through involvement of legislators at the state level came about from the recommendations of the UCEA report. The selection of new principals and subsequently the continued support of these administrators in their roles became more pronounced due to the work by the G.W. Bush Institute (2016) and UCEA (1956) in promoting preparation programs (as cited in Crow & Whiteman, 2016; Superville, 2017). The UCEA researchers determined four key areas that would lead to higher-quality preparation programs:

- Explicit selection process: Programs should employ a purposeful recruitment plan in order to choose the best possible school leaders.
- State oversight: Programs should be consistently evaluated by the state government.
- Strong clinical experience: Programs should offer more hours of field experience.
- District-university partnerships: Programs should have relationships with local school districts.

Non-traditional Principal Preparation Programs

Non-traditional principal preparation programs evolved due to dissatisfaction with traditional programs that did not equip administrators with effective skills to handle the expectations of assessments, responsibilities of the principalship, and the focus on improved student achievement. Modern programs can better create innovative curricula, prompting a change in the ways of acquiring principal certification to include different program structures (USDE Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2005). Many modern principal training programs emerged or adjusted in response to this (Prothero, 2017). Several of these types of programs have

been established by school networks, state education departments, and universities working through alternative programs and school districts (Duke, 2014; Prothero, 2017; Simon, Dwyer, & Penfold, 2014). The following section provides examples of non-traditional principal preparation programs created to address the need for developing school leaders who can effectively lead the schools to produce high performing.

National-level Programs

Before I delve into the state specific programs below, there are two national school administrator preparation programs that deserve a closer look. The first is the Kellogg Leadership Studies Project (KLSP), and the second is the New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) project. The first program, KLSP, was formed in 2000 to serve the school leaders working in the communities of Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) schools (KIPP, 2016; Knechtel, et al., 2015). KLSP's purpose is to boost the principal effectiveness according to KIPP management philosophies which focuses on discovering the aptitudes, expertise, and behaviors sought out in its leaders. These skills were classified as being able to instill scholarly focus in students, increase student outcomes, construct relationships, and manage staff (KIPP, 2016). The candidates were expected to become principals in KIPP schools following the successful completion of a work residency, management training, inter-session coursework, and an academic design plan. An additional route open to students is also has the option to complete a graduate diploma or credentials through a university-based program (KIPP, 2016; Knechtel, et al., 2015).

Similar to the KLSP program, the NLSN is a non-profit company seeking to produce high-quality school leaders through effective management and high instructional response (Gates, Hamilton, Martorell, Burkhauser & Heaton, 2014). New Leaders was formed in 2000,

and since that time has partnered with districts CMOs to train aspiring principals in Baltimore, Charlotte, Chicago, Greater New Orleans, New York, California, and Memphis (Burkhauser et al., 2013; New Leaders, 2011; Superville, 2017). The need for more new school leaders in urban areas led to the Urban *Excellence Framework* which outlines the practices shown in schools with the highest achievement gains (Desravines, Aquino, & Fenton, 2016). A number of other jurisdictions have also developed non-traditional programs, but where KLSP and NLNS are national or multi-state programs, the remainder of the programs I explore are either state- or city-centered.

North Carolina. The state of North Carolina has developed two programs over the years that fit the criteria of a non-traditional program. One program that was developed focuses on ways to improve school leaders preparation programs and another program that deviates by highlighting preparing principals to serve in high poverty schools. The first program created the Regional Leadership Academies (RLAs) in order to certify principals and provide early career and content support for leaders (Brown, 2015; Simon et al., 2014). The RLA program aimed to prepare over 180 principals in the state. The framework for the RLA program was developed using the literature focused on how to improve school leaders' preparation (Brown, 2015). Candidates of the RLA program are involved in a strict selection process, internships, development opportunities, coaching, and continuous support (Brown, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Another innovative program in North Carolina is North Carolina State University's Educational Leadership Academy (NELA) which seeks to increase student achievement by preparing and retaining principals in high-poverty, hard-to-staff, and historically low-performing schools. Following an extremely thorough and careful selection process, those who participate in

NELA involve themselves in course and field work over a duration of two years. By the end of the program participants will attain their principal school license in addition to a master's degree in school administration. In the first year of the program, the principal-in-training serves in teaching roles while they are undertaking their course work. The second year of the program involves an internship component along with the completion of additional course work. Those who successfully obtain an NELA fellowship get a full scholarship package that covers tuition though acceptance of the scholarship obligates recipients to a three year, post-degree commitment to work in a high-need school in one of the regions served by the program (Siddiqi, Sims, & Goff, 2018).

Initially, NELA was funded through a grant designated by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2010. Subsequent NELA programs were funded through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) with additional funding from the federal government. Through university faculty leadership, the NELA program developed far-reaching partnerships and relationships with local stakeholders, which were the result of town hall meetings with local community members, school boards, and school leaders working at the district level.

The launching of NELA took place in 2010, with the first cohort graduating in 2012. In the first five years, NELA has convoked 107 principals, of which 81 continue to serve in NELA districts in North Carolina. Out of the total number of graduates who have finished their three-year-degree commitment, 72 percent remain working in NELA districts (Siddiqi, Sims, & Goff, 2018). The substantial value of the NELA program and the sense of preparedness it provides school leaders may create a difference to school leadership cultures that can be applied to other contexts.

Florida. Similarly to the North Carolina program, the state of Florida created the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program (FTLP). The framework of the program is based on theories of action in the leadership of low-performing schools such as it considers the development of principal knowledge and skills as well as the importance of course design principles as integral to success. Principal candidates must also complete a practicum and internships during their tenure in the program (Duke, 2014). FTLP is one of the largest commitments the state of Florida has initiated in order to see effective leadership skills in its principals.

Kansas City. Another interesting non-traditional program developed in the metropolitan area of Kansas City, Missouri. Here the Kansas City Pathway to Leadership in Urban Schools (KC PLUS) described itself as “a two-year, practice-based principal certification residency and master’s program that helps talented educators become capable school leaders” (Siddiqi et al., 2018, p. 8). A rather demanding selection procedure is seen to be applied by the program so as to pin-point highly motivated teachers who are potential administrative heads, thereafter rendering them with a hardy grooming and occupational development, in-line with practice standards.

Upon completion of the two year program, their principal certification will be granted to the successfully graduated candidates, courtesy of Kansas City (KC) PLUS as well as a Master of Arts in Educational Administration, thanks to a partner university (Siddiqi et al., 2018). The New Teacher Project (TNTP) is a non-profit organization which operates KC PLUS, with the main purpose of bettering the teachers as a workforce, through relevant studies and targeted teacher training. TNTP initially proposed KC PLUS programs for principals’ development while it simultaneously championed the pivotal role carried out by principals in the recruitment, support, and retention of teachers. KC PLUS as a program was basically proposed by TNTP to

champion administrative heads well suited for the management of their respective teachers, and thereby support a commendable school culture (Siddiqi et al., 2018).

New York City. Similar to the KC PLUS as they are both city-wide initiative, the New York City Aspiring Principals Program arose in 2003 in an effort to reform underperforming schools (Corcoran, Schwartz, & Weinstein, 2012). In addition, New York City schools at the time had a shortage of principals due to retirements, large school populations, and excessive student turnout. The 14-month program chose, enrolled and trained aspiring principals to lead lower-performing schools in the city (Simon et al., 2014). A key focus of the program was training principals in order to facilitate environments free of racial discrimination. The program is unique because it served the largest school district in the U.S., collated a variety of content and methods, and offered candidates three years of leadership experience (Corcoran et al., 2012).

Characteristics of Effective Principal Preparation Programs

The standards and credibility of principal preparation programs is a highly diffusing topic among researchers. Studies have proven that principals provide clues to student development; are pivotal in attracting, maintaining, and fostering good teachers; as well as promote an academic culture that is best for students (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 2006). To that end there are multiple ways in which research has defined the characteristics of effective principal preparation programs. According to Orr (2006), high-quality leadership preparation programs have seven features: (a) strict selection processes that focus on previous experience and aspirations, (b) give priority to minority groups, (c) emphasize the value of leadership, (d) promote standards-based content and internships, (e) provide supportive organizational structures, (f) concentrate on logistical challenges, and (g) have pride in their highly qualified graduates. Another study conducted by Smallwood and Jazzar (2006) assessed, also, the features of perfected preparation

programs for school leadership, and pointed out thirteen vital techniques that need including in the programs. The programs are to insist on the aptitudes of administrative responsibilities, staff and faculty modification, student discipline, problem-solving, special services, law and finance, facility administration, career designing and advancement, as well as group communications (Smallwood & Jazzar, 2006, p.17).

Finally, Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) determined that effective programs incorporate ten components: (a) a detailed curriculum with professional standards, (b) an ideology and curriculum that are based on instructional leadership and school improvement, (c) a balance between theory and practice, (d) instructional strategies that are problem-based, (e) knowledgeable faculty, (f) follow a cohort structure, (g) include expert mentoring, (h) are selective in recruitment, (i) are well-designed, and (j) include supervised administrative internships. Each set of program requirements outlines potential elements that any principal preparation program should take into consideration.

International Studies

Although university programs for principal preparation programs have existed since around the 19th century, there is very little research done outside of the U.S. (Willower & Forsyth, 1998). Given that the majority of research existing about principal preparation is about the U.S. context, many countries assume that they can evade “pitfalls” (Murphy, 1998, p. 359) by first assessing the scholarly and historical context of the U.S. research. To that end, this section reviews several case studies that compared principal preparation programs from five international contexts namely the U.K., China, Brazil, Australia, and Saudi Arabia to the United States. The choice to include these five countries is based on the available literature, although my inclusion of the case of Saudi Arabia is largely due to its similarities in culture to ABC university

country. Thus what follows is a look at various comparative studies looking at how principal preparation programs exist within the country specified as compared to the U.S. context.

The U.S. Compared to the U.K.

In their respective works Gronn (2002) and Brundrett (2001) portrayed the improvement of educational authority measures both in the United Kingdom and the United States. Later, they recognized various genuine worries which were affecting this kind of methodology. These uncertainties incorporated their connections, especially in trade enterprise, the assumed association among those in leadership, and of course the school results. This approach is likely to dissolve essential customs of assorted and expertise arrangements thus lessening the level of separation among the pool of forthcoming heads for the arrangement of different school networks. The problem comes when an overwhelming gauge driven leadership creation system negatively affects leadership enrollment.

Daresh and Male (2000) compared the experiences of English and American school leaders when they shifted from teachers to principals. The authors concluded that the U.S. had a longer history of principal preparation than the U.K. As Culbertson (1990) explained, the U.S. began to develop these programs, mainly in universities, by the end of the 19th century (Culbertson, 1990). In the U.S., according to Daresh and Male (2000), the principal must have at least three years of work years of teaching experience, should have a college graduate degree, and completed the educational requirements needed for them to receive their license. On the other hand, Britain was using an apprenticeship method in which the educational leaders were already trained through a hierarchical order, that is, from study hall instructors to educators, then to heads of departments, and then principals (Daresh & Male, 2000).

However, Britain recently started to formalize its process in preparing school directors. The Labor government, for example, has been distributing a White Paper which outlines their successful learning and its expectation concerning imminent instructors in embracing formally arranged leadership for every level. The accentuation set on proficient improvement is to such an extent that recently named British leading educators are qualified for an award of 2500 sterling Pounds, inside the initial two years of arrangement in acquiring proficient advancement, ideally at the college stage. The interest in these programs has grown significantly in the UK. For example, in 1999, the University of Leicester had more than 1300 individuals who competed for spaces in the MBA in school management (Gamage, 2001).

The U.S. Compared to China

Historically, China did not have specific school leadership programs. Principals were seen as “laymen lead specialists” (Lewin, Little, Xu, & Zheng, 1994, p. 205) and did not receive formal training. In 1985 the Chinese government began a process to formalize principal preparation programs, which altogether affected the change and improvement of Chinese state-funded instruction (Bush, Coleman, & Xi, 1998). Currently the Chinese National Ministry of Education that teachers interested in the role of principal demonstrate proof of pre-administration preparation for a few months before they take authority positions (Su, Adams, & Mininberg, 2000).

In their research, Su, Adams, and Mininberg (2000) interviewed both Chinese and U.S. school leaders to determine how they saw the principalship, their attitudes toward the role, and what they had done to prepare for their training. The authors discovered more differences than likenesses between the school administrators of the two nations. As indicated by Su and colleagues (2000), “The United States has a substantially more settled framework than China,

which just started to create formal and organized preparing for principals in 1990” (p. 477). What is more, Su et al. (2000) suggested that in China, “leadership, especially as the main role, is similar to the other administrative levels” (p. 475). However, the Chinese administrators interested in the International Development Academy at CSUN were very intrigued by the expansiveness and profundity of the instructive manager preparing programs in California (Su, Adams, & Mininberg, 2003).

Additional research was done to compare the two countries by Lin (2005) who looked at the impression of Chinese and U.S. headships in urban regions concerning the choice, readiness, and expert improvement of primary school heads. The American and Chinese principals focused on the significance of educational quality and student learning while also recognizing the principal’s capacity to improve educational plans and guidance. However, the requirement for becoming principals varied significantly between two countries. In the U.S. school administrators had obtained accreditation more than ten years before beginning their role whereas in China, younger principals were approached to enroll in training programs while older administrators were able to obtain principalship positions without enrolling in any training programs.

Another difference between the approaches to principal training between the two countries was the bureaucracy involved with becoming a principal. Chinese principals in the study were given permission to become administrators generally by their own principal, while they were still teachers themselves. The American principals, in contrast, did not have to receive permission from their supervising principal (Lin, 2005). However, funding for principal preparation programs was provided for interested persons in China, whereas in the US individuals had to finance it on their own. Although the American preparation processes are

more established, China is in the initial phases of professionalizing its leadership preparation programs. Relative investigations of headship among China and the United States have so far attended to issues such as jobs and obligations, authority styles; the executives draw near, frames of mind, attributes modes, convictions, change activities, educational dreams, readiness, determination, and expert improvement (Lin,2005).

The U.S. Compared to Brazil

As indicated by the Department of Education for the Federal District (SEDF) in Brazil, there are “640 schools, with 564 open urban schools and 76 open rustic schools” (SEDF, 2011, as cited in Borges-Gatewood & McNeal, 2013, p. 2). Borges-Gatewood and McNeal (2013) stated that these schools are free and aim to provide excellent education that provides graduates the training they will need to work as well as citizenship education and components of personal growth including morals, academic skills, basic reasoning, and imagination. The appointment of school principals occurs for two-year terms per the guidelines of SEDF and if the principal’s work is deemed satisfactory, they can continue in their position for an additional two years.

These positions are based on an application where interested persons must outline the individual objectives for the particular school to which they are applying for. These objectives must address student improvement and instruction as well as the regulatory and money related administration of each instructive establishment (Borges-Gatewood & McNeal, 2013).

Borges-Gatewood and McNeal (2013) argued that administrators needed to focus on current initiatives issues: “It isn’t hard to comprehend the need of changing the elements of a school initiative in Brazil so it can add, restore and advance money related and vote based adequacy” (Krawczk, 1999, p.116). This echoes earlier work from Teixeira (1968): “that as specialists deal with human’s wellbeing, teachers should deal with human’s way of life” (p. 10 as

cited in Borges-Gatewood & McNeal, 2013, p. 2). Nonetheless, in Brazil “authority is not a vocation for somebody who needs to begin in readiness initiative courses; however, it is a later choice for an instructor with a degree in instructional method and experience which is gained through specialization” (Teixeira, 1968, p. 14, cited in Borges-Gatewood & McNeal, 2013, p. 2). Thus, in Brazil, the readiness of the principal comes partially from what was addressed in the application to become principal of that school, which is very different than how administrators are appointed in the United States (Borges-Gatewood & McNeal, 2013).

Borges-Gatewood (2014), utilizing Adkin’s structure of head arrangement project types, showed why there is some relationship between Brazilian and American principal preparation programs. The study employed the School Administrator Preparedness Survey. The reviewed comprised of 93 inquiries dependent on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) gauges for instructive administration. In both countries, the training programs help principals actualize a shared school vision, build up an educational culture, oversee school activities and assets, develop teamwork amongst teachers, and maintain a respectful environment.

The U.S. Compared to Australia

Su et al. (2003) concentrated on the profiles and points of view of Australian together with American school leaders as well as the pre-administration and in-administration preparation programs in which they took an interest. With respect to pre-administration, 76 percent of American school leaders completed at least two years in a formal preparation program, 20 percent went to a one-year program, and just 4 percent finished a couple of long periods of training. In sharp differentiation, 66 percent of the Australian heads did not have any pre-administration training before they became school leaders. This seems to be the after effect of

not having any pre-administration training required except for being a decent teacher. Of the individuals who did receive some pre-administration training in Australia, 4 percent had three months of preparation, 2 percent had more than three months but less than a year, 5 percent had one year, 9 percent had two years, and 14 percent had four years of preparation. The individuals who had at least one year of training completed college-level pre-administration readiness, but this was not explicitly required (Su et al., 2003).

In contrast, American principals obtained significantly more preparation than their Australian counterparts (Su et al., 2003). Past policy in Australia required that new principals complete a two-day enlistment program toward the start of the year. Currently, any training components required are completed online and are tied to what the government deems essential knowledge for that year and adjusted at the regional level. As discussed previously, American requirements are formal, highly organized, completed in-person, and provided by various associations, state offices, and school districts (Su et al., 2003).

Furthermore, Australian and American headships contrast in their perspectives on the knowledge needed for pre-administration and in-administration training, particularly concerning handling challenging encounters such as staff conflicts. The Australian school leaders put less focus on the significance field encounters in formal training programs because many became principals through an apprenticeship model which regularly involves in-school training (Su et al., 2003).

The U.S. Compared to Saudi Arabia

Presently, Saudi Arabia right now does not have any program with the goal of preparing new educational heads for the obligations and duties they will undertake as undeniable school leaders (Altuwaijri, 2015). Potential Saudi school administrators must attend a school head

readiness program before they can take on the role of principal. Each year, the Saudi Ministry of Education selects 300 principals from the country's 35,397 schools (Ministry of Education, 2012; 2014; 2015) to complete preparation programs (Ministry of Education, 2012). To accomplish this goal, the Ministry of Education works with seven of the 38 Saudi colleges to develop principal preparation programs and prepare those who will be working as school administrators (Ministry of Education, 2012).

Accordingly, Saudi schools face issues due to having an inadequate number of properly trained school principals. In their research, Aldbian (2003), Almaboth (2004), and Alsolami (2012) found that Saudi principals often lack the communication and critical thinking abilities that are required to be successful educational directors. Additionally, because there are not enough spaces in the programs for all those currently holding administrative roles, principals are likely to continue in their roles without receiving proper training and preparation (Almaboth, 2004; Alshahoan, 2010).

Altuwaijri (2015) used principal readiness program standards from Illinois and compared them to programs in Saudi Arabia, focusing on program prerequisites, entry-level position necessities, coursework prerequisites, and staffing necessities. Altuwaijri concluded that there were a number of similarities between the two, including the skills, knowledge, and behaviors principals need to fulfill their general obligations and duties. In addition, a four-year degree and previous work as a teacher was another commonality.

There were also a number of differences between the two countries. In the U.S., aside from the State Board of Instruction that underwrites principal preparation programs, there are numerous other professional accreditation associations involved in principal training. In Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Education is the only licensing organization. According to Altuwaijri,

this means that American training programs allow for more flexibility in meeting the changing needs of principals, whereas in Saudi Arabia there are fewer options because there is only one organizational body. Another distinction is that Saudi principalship programs are offered to those who are already principals and vice principals, while in the U.S., teachers are trained to become principals before they become administrators. The length of training is another difference: Saudi principals only complete one semester of training equating to 25 hours a week, while in the U.S., the typical requirement is a few years of coursework. Since Saudi principals are only allotted a single semester to complete their training, they are not prepared for their jobs upon completion.

Preparation of Principals in ABC University Country

Few studies talk about principal preparation programs in ABC country, and no study compares the principal preparation program with American programs based on my research and knowledge, hence much of the impetus for my study in particular. In lieu of providing a comparison, the following section provides some additional background on the principal preparation programs that are offered by the Ministry of Education and ABC University.

In the ABC university country, the Ministry of Education and its directorates are responsible for preparing school principals through the Educational Leadership Program. The program was established according to the *Ministerial Decision No. 294* (2007). In order to implement the executive plan of the program, a team of experienced educators from Seward International Company, in coordination with the Ministry of Education, trained 24 principals within the Ministry; those administrators then went to their respective regions and trained remaining administrators (Ibrahim & Al Qatabi, 2017).

In 2014, the Specialized Center for Vocational Training for Teachers was launched under the Ministry of Education. The Center is responsible for the preparation and professional

development program for administrative, supervisory, and teaching functions such as school principals, educational supervisors, administrators, and teachers (Ministry of Education, 2016). The Ministry of Education cooperated with the Educational Foundation and Administration Department with the College of Education at ABC University to prepare principals, assistant principals, and supervisors who do not have bachelor's degrees to offer educational administration programs for them. The Educational Administration Bachelor (EABA) program was first offered in the 2003–2004 academic year. This program aims to qualify professionals with a diploma to receive a bachelor's degree in educational administration through the completion of 64 credit hours over four semesters. The remaining 56 credit hours are transferred from the Intermediate Teachers College Diploma program (Educational Foundations and Administration Department, 2014). In addition, the department offers a master's program in educational administration. The department offers this program for two reasons. First is to support the expansion of knowledge in school principals. Second is to develop the emergence of new specializations in the field of educational administration, which has become imperative in preparing highly qualified educational professionals capable of developing the educational institutions in ABC university country and solving their problems effectively.

The master's program has four aims:

- (a) enhancing administrative performance in educational institutions in accordance with requirements of the progress witnessed by most administrative units in the Sultanate,
- (b) meeting the growing needs of many sectors in the community for specializations in educational administration by offering four streams,

- (c) contributing to ABC University's mission of serving the community by providing educational institutions with highly qualified professionals trained by experienced faculty members, and
- (d) expanding administrative awareness among the staff of educational institutions.

The four paths in the program are educational planning, higher education administration, school administration, and educational supervision. Each track consists of eight courses and a thesis, with a total of 24 credit hours. The program's duration is two years for full-time students and three years for part-time students under the University Postgraduate Academic Regulations (Educational Foundations and Administration Department, 2014).

Conclusion

It is crucial that principal preparation programs effectively develop educational leaders especially because school leadership impacts student achievement. Within the ever increasing importance of high standards for K–12 schools, schools cannot wait as skilled leaders are needed now (Southern Regional Education Board, 2004). The literature indicates that university-based traditional training programs are not effectively training teachers to become principals. The debate over which type of program might be best, either a traditional university-based program or a non-traditional preparation program, may be linked to the question, "How should school leaders be educated and who should provide that education?" (Southern Regional Education Board, 2004, p. 19). The international study of principal preparation has not only made major contributions to research but has also offered principal training programs and their administrators' different perspectives on ways to develop these programs around the world.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

The school principal is the key to success or failure for any school. As such, it is integral that school administrators receive suitable preparation within higher education organizations to provide them with the skills they need to lead their school in an effective way (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). To that end, this study focuses on the principal preparation programs offered by XYZ University and ABC University. In particular, this research concentrates on the perspectives of academic staff and graduate students at XYZ and ABC regarding the factors that should be included in preparation program like criteria, curricula, areas of strength, areas of growth, and the changes that need to be made in university educational leadership programs to prepare better principals to be successful school leaders.

This chapter describes the research methods used in the study and is comprised of sections that outline the research design, research questions, and a description of the participants who contributed to the research, as well as a description of the data collection methods and data analysis. The chapter ends with sections on the study's credibility, ethics, and limitations.

Research Design

Qualitative research seeks to develop an understanding of social phenomena. It aims to help in explaining the nature of the world and enable people to have in-depth knowledge about different aspects of life (Hancock, 2002). This study uses a qualitative approach for a variety of reasons. First, the research topic explores and discusses particular data that cannot be quantified in collection or interpretation. For instance, what people say and do, as well as their motivations which are difficult to measure by other means (O'Toole & Beckett, 2010). Second, qualitative research permits researchers to go deeply into natural settings using case studies to examine personal experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1988). Third, qualitative research focuses on data

collection about individual opinions, feelings, and experiences using various methods such as observations and interviews (Hancock, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Hancock (2002) added that “qualitative data are collected through direct encounters with individuals, through one to one interviews or group interviews or by observation” (p. 2). Finally, qualitative research permits researchers to explore substantive areas to obtain a clear understanding of the issues being researched (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Overall, with the qualitative approach, the researcher is able to ascertain in-depth the respondent’s perceptions. More specifically, this means that I have been able to better understand the viewpoints of the faculty responsible for teaching in the principal preparation programs at XYZ university and ABC university.

The research design for this study was a qualitative comparative case study. This strategy provides an “all-encompassing method” for systematically studying and describing a phenomenon (in this case, the implementation of principal preparation programs) within a real-life context (Merriam, 1998). Furthermore, in Merriam’s (2009) words a qualitative case study is as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (p. 21). Additionally, Merriam (2009) described a comparative case study design as a method developed to collect and analyze data from several various sources.

In order to conduct effective interviews, make careful observations, and mine data from documents, a researcher conducting a qualitative study needs to learn essential skills and follow particular procedures (Merriam, 1998). In this case, I used interviews and information from documents to gather the data about the perceptions of the quality of preparation in educational leadership programs from four university educational leadership professors at XYZ university and ABC university, as well as six masters students from XYZ and four students from ABC. The

case also explores the similarities and differences between XYZ and ABC in how the respective programs have been designed and what each institution can learn from the other. Moreover, the use of a case study is the most appropriate method because it allows the examination of the whole development process of the leadership program from the perspective of the educational leadership professors. In addition, the method also enables me to obtain information from a wide variety of sources such as documents related to the programs and professors' and students' opinions from both countries.

Roles of the Researcher

The investigator in this study is an insider. An insider is a researcher who conducts a research project in their local environment such as their community, institution, or home (Rabbitt, 2003). For this research study, I am connected to both research sites. First as a lecturer at ABC in the Educational Foundation and Administration Department within the College of Education, and second as a Ph.D. student at XYZ in the Educational Leadership Program. The participants involved in the study were the academic staff and graduate students, more specifically professors within the Educational Leadership programs and master students at each institution, including individuals with some relationship or connection to myself.

On the one hand, being an insider brings the researcher many advantages. First, I have a good background knowledge of the context in which the research is conducted (Bell, 2000). That knowledge could be about the physical environment, the macro- and micro-politics, the old and new regulations in the programs, as well as the intended participants. Then, because of my position in the two environments, I may be favored and offered help that would not have been given to an outsider (Rabbitt, 2003). Also, I may have some experience with all or some of the above parts of the study environment that may have an impact on my ability to conduct this

research study. For example, from experience I may know preferred ways to approach and contend with the participants that will be involved in the study (Rabbitt, 2003). In this way, my experience in both departments may help to develop the best possible interview questions for this study, as well as the most effective ways to manage the participants. Finally, doing research studies as an insider can open new horizons to a researcher as well as develop a fresh understanding of the pragmatic concerns of a local environment (Bell, 2000). This research opened new horizons to the researcher to deal with an academic environment, and it also developed a greater insight of the challenges of the college of education at ABC.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of the university leadership program professors' and graduate students at XYZ University and ABC University in terms of the (a) program's mission and vision, (b) program's aims, (c) curricula, (d) areas of strength and areas for growth, (e) challenges, as well as (f) opportunities for improvement in the way that the educational leadership programs prepare principals to become effective leaders?
2. What are the perceptions of the university leadership program professors' and master's students at XYZ University and ABC University in terms of the (a) client group, (b) structure, (c) delivery modes, (d) credentialing, and (e) pedagogy of the educational leadership preparation program at their universities?
3. What are the similarities and differences that exist between XYZ and ABC?
4. What can American and Arab university professors learn from each other?

Participants

Rationale

There were a variety of reasons that I chose professors as the main participants of this study. First, the academic departments form the primary unit of the administrative structure, and have the authority to initiate most actions that may affect the institution (Dressel & Richard, 1970). Second, faculty members are the individuals who know in-depth the processes involved in developing and teaching in the program. Third, the faculty had significant experience with the program and its evaluation. Fourth, the faculty themselves are educational leaders who aim to produce effective programs that will build excellent leaders. Finally, the faculty are the people who have had the opportunities to improve and develop the programs based on how they have been evaluated in addition to research on principal training and growth.

On the other side, I chose master's students because they are the receivers of the knowledge and the people who study the program can evaluate whether or not the program prepares them to be effective leaders in the real situation.

Sampling

Non-probabilistic sampling, a type of purposive sampling, was selected for the study. Merriam (1998) argued that the most common form of non-probability sampling is a purposive sampling, which “is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and, therefore, must select a sample from which the most must be learned” (p. 61). Purposive sampling is not a random way that is needed in hypotheses or some personnel.

For an analyst to get the right information while choosing members they have to know who is willing to give out data (Bernard, 2002 as cited in Etikan, Abubakar Musa & Alkassim, 2016). Most often this step is used in qualitative research to identify and choose the information

that can be required for “proper utilization of available resources” (Patton, 2002 as cited in Etikan, Abubakar Musa & Alkassim, 2016, p. 2). “This involves identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest” (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011 as cited in Etikan, Abubakar Musa & Alkassim, 2016, p. 2). Therefore, purposive sampling, as opposed to a random sampling method, works better for the purposes of gaining the information that I am seeking in this study.

Criteria

The study will concentrate on the educational leadership program that is offered at XYZ and ABC universities. I am focusing on these two locations for a variety of reasons. Firstly, ABC university and XYZ university offer an educational leadership program for preparing educational leaders. Secondly, both offer master's degree. Thirdly, both of them are accredited by NCATE. Fourthly, the client group of the program at both universities are principals, assistant principals, and teachers. Finally, ABC university located on AGC and XYZ located in the US, which means they differ both culturally and historically, both of which impact on the preparation of educational leaders.

The participants for the study included university academic faculty and master students at XYZ and ABC who are responsible for the design of educational leadership programs as well as teaching in them.

Recruiting

Recruitment of participants occurred via both personal and professional connections. This process was made easier by the positionality of the researcher as an insider. Thus for each potential participant I was able to personally approach each individual and ask if they would participate since they were all known to me prior to the commencement of this study.

Data Collection

Methods are “techniques for gathering evidence” (Harding, 1987, as cited in Carter & Little, 2007, p. 1317) or “procedures, tools and techniques” (Schwandt, 2001, as cited in Carter & Little, 2007, p. 1317). The main methods of collecting qualitative data are interviews, observation, texts and document analysis, as well as the analysis of transcribed speeches. Interviews are commonly used in data collection methods. For this study, I used audio recorded interviews, where an interview is understood to be “a method of data collection in which one person (an interviewer) asks questions of another person (a respondent): interviews are conducted face-to-face” (Polit & Beck, 2006 as cited in Whiting, 2008, p.35). The reason behind using the interview in this research is that I felt would be able to understand my respondents’ perception of the principal preparation program through mutual interaction during an interview.

There are several different types of interviews, as well as multiple strategies within those types that can assist researchers in gathering the information they are interested in obtaining. To start there are three main types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. An interview where questions are designed and outlined with a schedule that is adhered to closely by participants and respondents is called a structured interview. In this case, questions are well outlined and easily understood by respondents although interviewers are also allowed upon any issue for clarification. This type of interview allows for the easy collection of data which, in the end, also saves time for the researcher in the analysis (Boyce & Neale, 2006). The most widely used format for qualitative interviewing is known as semi-structured in-depth interviews, which can be used with either individuals or groups (Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In an in-depth face-to-face interview participants get the opportunity to freely express their ideas while the researcher is able to probe issues further and glean clear information from the participant. This is a qualitative

technique that is done by conducting intensive individual interviews in small groups of respondent to explore their perspective ideas on a specific matter (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Also, this technique is mostly used when one needs detailed information from someone's ideas and behaviors or in exploration of new issues in-depth. Interviews in most cases are always used to give a clear picture of what happened including the reasoning behind participant decision making.

One of the most important elements of any interview is the first couple of minutes. Tracy (2013) indicated that an audio-recorded interview requires informed consent and that time should be provided to the participants to read and ask researchers any questions they have right from the beginning. The consent form that is given to participants should contain a brief description of the study, significances, ways of data collection, as well as how confidential information will be protected and destroyed. These consent forms are a good location to take notes on the research field on the context of interviews. It brings out a clear picture of the method of data collection: nonverbal communication, the appearance of the respondent, where they chose to sit and any interesting issues that will not appear in the audio recording. This promotes confidence in the collected data.

Using the knowledge of completing an effective interview, as well as the value of the different types of interview strategies, I used three techniques to conduct the audio recorded interviews in this study. The first technique used in the interviews was building rapport. This technique is supported by research as it can help "gain perspectives and counter-perspectives on the issues under scrutiny" (Pathak & Intratat, 2012, p. 4). In order to gain rapport, I started by sharing common ground and common experiences at the beginning of the interview. Another way I built rapport with participants was by asking questions in order: "Question order is important for substantive reasons (order effects occur in interviews, just as they do in a survey),

but the order is also important as a means of gaining rapport” (Leech, 2002, p. 665). The second technique I employed was providing thought-provoking interjections while participants were providing their answers to the questions. According to Pathak and Intratat (2012), this technique helps the researcher to get comprehensive responses about the issue of study because it provides a chance for the participant to explain their thinking. The third technique used was critical event analysis. “Since abstract thinking and replies in abstraction may not be useful in some instances, the interviewees are encouraged to describe critical events and talk about them” (Pathak & Intratat, 2012, p. 5). Using critical event analysis helped participants to provide concrete answers on abstract or complex issues.

In addition to the form an interview takes and how the interview is conducted, there are also many types of questions that can be used to stimulate responses from interview participants. In this research, I used two kinds of generative questions. Using generative questions after opening the interview helps to relinquish control to the respondents, who are then able to set the pace and exact topic of the answer (Tracy, 2013). The two types of generative questions offered were tour questions and example questions, where tour questions ask respondents to overview familiar descriptive knowledge or memories about an activity or event (Tracy, 2013). Leech (2002) stated that “the single best question I know of for a semi-structured interview is what Spradley (1979) calls a ground tour question. The major benefit of the question is that it gets respondents talking, but in a fairly focused way” (p. 667). One of the tour questions used in this research was, “How can you say you attained this position?” Example questions were also queried, and while there is a high degree of similarity between example and tour questions, example questions seek to gain more specificity from respondents. The example questions dwell on one particular act as pointed out by an individual respondent (Leech, 2002), where a specific

example is asked for on the same. For instance, “Can you give some examples of characteristics of a good program?” is an illustration of an example question that I used. Another question strategy used was to adopt interview questions, which is meant to obtain detailed information from participants, as suggested by Tracy (2013). Some of the questions I used in this manner were aimed at describing the experiences of interviewees, as in “Have you been in a leadership role previous to current position? If so, for how long?” which allows the researcher to go deeply into the respondents’ experiences. To close the interview, I adapted Tracy’s (2013) technique of asking catch-all questions, which can effectively capture and tie together loose ends or unfinished stories. Thus, researcher asked the participants “Are there any other points that you would like to add?” in my own version of Tracy’s practice.

Finally, in closing an interview, Tracy (2013) suggests expressing gratitude and reassuring the respondent of confidentiality. As part of this process, I asked the participant if they had “a preferred pseudonym” (Tracy, 2013, p. 151). This question was asked to the participants their preference by saying: “I am going to be using fake names when I write up these data. I can make one up- or is there a name that especially suits you?” From there, I offered the interviewee thanks for participating and reassured them that all personal information would be kept confidential and secure.

Document Analysis

In order to provide a more well-rounded picture of the programs that I was investigating, I examined documents including the bulletins, aims, vision, mission, course descriptions, and course syllabi of the Master of Educational Leadership preparation program at both XYZ and ABC universities. These documents were provided directly from the individuals interviewed, the institutions upon request, and directly from the two program websites.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is “the process of making sense out of the data... [which] involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning” (Merriam, 1998, p. 178). To complete my analysis, I followed the strategies suggested by Merriam (1998) as well as Braun and Clarke (2006). The process of analyzing data is a mysterious metamorphosis in qualitative research where procedures are intuitive and learning is an action as said from history by Merriam (1998).

Since I completed all of my interviews in the language most comfortable for my participants, either English or Arabic, I needed to add additional measures to ensure accurate translations. Therefore, prior to analyzing the data, I fully transcribed the interviews in the language they were conducted. For the interviews conducted at ABC there were two additional translations performed. First, each interview was translated by myself from Arabic to English, then I translated each interview back to Arabic. This process of transcription between the two languages allowed for a level of comparison between the original Arabic translation and the second Arabic translation to ensure that the meaning had not changed and to ensure reliability and validity of the data.

Once all of the interviews were translated to English, and the Arabic translations were verified, I used thematic analysis to begin organizing my findings. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method used for “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). To the end, the researcher followed the five main phases for this type of analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first step of this process is becoming familiar with the data. To do this, after transcribing the interviews, I read and re-read the notes taken and transcriptions a number of times. While I was reading the transcriptions and

notes, I highlighted the points that were important to the study like those directly related to the research questions. After reading through the transcripts a number of times, I started to generate an initial coding structure. More specifically, I coded the interesting features in the notes and then moved to the codes and at the same time collected more data relevant to each code. Third, after coding, I searched for emerging themes. Put differently, I collected codes that were all related to one topic and began the process of creating potential themes that might explain the relationship between those chosen codes. Next, I reviewed all of the potential themes by gathering all data relevant to a theme and moving back and forth between the data collected, the codes created, and the potential themes to ensure symbiosis. Finally, I identified the overall story the analysis tells, and generated clear definitions and names for each theme.

Trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness is a critical aspect of the research process. It is directly related to the analytical and methodological processes of a research project. Several analytical and methodological approaches, safeguards, and specific strategies to produce accurate results have been identified by researchers (Denzin, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Mubry, 1998; Peshkin, 1988; Stake, 1995). This paper addresses two major safeguards: member checks, and acknowledging the subjectivity of the researcher. These techniques were applied by the researcher to ensure trustworthiness.

Member-checking. Member-checking encompasses the act of seeking feedback from the stakeholder representative groups that either took part in the investigation or were affected by it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This approach involves the selection of participants who will assess and respond to interpretations and data. Mubry (1998) highlighted a two-step process to accomplish this goal, which I also followed. In the initial stage, the study participants are provided with

copies of relevant raw information without interpretation (Mubry, 1998). For this research study, I provided interview transcriptions to a portion of my participants. The respondents were then requested to correct any anomalies or to provide more information that could lead to the improvement of data accuracy. Most importantly, this stage helped to improve the descriptive validity of the research results. The second and final stage was completed after the thematic analysis, and so, by nature, is built upon the initial stage of the process. For this stage, I sent a copy of initial interpretations from the thematic analysis to the respondents and recorded their reactions. This stage is important in the member-checking process because it leads to the improvement of the interpretive validity of the study results since it is not solely based on the researchers interpretations. Making sure to include participants in this process, not only ensures the validity and reliability of the translations and interpretations, but also provides the researcher with peace of mind that they have not incorrectly made assumptions about their participants intentions.

Acknowledging Researcher Subjectivity

Subjectivity refers to the effect of the investigator's emotions, training, knowledge, and experiences on their research. In this study, subjectivity was addressed in a number of ways. First, I provided information about my professional qualifications to the interview participants. Second, I highlighted the conceptual framework that I applied to the study, and I was forthright in acknowledging the influence of my choice of conceptual framework on my data interpretations. Moreover, the act of sharing the conceptual framework with the interview participants helps them to provide an excellent analysis of my interpretations. Finally, I reduced the effect of my subjectivity by quoting the words of the respondents directly. In this way, I

avoided paraphrasing their words and thus interpreting them in an effort to help the readers of this research understand what the participants said in a more direct way.

Ethics

Ethics approval (Protocol# 21-136 EP 2015) was obtained to carry out the research from the Institutional Review Board at XYZ University. All data collected was based on the written consent of the participants, who gave their consent before taking part in the interview component of the study. The respondents were allowed to withdraw from the study at their own will at any time without any consequences.

Limitations

This research study has two limitations. First, the subjectivity or the bias of the researcher who is a student in the educational leadership program at XYZ University and an academic staff at the College of Education at ABC. Second, Merriam (2009) stated that “perhaps because a case study focuses on a single unit, a single instance, the issue of generalizability looms larger here than with other types of qualitative research” (p. 51). Based on this quote, the second limitation to my study is, due to the nature of the case study methodology and the fact that I only deal with professors and students from XYZ and ABC, the research conclusions may not be generalizable elsewhere.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research methods. It explained the reason for implementing a qualitative a comparative case study design to collect and analyze the research data. Data were collected using in-depth and semi-structured interviews as well as documents such as bulletins, aims, vision, mission, course descriptions, and course syllabi from each of the two programs. This methodology was employed because interviews permitted me to explore

participant's attitudes, while the program documents provided a more official perspective about the program. Some different approaches to supplementing the interview questions came from asking tour and example questions, which were used to stimulate the participants' responses.

Data was analyzed using Merriam's (1998) strategies as well as the thematic analysis principals outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The chapter also discussed the validity and reliability of research, the role of the researcher as an insider, issues related to ethics, and the study's limitations.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The purpose of this comparative qualitative study is to provide insight into the educational leadership preparation programs that are provided at ABC in Gulf countries and XYZ in the United States. Goals of this study included understanding the implications of any similarities or differences in the ways that these leading universities prepare educational leaders and identifying opportunities for these universities to learn from each other in the spirit of continuous improvement.

To guide my study, I used a hybrid conceptual framework built of *Analysis of Principal Preparation Programs* (Webber & Scott, 2010) and *Participants' Model for Developing Principals as Supervisors and Instructional Leaders* (Taylor-Backor & Gordon, 2015). In addition to combining these two frameworks, I also included factors such as mission, vision, challenges, goals, areas of strengths, and areas of growth. The Webber and Scott (2011) framework looks only at mapping for preparation programs, while Taylor-Backor and Gordon's (2015) framework contains the first step of preparation educational leaders at universities, which is the screening process and how it is important in admission requirements. Based on the aims of my study, I saw these two conceptual frameworks as complimentary and as guides as I analyzed my data, since I compared principal preparation programs in Gulf countries and in the U.S.

Data Collection Procedures

The primary data sources for this study were personal interviews with academic faculty and master's students from educational leadership preparation programs at ABC and XYZ, and available documents about the master's educational leadership program from both universities' websites. Interviews were performed via Zoom, the video conferencing program provided and

supported by ABC. The interview process provided insight into the lived experiences of professors and graduate students in the educational leadership master program at XYZ and ABC.

I recruited the professors and graduate students via email using a prepared script (see Appendix A). My committee and my cohort helped me access graduate students at XYZ, and the department head of Educational Foundation and Administration at ABC helped me access the graduate students at ABC. They received a copy of the informed consent form as an attachment. If they agreed to participate, I obtained written consent before beginning. My recruitment script included an example of how I would use the data I collected from them. I let participants know that they may turn in a consent form regardless of whether or not they chose to participate so that it will not be obvious to others what they decide. Participants were given a copy of the consent documents to keep for their record as an attachment via email. An interview script was created based on a list of the pre-determined questions that each participant was asked (Appendix B). This semi-structured format aimed to elicit stories of the educational leadership program as experienced by professors and graduate students.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. I transcribed interviews that were conducted in Arabic into Arabic first, then translated them to English, and then back Arabic, to ensure continuity. To create codes, the English transcript data was separated into categories, and detailed descriptions led to themes that were codified. There was a winnowing process during coding in which unnecessary information was discarded. Huberman and Miles (1994) and Creswell (2013) suggest that preliminary counts of data codes determine the frequency at which the same code shows up in the database. Accordingly, themes were derived from the frequency of the code appearances. Verbatim quotes obtained from the interviews helped me to reflect closely on the interpretation of the participant's lived experiences.

Research Questions

This study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the university leadership program's professors and graduate students at ABC and XYZ in terms of the (a) the program's mission and vision, (b) the program's aims, (c) admission requirements (d) curricula, (e) areas of strength and areas for growth, (f) challenges, as well as (g) opportunities for improvement in the way that the educational leadership programs prepare principals to become effective leaders?
2. What are the perceptions of the university leadership program's professors and graduate students at ABC and XYZ in terms of the (a) client group, (b) structure, (c) delivery modes, (d) credentialing, and (e) pedagogy of the educational leadership preparation program at their respective universities?
3. What are the similarities and differences that exist between ABC and XYZ?
4. What can ABC and XYZ professors learn from each other?

Participants

The participants were academic faculty staff at XYZ and ABC and graduate students from XYZ and ABC. I recruited one program coordinator and one clinical professor from XYZ, and one program coordinator and one clinical professor from ABC. The faculty are from Educational Leadership departments in both universities. I also recruited six master's students from each university. Table 1 shows the pseudonym names of the participants.

Table 1

Pseudonym Names

	Number of Faculty; pseudonyms names	Numbers of Students; pseudonyms names
ABC	Two: Dayan and James	Six: Sun, Noor, Yara, Yasmeen, Summer, Zain
XYZ	Two: Linda and Alix	Four: Lee, Dana, Sara, Rose

This chapter presents the findings of the study, based on my analysis. Each research question is presented, in order.

Research Question One

What are the perceptions of the university leadership program's professors and graduate students at ABC and XYZ in terms of the (a) program's mission and vision, (b) program's aims, (c) admission requirements, (d) curricula, (e) areas of strength and areas for growth, (f) challenges, as well as (g) opportunities for improvement in the way that the educational leadership programs prepare principals to become effective leaders?

The following themes emerged to address the research question one: Standards, Screening, Curricula, Evaluation of the Programs, and Opportunities for Improvement. Those themes were predominately descriptive; they described patterns in the data relevant to the research question. The first theme is Standards, which covers the mission, vision, and aims. The second theme is Screening, which covers the admission requirements. The third theme is Curricula, which covers the curriculum of each program. The fourth theme is Evaluation which include areas of growths and areas of improvements, and the challenges each program faced. The last theme of the first research question is Opportunities for Improvement. I illustrate the

findings with theme names, beginning each section with responses with faculty, followed by the student responses.

Standards: Vision\Mission and Aims, Faculty

Table 2 presents academic faculty views about the importance of mission, vision, and aims of each program.

Table 2

Faculty Views on Mission, Vision, and Aims

Reasons for having mission/vision and aims for the program	(ABC)	(XYZ)
	N= 2	N=2
Guiding principles		1
The Master's is kind of introductory program		1
The program is a plan that is considered a long-term strategic plan	1	
It's important for the students to see if this is what they want	1	

Table 2 shows that the academic staff from both universities gave different reasons for the importance of the standards of their programs; their reasons include vision/mission and aims of the respective educational leadership preparation program. The theme of standards is important because it illustrates the opinions of both the providers and the receivers of the program. Those opinions will help the provider—academic faculty—to see how receivers (students) are thinking about standards, and to change what they need based on the opinions of receivers. Two professors from both universities saw that the vision, mission, and aims statements as basic pillars of any introductory program or a plan. Linda from XYZ stated that

“The Master’s is kind of introductory and exposes people to a lot of leadership competencies and standards” (Linda, Interview transcript, p.2). In addition, James from ABC shared a similar opinion: “The program is considered a long-term strategic plan, and the strategic plan must have a clear vision and goals for the student, clear to the implementer and clear to the beneficiary, so that the student understands that this program is what will be presented to them” (James, Interview transcript, p. 2). However, Alix, from XYZ, saw the mission, vision, and aims as the guiding principles for the university to help the administration lead and move the program forward. He stated that “Vision, mission and aims are our guiding principles to help faculty stay the course for the lack of a better term. To keep us grounded and the work that we are to do as a feature in instructional leaders” (Alix, Interview transcript, p. 2). Dayan saw the standards (vision, mission and aims) as guiding principles for the students who are willing to join the program to decide whether to enroll or not. She stated, “The vision and mission and outcomes of the program is that what they aspire to achieve” (Dayan, interview transcript, p. 4). Faculty from both universities agreed that the vision, mission, and aims of their preparation program were important standards to guide the success of the program.

Standards: Vision\Mission and Aims, Students

Based on the data the interviews and the programs’ information on the universities’ websites, I discovered that students from both universities believed that the mission, vision, and aims of the program were very important for them before enrolling, though most of them did not focus on these elements because they trusted the university based on its reputation. Three students from ABC claimed that they did not read the mission, vision, and objectives because the most important thing for them was the admission requirements and the department did not mention the mission, vision, or aims in the announcement when the students announced that they

were enrolling in the program. For example, Yasmeen stated that “the department does not put them very clear in the announcement which make students not look at them” (Interview transcript, p. 3). Table 3 presents students’ views about the importance of mission, vision and aims of the program.

Table 3

Students Views on Mission, Vision, and Aims

Reasons for having mission/vision and aims for the program	Students (ABC) N= 6	Students (XYZ) N= 4
Making sure the mission, vision, and aims align with the student’s mission, vision, and aims	4	2
It provides the framework for everything that’s going to be covered.	2	2

Table 3 illustrates how students perceived the importance of the vision, mission, and aims of each program. Six students from both universities considered the vision, mission, and aims as standards that should align with their own vision, mission, and aims. For example, Lee from XYZ stated, “I want to be sure that it aligns with my mission and vision. And what I want to get out of it, why it was important to me.” (Interview transcript, p. 2).

The rest of the students elaborated that vision, mission, and aims are a framework for the things that the program will cover. For instance, Summer, from ABC, stated that “they are important to know which path I am going in. It is not reasonable for me to go to a place when I do not know anything about it, and until I have a clear picture of it” (Interview transcript, p.1).

Students at both universities viewed the stated vision, mission, and aims of their respective departments as a barometer which helped them to conceptualize the program that they planned to join.

Screening: Admission Requirements, Faculty

Table 4 shows the theme of screening, which includes interviews and exams. This theme is important because it gives a clear picture of the requirements for students and why the department utilizes these measures. In addition, it is important for faculty to know their candidate's opinions in order to modify those screenings to meet students' interests.

Table 4

Importance of Admission Requirements, Faculty

The important admission requirement	(ABC)	(XYZ)
	N=2	N=2
Exam	2	
Interview		2

Faculty and students from both universities agreed that universities should have multiple criteria or requirements for admission because “one does not speak enough” (Dayan, Interview transcript, p. 5). ABC's professors saw the exam as the most important criterion for admitting students to the program. James and Dayan shared similar opinions about the importance of the exam as a requirement, and they mentioned that, from the exam, one can discover the students' knowledge about the leadership field. James stated that

The test reveals the extent to which the student or applicant understands the concepts of management, supervision, planning, and others, especially that they must be practitioners; [they must be] either supervisor[s], or, if they are administrators and have undergone teaching courses in their fields and have long[term] experience—often up to ten or five years—this is how they have taken many concepts in administration. When a student comes to us who has these concepts and experiences, [it] is better than someone who does not have that. (James, Interview transcript, p. 3)

Dayan agreed and noted, “we give them an exam to assure that they have [a] solid sort of academic standing, in terms of writing, reading, knowledge, and so forth” (Interview transcript, p. 5).

However, XYZ’s professors emphasized that the interview was the most important factor in selecting a candidate for their program, even if it was not the only way to allow people into the program. The department has other requirements such as GPA and a portfolio. Linda said, “I think that interview is probably one of the most critical pieces of the Admissions Board” (Interview transcript, p. 2). She mentioned that the interview gave the admissions board a clear picture about the candidate and his\her aims, abilities, and interests so that “they can figure out whether or not you think they’re going to be successful or if there’s a way that you can help them grow” (Linda, Interview transcript, p. 2). Alix considered that, through the interview, they can tell if people want to learn or not. He saw the “willingness to learn” as key to having a successful leader. He reported that “for me I think the most important factor is their willingness to learn” (Alix, Interview transcript, p. 2). He provided an explanation of the terms *willingness to learn*:

Having that activator strength, having that ability to want to see change versus someone who may interview and just say, “well my dad was a principal, my grandmother was a

principal, and so I need to be our principal.” So, really trying to get at the heart of their why: why it is they want to be an instructional leader? And using that to help us understand that they are a good fit, or not, for the program. (Interview transcript, p. 2)

Both Linda and Alix considered that the admission requirements are good, and there is no need to make any modifications: “it’s fine so no need to improve” (Linda, Interview transcript, p. 4). Alix also mentioned:

There’s no real suggestion because interviewing you know some people interview really well. Some people may not have a great interview because they may be nervous. So, the interview alone can’t be the only way we let people into their program. So, as a part of our admission process here at department, they have to submit an online portfolio, and that gives us a glimpse of their work over the last three years, and an opportunity for us to save their writing and learn more about them through the documents that they're submitting for that portfolio. (Alix, Interview transcript, p. 3)

Faculty from both universities agreed that the screening process for each program is good and helped them pick a qualified candidate. Dayan, from ABC University, suggested adding two requirements, which would serve as a screening process in the preparation program: recommendation letters and having a license of Educational Leadership. She saw both of those requirements as good indicators of a quality of candidate.

Screening: Admission Requirements, Students

The students and faculty shared similar opinions about candidate selection for the programs. Six students saw the interview as a very important requirement in screening process. For example, Lee asserted that

the interview was probably the most important factor in the admission process because it kind of gives the people at the committee that are accepting or not accepting students, ability to see the students think on their feet. And see, like, what where their answers, how their brain processes at different situations.

(Interview transcript, p. 2)

Dana and Rose considered experience in the educational leadership as the most important factor for accepting people into the program. Dana gave an example to support her claim:

That's important to have that certificate then to have years under your belt, to have that practical experience gives you the practical and applicable tools to be a leader. (Interview transcript, p. 4)

Noor from ABC shared a similar opinion with XYZ faculty about the exam as an important requirement. She said, "The exam is important as a prerequisite because the exam is what gives a person differentiation in joining, I mean, without differentiation, how is there an opportunity to join?" (Interview transcript, p. 4). She is referring to a differentiation in the knowledge about leadership and administration. Only Zain, from ABC university, saw giving the students study leave as the most important factor. According to him, part-time students suffered from heavy work for studying besides their work at schools and they could not finish their study in the same way a full-time student could. He stated that "study leave is an important condition. If, for example, I was asked a question as recommendations for the future, I would say that the total discharge is very important" (Interview transcript, p. 2).

Students from XYZ confirmed the opinions of their faculty regarding their suggestions about improving the selecting process. Only Rose proposed a suggestion of having face-to-face

meetings with the faculty to introduce the faculty and all services that the department offers to the students. She stated that

I think maybe having a face-to-face meeting at the beginning with students saying these are the expectations, this is what to expect. These are some people you can reach out to when you're struggling to find answers to different things, again, that could be something that they already do, but we did it via a phone call, so that was a little bit difficult, in my opinion. (Interview transcript, p. 3)

Four students from ABC pointed out some suggestions for the admission requirements such as participation in research projects or conferences about leadership and administration; experience in doing research; the names of candidates supposed to come from the Ministry; and removing the requirement about GPA. Yara stated that “his/her experiences and participation, i.e. certificates, courses, conferences that give the committee a clear picture about the candidate and his/her willingness to learn and serve his/her school” (Interview transcript, p. 2). Sun wanted GPA to be removed from the admission requirements because

I will not look at the bachelor's rate because there is a difference between all students, meaning we finished our bachelor's degree in 2001. There is a difference between the circumstances that I went through and the circumstances of the students now. Of course, over the years, many things have changed. I mean, we spent years in the field. This is considered a testimony. (Interview transcript, p. 4)

In addition, Zain suggested that it is good if the names of the candidates came from Ministry of Education because they know the principals and assistant principals who work hard in their schools, and he considered this an encouragement from the Ministry to them. He added that the Ministry sends the names to the department because some of the students join the

program to get leave from their work. He said, “Some join the program only for taking leave” (Interview transcript, p. 2).

Interviews were rated as the most important component of the screening process by students from both universities; experience was ranked second; and some students from ABC University suggested adding study leave but removing the GPA requirement. They believed that those factors helped universities to select good candidates.

Table 5

Importance of Admission Requirements, Students

The Important Admission Requirement	(ABC)	(XYZ)
	N= 6	N=4
Exam	1	
Interview	3	3
Experience	1	1
Study Leave	1	

Curricula, Faculty

The theme of curricula is important because an effective curriculum provides professors, master’s students, administrators, and community stakeholders with a measurable plan and structure for delivering quality education. The curriculum identifies the learning outcomes, standards, and core competencies that students must demonstrate before advancing to the next level. A curriculum provides a great way to tell a student what to expect from a course. On the other side, the student’s opinions are reviews of the curricula that assist the designers and

professors in modifying the process of the program. According to the faculty members at XYZ, the curricula were selected by the State Department of Education, and the department developed the courses based on Educational Leadership standards. Alix declared that

We don't select the curriculum, the state dictates, but the standards, and then we go through a process where we develop the courses based on the standards and then that is sent to the State Department of Education for approval. (Interview transcript, p. 4)

On the other hand, the curricula at ABC were selected and designed by the department faculty based on ELLC standards. Dayan said, "We looked at ELLC, we've been involved in the accreditation since 2011" (Interview transcript, p. 6).

Academic faculty emphasized the balance between practical and theoretical when designing courses. James from ABC stated that the department gives the theoretical aspect, and this is the best from his point of view. He explained, "students will use the theory to write the literature and learn from them when they will start doing the dissertation" (Interview transcript, p. 4). In addition, the core topics of the courses come from different sources, like the literature and requirements from the local community. Dayan mentioned that "Core topics they are coming from the literature, and also the requirements from the local community" (Interview transcript, p. 8). She clarified that the department looked for examples of the problems that appeared in the community, like bullying, and tried to put this in the curricula as a topic.

Regarding the perceptions of the faculty about the curricula overall, the faculty from XYZ mentioned the courses are good and there is evidence that students are passing the practice test with high scores. Linda stated "that's really good. I don't see any problem with our courses" (Interview transcript, p. 4). She added, "our courses are doing what they need to do, which is prepare people, everybody's passing the practice with real high scores" (Interview transcript, p.

4). However, Dayan from ABC saw that the curricula missed one element: “we are missing some of the core content. One of them is, you know, partnership, or school community partnership” (Interview transcript, p. 7). She also mentioned that “in terms of the leadership we taught Educational Administration, and it was only for the track for a school” (Interview transcript, p. 7). Academic faculty from XYZ university thought the preparation program’s curricula were good, covering theory and practice, and that this was exactly what their students needed; academic faculty from ABC university thought their curricula were doing a great job of preparing leaders, but they wanted to focus more on internships.

Curricula, Students

Students from both universities saw the curricula for the programs as good, but there were some courses that they really benefitted from and others they did not benefit from. Table 6 includes courses that students liked and disliked.

Table 6

Student Course Preference

Courses	ABC Responses	XYZ Responses
	Number of students (6)	Number of students (4)
Courses students liked/gained benefits from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Education and development of society (3) – Educational Research Methodology (6) – Contemporary Educational Philosophy (3) – Readings in Educational Administration (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Law (2) – Supervision (1) – Finance (3) – Ethics (equity) (2)
Courses students disliked/did not benefit from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Contemporary Educational philosophy (1) – Readings in Educational Administration (5) – Sociology of School (1) 	System Thinking (1)

The courses offered at ABC are different than those which are offered at XYZ. From Table 6, it is clear that all master students from ABC agreed that Educational Research Methodology is an important course in the program because it is fundamental in preparing researchers. Noor illustrated that

The best course I studied during the first semester is Educational Research Methods. I feel this course is the most important course, and I suggest that this course is taught in each semester, not only in one semester because the course serves us a lot in the thesis. (Interview transcript, p. 8)

Yasmeen added that “The scientific research methods course was the basis for what we must stop at especially when we are doing research” (Interview transcript, p. 7).

Contemporary Educational Philosophy is the second important core course in the program, based on students’ opinions. For instance, Yasmeen reported that it was

A very important course. As an educator, and leader how can one speak if he/she does not have thought and philosophy? Frankly, at first, when they say what your thoughts are, what is your philosophy I don’t know, but now I know what they are talking about, I started to sit with people and say this person has a thought, this person does not have thought. I began to criticize others in this field from what learnt from this course.

(Interview transcript, p. 6)

However, Yara did not take any benefits from the course. She said, “I did not feel this course is good because I have not taken any benefits from it” (Interview transcript, p. 5).

Education and Development of Society is an elective course. Students consider it as an important course, and they enjoy it and learn much from it. They were very thankful for the instructor and the content of this course because the topics are very useful, and the instructor’s

manner was very engaging. For example, Zain stated that “Education and Development of Society is an elective course, but it is more useful and important than the other courses. The instructor's manner was very interesting, and the topics take care of the issue related to society and how as leaders contributed to developing it” (Interview transcript, p. 3).

Most students from ABC complained about the course Readings in Educational Administration because of the language and the manner of the instructor. For instance, Noor, Yasmeen, and Yara were surprised by how the instructor taught the course. Noor stated “The instructor's manner in this course was never motivating. The focusing on the class only for Students who speak English very well. I personally am an Arabic language teacher” (Interview transcript, p. 9). Yasmeen added that “There was no content of the course, there were no papers or presentations, the lecturer would enter the lecture and talk to us for more than two hours about ordinary life things, and the remaining time of the lecture we are assigned assignments that were not clear” (Interview transcript, p. 9). Zain and Sun recommended to remove this course from the curriculum because it is not that necessary for them since they are studying and teaching in Arabic, and the basic things in English are easy for them because they used translators. Zain said,

The course of readings that are taught in English, I prefer that be deleted from the program because it is a course that is absolutely not necessary. I mean, first of all, I studied in Arabic, it is true that I will use foreign references, but I feel the people entering the program know how they refer to foreign references. They will use translation and, in the assignments, or research, they will translate all English references to Arabic.

(Interview transcript, p. 3)

Only Summer mentioned the Reading course was good and easy because she knows English very well. She said, “I benefited from the course, Reading, I have read a lot of research in English and learn the way to do research and present research papers” (Interview transcript, p. 4).

According to the students at XYZ, the courses that they like and benefit from were Finance, Law and Ethics. They all agreed that their professors were incredible and put them in the real situation to practice. The content of the courses were very important, as well. For example, Lee stated that “we took a law class and I think that is on a scale of 1 to 10 of 10. We took a finance class, and I would say that’s also a 10” (Interview transcript, p. 5). She added

I have probably learned the most to get the most out of why you give him this rate. Why, because our professors were incredible like the experiences that they put us in really prepared us for what we’re aspiring to be. They were just straight down to the point.

(Interview transcript, p. 5)

Dana supported Lee; “I would write the financial, the finance course very important. The law course, the law and equity” (Interview transcript, p. 7). She gave the reason for her opinion as,

the content was very important, because all three of those are things that you need to know. And you cannot get into hot water if you do not know the law. If you do not have equity in your school, if you mess up financially, I think those are three of the major important factors that you have to deal with as an administrator. (Interview transcript, 7).

Moreover, Roes praised the course Finance and Ethics because it met her expectations and helped her to pass the exit exam. She said,

The finance course I took was very helpful. I learned a lot about school funding and where funding comes from at different levels from the national to the State Department to the local level. That was a very important chapter, and very useful to me, I learned a lot

from that when I took the ethics, I felt a lot of what he taught us was in this the national level exam we had to pass. (Interview transcript, p. 4)

Lee also enjoyed the Supervision class, and she gave it a 10 out of 10 because as she mentioned she liked the way that professor taught, and she learned so much about supervision.

Students from XYZ university were satisfied with the curricula that program offers, and they benefit from them in terms of preparation to be practitioners in the educational leadership field. ABC students were more focused on courses that related to research and helped them in doing their thesis because the program focused on preparing them to be researchers in the educational leadership field.

Evaluation: Areas of Strength and Areas for Growth

The theme of evaluation includes areas of strengths, areas of growth, and challenges that faced the program from faculty and students' perspectives. Evaluation is an important theme for various reasons. First, it is important for obtaining insight. Program evaluation helps students gain insights into the program. This is a good opportunity to see what students think and feel about the entire program. The feedback collected can also be used to assess student needs and expectations regarding the program (structure, course, schedule, etc.). Secondly, evaluation is an important theme for improving the program. One of the main benefits of program evaluation is providing useful data to drive improvement. The information collected can indicate whether the program has achieved its purpose, whether it has been properly implemented, and whether the program has achieved its purpose. The data can also be used to determine if delivery and teaching methods were effective. The strengths and potential of program improvement are at the forefront of constructive program changes that improve education and the quality of education.

Thirdly, the theme of evaluation is related to measuring learning. Performing a program evaluation is important for understanding the impact on students' learning. Here, universities can determine if the program has achieved the student's learning goals. Did students improve their knowledge and skills by the end of the program? Did students learn what the program is designed to teach them? By collecting this data, schools can track the effectiveness of their program over time and see if student learning has changed significantly. Finally, evaluation leads to determining usefulness. Evaluation provides useful data on whether the program meets its goals and student needs. Universities and colleges can use this data to determine efficiency by balancing program costs and resources with student needs and outcomes (supply and demand).

The following section illustrates the evaluation theme, starting with areas of strength, followed by areas of growth, and concluding with the challenges that faced the programs at ABC and XYZ universities.

Areas of Strength, Faculty

Table 7 depicts the areas of strength for the master programs offered at ABC and XYZ, based on professors' perspectives. ABC faculty mentioned five areas of strength. These include having qualified academic faculty who have experience in educational administration and leadership, are published in international journals, and are using different methods in teaching.

For instance, Dayan stated

We have people who are experts in education administration, people who publish in international journals people who are very known in the field for their own area. We have also a diversity of, you know, the teaching of research methods that we use. (Interview transcript, p. 10)

Table 7

Areas of Strength from Faculty Perspectives

ABC	XYZ
- Faculty	-Students
- Good reputation	-Faculty
-Thesis of students	
- The design of the program	
-Arbitration of the program by Arab and international experts	

The second area of strength is the good reputation of the program; this reputation came from the faculty who teach in the program and the long history of the program. According to ABC faculty, the program was the oldest program in the country, “more than 25 years” (Dayan, Interview transcript, p. 10). The third area is student theses because most of them address current issues within education. The fourth area of strength is the design of the program is; it was designed based on international standards of educational leadership, following the 2020–2040 vision of the country and the labor market. James noted “The master program designed to follow the 2020–2040 vision, we looked at international standards when we designed it and the needs of labor market” (Interview transcript, p. 11). Finally, when the department designed the program, and before getting approval from the university council, they sent information about it to the local and international examiner to review and evaluate it. In addition, they sent this information to many ministries such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Labor, and Ministry of Defense. All of them praised the program.

On the other hand, XYZ faculty mentioned two areas of strength, which were the faculty and students. Alix saw that the strength of the program lies in the presence of professors who

have deep knowledge of the specialization and have published many research papers and authored books. He mentioned that “Our strength is just the wealth of knowledge that our team has, we all do the research. So, where our team is well grounded in the theoretical world and producing that research that our students are benefiting from” (Interview transcript, p. 6). Linda saw the success of students who had high positions and passed the exit exam as evidence of the strengths of the program. She stated, “we honestly are doing something right, because our students are our graduating, they’re passing the facts and they’re getting jobs. That’s how you judge, in my opinion, the strength of a program.” The results above indicate that the faculty from both universities are satisfied with their programs. The outcome of the programs, and the way that departments design the programs gave each program strengths and success in preparing educational leaders.

Areas of Strength, Students

Table 8 shows the areas of strength for the program according to students. Students from both universities agreed that faculty gave the program strength because they are full of experiences, and they were very cooperative with students. For example, Noor stated “our academic faculty are the strength of the program, they are experts and are always with students when they need them” (Interview transcript, p. 13). Curricula, admission requirements, and caring for students by giving them extensions to submit their work if they were not able to meet the deadline are the other areas of strengths according to ABC students. For example, Yasmeen stated

caring of the student because some of them have other responsibilities, meaning the master’s student is not only a student but a student and an employee at the same time, this

consideration and caring made the student give the maximum of what he has in the program. (Interview transcript, p. 16)

Table 8

Areas of Strength from Students' Perspectives

ABC	XYZ
– Faculty	– Cohort model
– Curricula	– Internship
Admission requirements –	– Faculty
– Caring of the student (deadline of submitted their work)	

On the other hand, students from XYZ were very happy and comfortable with the cohort model because they were very helpful. For instance, Lee gave a brief explanation for why a cohort model is a point of strength for the program, noting:

I think because it can help you, it gives you the number one opportunity to lead because there's always gonna be questions that you can turn to; it gives you like a support system where if you're not understanding them or you're having a bad day or you have a lot going on, because we're all working adults with kids, that you have somebody to fall back on that you have somebody to lean back on, and you establish these relationships that don't only help now, but also in the future as you begin getting into administration, it creates a network. (Interview transcript, p. 10)

The results above indicate that the students from both universities are satisfied with the programs and that each program did a great job of preparing educational leaders. They saw the

professors who teach and design the program, the structure, and the curriculum of the programs as the things that make the program strong and prepared educational leaders. On the other side, based on the faculty and student evaluations, the programs from both universities have some areas that needs to improve, which will discuss in the next section.

Areas of Growth, Faculty

There are opportunities for improvement in the programs. ABC faculty mentioned the curricula and the quality of the candidates. Regarding the curricula, Dayan mentioned this practicum component because there is a disconnect between theory and application. She said, “We felt that there was a good disconnection between, you know the application and the theory. So, we’ve included applications and theories that should go together” (Interview transcript, p. 11). Another area was the quality of candidates because many of the current candidates are facing too many difficulties during their study, especially in the research courses and thesis. James stated, “most of students were behind the deadline of graduation because they did not even have skill to choose a correct topic for their dissertation” (Interview transcript, p. 5). The reason behind that, according to the department, was the hosting research course because students study the research methods course in the psychology department, and the department did not teach them methods of research related to educational administration and leadership field. Dayan noted “So, some of the research methods that we use in the program, Educational Administration, they’re not aware of it” (Interview transcript, p. 13).

Table 9

Areas of Growth, Faculty Perspectives

ABC	XYZ
– Curricula	– Duration time of the program
– Quality of candidates	– Toxic culture of the department

However, XYZ faculty mentioned two areas for improvement which are the duration of the program and the toxicity of the department. From Alix’s perspective the duration of the program was not long enough to teach the students what they will need to practice in the field of educational administration and leadership. The other concern came from Linda’s interview, where she identified the “toxic” culture of the department as the area that needs improvement.

Toxic, in this case, is understood to mean that the work environment in the department and college where she worked is not healthy due to very poor relationships between staff and administration. In addition, Linda pointed to the incidence of “senior faculty members holding tenure over people’s head. Threatening them with [an inability to obtain] tenure” (Interview transcript, p. 8) as well as senior faculty asking for a lot of work while not listening to other faculty suggestions or concerns.

Areas of Growth, Students

Table 10 presents the perspectives of students in both universities about areas of growth for the current master’s programs. ABC students illustrated a variety of areas for growth while XYZ students mentioned one area only. First, I will show the areas that need improvement at ABC University. The first area was curricula. The students complained about some courses like Readings in Educational Administration, as mentioned previously under “Curricula” section. In

addition, some students suggested combining some courses because they shared some topics. For example, Noor stated:

I prefer to combine some courses like Higher Education Administration and Policies in Higher Education courses because when we learn about higher education institutions, we already learn about their policies so there is a need to separate the courses. (Interview transcript, p. 17)

Table 10

Areas of Growth, Student Perspectives

ABC	XYZ
1–Curriculum	1- Organization (a lack of communication)
2–Helping students to publish research 3– Enrolling into courses	
4–How to write a research proposal following the department ways and roles	
5–Assessment tools	
6–Not giving notes to students from his\her committee in sufficient time before the discussion. The difference of views between the supervisors in the committee makes the student confused	

The second area is helping students to publish papers and teaching them about the scientific journals. The master's students considered themselves to be researchers, and they are looking for help from their professors to publish their work. For instance, Sun stated that

The area that I need to improve is that the academic relationship between the department's teachers and the students. I want them to encourage students to publish research. I did not feel this aspect clearly. I mean, the students have a desire to publish the

research, but they did not find encouragement and support from their professors.

(Interview transcript, p. 10)

The third area of growth is registration for courses. The students wanted the process of enrolling in some courses to be more fair. Some students complained that some professors let some students change their sections and enroll, while they told other students that the section was full. The students wondered why it was allowed for those students and not allowed for others since they were all master's students and in the same cohort. For example, Yara reported,

In the courses, I mean, for example, in the course of Readings in Educational Administration, two professors used to give this material. At first, I searched and decided which professor to register with. When I came to the registration, I found that there was no room for another student, but after two hours I discovered that there were students who came after me. And they are allowed to register, this explicitly reduces the reputation of the program. (Interview transcript, p. 3)

The fourth area is a written research proposal following the department's ways and roles. The students wanted their thesis committee to be clear with them before starting to write their research proposal because what they learned in the educational administration department is different than what the psychology department taught them, specifically in the research course.

Yasmeen said,

One of the ways that needs improvement is how to write the research proposal the same way the department wants it because the student studies not only in the department but also in the psychology department. The Department of Psychology has its own way of writing the research proposal, so there is a discrepancy that makes the students confused.

(Interview transcript, p. 17)

The fifth area for growth is assessment tools that professors used to evaluate students in the courses. Some students complained about having to write a research paper for most of the courses. The professors put the research paper as an assessment tool, and, according to the participants, having diverse assessments is better because they want to learn not only about writing research papers but about other things like reports. Zain reported that

in most courses the professors asked us to do research papers and imagine how many courses you take at the semester. The same assessment makes us feel that professors do not have other tools. We want different assignments topics and tools. (Interview transcript, p. 5)

Finally, all the students suffered from the delay of response from their committee before they discussed their thesis proposal. The supervision committee did not give notes to students in sufficient time before the discussion. So, the different views between the supervisors on the committee during the discussion made the students confused. Summer explained this in detail. She said,

The professor's response time or response to student inquiries and questions on email is long, which means that when I send a discussion to the moderator, I wait a long time for them to respond to me. I have to change based on her comments and that takes time. I mean the supervisor should always follow the students while they are writing the thesis. Therefore, as a student, I would not be surprised at the time of introduction and discussion with the number of comments on the discussion. Well, where were you before when I sent you, I ask you to give me your comments for discussion before sending, why you didn't reply to me at that time, why the delay in replying frankly, is one of the things that bothered me during my master's thesis discussion period. Why the first supervisor

asks for modifications different than what the second supervisor wants. (Interview transcript, p. 7)

Regarding the areas that need to improve at XYZ, all of the participants mentioned organization. The students meant the lack of communication between them and their professors. For example, Dana stated “I don’t know if there’s a lack of communication between the professor and the advisors. They’re not all on the same page” (Interview transcript, p. 14). Lee added “You ask the professor a question and you don’t always get a response. And then, due dates change or something’s due and this time it’s not unlocked to do, I think a lot of it is probably because of the turnover of staff” (Interview transcript, p. 10).

The above section indicates that the areas that need to improve in the current preparation program from students related to the assessment tools and thesis writing, since the department focuses on scientific research and most of the assignments were about doing research papers at ABC university. The department should address these areas. However, XYZ students are satisfied, and only saw a misconnection between students and professors as the area that needs to be improved. The next section will concentrate on the program's difficulties that fit under the evaluation theme.

Evaluation: Challenges, Faculty

Table 11 shows the challenges that face educational administration and leadership master’s programs from academic faculty viewpoints. There were two challenges reported at the ABC University. James mentioned COVID-19. The pandemic affected the program because the students who enrolled in the 2020 year could not take the ILETS test since centers that offer this kind of test were closed. ILETS was required for students to gain acceptance to the program.

James stated that “the challenge that we faced this year was COVID-19 because students did not find centers that offer the ILETS test to complete their admission requirements” (Interview transcript, p.6). Dayan mentioned another problem: reaching out to good candidates. According to Dayan, the department waits for the candidate to come, not recruit them. She said, “We don’t recruit people. We just wait for people to come to us” (Interview transcript, p.13). She wanted candidates to have a license in educational leadership and administration before entering the program. In addition, she was looking for international candidates. She mentioned that the reason behind a lack of diversity in the candidates was because the department “doesn’t have the capacity to do the marketing” (Interview transcript, p. 13).

Table 11

Challenges, Faculty Perspectives

ABC	XYZ
1–COVID 19	1–Teacher recruitment
2–Reaching out to good candidates	

On the other hand, the faculty at XYZ reported one challenge faced by their program, which is teacher recruitment. Here Alix provided a long explanation describing several factors that he saw as relevant, stating:

a teacher recruitment problem across, you know, the country is, how do you really recruit and encourage teachers to go into an instructional leadership role. You know one of the things that we look at the research, the life expectancy of a principal now in a job is less than seven years. And if you become a superintendent, most superintendents, average.

Why are there when I say life expectancy, I’m not talking about their life, my age, birth to

death. I'm talking about their time in that position. So, and for your superintendents, the average time superintendent are in office, less than five years. So, there's a lot of turnovers, across the state and across the country. And when you have a lot of turnovers, then there are other issues that could be going on at that school so trying to recruit people to go into instructional leadership is probably our number one problem right now is how do you find teachers willing to go into this position, into this program. (Interview transcript, p. 8).

In essence, he noted the limited amount of time that instructional leaders spent in their positions thus leading to a lot of turnovers in turn making teachers afraid to fill instructional leadership roles. So, the program's challenge becomes about encouraging people to consider principal positions.

Evaluation: Challenges, Students

Two challenges that faced ABC were online classes because of COVID-19 and the time of class. According to the students, their cohort was the first cohort that the department applied the online classes to. Some faculty did not have much experience with online classes because the university only applied face-to-face classes. Yasmeen stated that,

one of the challenges that we faced with a pandemic, we are the first cohort to which distance education is applied because not all members were well-versed in e-learning, I mean in some of them the technology was easy for them and in some of them it was somewhat difficult, they lacked e-learning skills, I mean, for example, in a subject that we studied during e-learning, when we applied it later, the electronic method that we applied in was not correct because the explanation was content only. (Interview transcript, p. 19)

The other challenge was the time of class. Some students, like Sun, preferred the class to be in the morning instead of evening because she wanted the evening time to be with her family. She stated,

The time of the lectures starts from four in the afternoon and ends at six or seven pm. I mean, sometimes they are psychologically tiring, very tiring, I mean, the evening period often spends it all at the university. I come home at nine pm and I found my children sleep, I mean, I do not get time to sit with my children and this is psychologically exhausting. (Interview transcript, p. 8)

Students from XYZ reported that the COVID 19 pandemic was the challenge that they faced because before the pandemic, students and professors could meet in person instead of being in front of the screens for long periods of time. Students prefer to discuss topics in person, and prefer being in the classroom with their classmates and professors. They also enjoy having discussion outside of classes and meet with classmates at home, but COVID-19 did not allow them to do that. For example, Lee mentioned that

we had never been on Zoom or, you know, we always met in person. So, I think that was a big different thing. Yeah, that's why it's hard to not get too frustrated because this last year has been a big learning year, a big learning curve for all of us in education.

(Interview transcript, p.11)

Table 12

Challenges, Student Perspectives

ABC	XYZ
1–COVID 19: Online classes	1– COVID 19
2–Time of class	

The above section illustrated the evaluation theme within the two programs; the following section will present the suggestions from faculty and students perspectives for improvement.

Opportunities for Improvement, Faculty

Table 13 presents the perspectives of ABC and XYZ about their suggestions to improve the program. Dayan from ABC mentioned two suggestions. First, collaboration with other programs. She stated that “I think one of the things that we also would like to improve maybe is also collaboration with other programs. like, collaboration, cooperation with other similar programs or international programs that are similar to us, so maybe that will be one area, to learn how to collaborate and research collaborative teaching” (Interview transcript, p. 12). The second was having international candidates from Arab countries in the program. That would add to the reputation of the program. Dayan stated that “We need international candidates’ regional candidates to come and join our program” (Interview transcript, p. 13).

Table 13

Suggestions for Improvements from Faculty Perspectives

ABC	XYZ
1–Collaboration with other programs 2– Having international candidates	1–Get the upper administration to understand what the challenges of the program are and being supportive of the programs

On the other side, Linda mentioned one suggestion. She wanted the administration of XYZ to care about the challenges that the program faced and be more supportive. She stated, “to get the upper administration to understand what the challenges of the program are and being supportive of the programs. It’s their view of what’s going on when they view things, not on the micro-level, they’re not looking at programs specific program data, they’re looking at macro data. They’re looking at what’s going on across the college. And so, they’re, they’re losing critical information. They can help those programs because they’re not, they’re not looking at it that way” (Interview transcript, p. 10).

Regarding the students’ suggestions to improve the program, ABC students mentioned three suggestions, and XYZ students mentioned one suggestion, as is shown in Table 14. Most students from ABC wanted to see courses in practices of leadership. They came to the program to improve their leadership skills, which the current program missed. For instance, Sun stated “Frankly, there is not much development in leadership skills, because of no practice. We studied the theories only. What we were looking for is applying those theories in the field of education” (Interview transcript, p. 12). Summer suggested having one year for studying the courses and one year for only doing the thesis. In addition, she wanted the department to accept only full-time

students who did not have work. She said, “I hope that one of the requirements for admission is accepting students who have been fully discharged from their work during their study duration” (Interview transcript, p. 8). She added that “from my opinion put one year from the program to complete course works and one year for doing thesis only because thesis needs a focus” (Interview transcript, p. 10).

Table 14

Opportunities for Improvement, Students

ABC	XYZ
1–leadership skills	Organization
2–One-year courses and one year for writing the dissertation 3–	
Admission requirements (full time students only)	

The suggestion that master’s students at XYZ had was organization, as mentioned under the area of growth. They mentioned that everything in the program was perfect except the disconnection between the faculty and students. For example, Rose stated “It’s been a great program, I’ve enjoyed it. I hope the department solves the problem of misconnecting only” (Interview transcript, p. 9).

The discussion of research question one presents the views of the faculty and students about the educational leadership preparation programs that are offered in ABC university in Arab countries and XYZ university in the USA in terms of the standards, screening, curricula, evaluation, and opportunities for improvements within each program. In summary, the faculty and students at both universities saw the programs as good preparation programs but need to go

back and look at the curricula and evaluation themes and suggestions for improvement to make them even more effective programs. The students from ABC university presented more areas that the program needs to review, than the students from XYZ, who were very satisfied with their program. Research question two will illustrate the faculty and students' opinions at both universities regarding the mapping of each program, which includes participants, structure, delivery modes, credentialing, and the pedagogy of the educational leadership preparation program.

Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of the university leadership program's professors and graduate students at XYZ and ABC in terms of the (a) client group, (b) structure, (c) delivery modes, (d) credentialing, and (e) pedagogy of the educational leadership preparation program at their universities?

The results from the second question are based on interviews with members of the faculty and master's students from both universities and the information available about the two programs from each university's website. Webber and Scott (2010) name *mapping* as a way to assess preparation programs. Mapping includes the client group, structure, delivery modes, credentialing, and pedagogy. The following section illustrates findings from my interviews.

Client Group (program participants), Faculty

Based on the information that I found about both programs from their websites and from interviews, the client group at ABC was anyone who wanted to be an administrator leader in the education field. Most of the objectives of the program are about "meeting the needs of the educational field by preparing qualified professionals in different areas of educational administration" (Restricting the M.Ed. program in Educational Administration, p. 4). Based on

the faculty responses, program participants include principals, teachers, and supervisors from the Ministry of Education. James said, “Basically, the program provided primarily the outputs and employees of the Ministry of Education, including principals, supervisors, and teachers” (Interview transcript, p.7). The faculty want participants to come from different sectors, not only from the Ministry of Education. For that reason, they sent the program proposal to different Ministries to get their view and if they might serve that Ministry’s employees. They all said the program was a very good one and they support it (see Appendix B for letters of support). The department has four tracks which are Educational Supervision, School Administration, Higher Education Administration, and Educational Planning.

The participants at XYZ were the people who wanted to serve as leaders or administrators in K-12 settings, or in higher education organizations (College of Education, XYZ, 2021).

Client Group, Students

Students from both universities saw the programs as designed to prepare leaders, especially in education sectors. All of students were principals, assistant principals, or teachers. Lee from XYZ was looking for diversity in participants, that is, diversity in term of gender, nationality, background, experiences, and culture. She stated,

I think it should be more diverse thinking that I learn more from people who have different backgrounds, who are walking a different path in life, who can really bring a different perspective and a different viewpoint on, you know, their experiences because the education is so diverse. I feel like the more opportunity you have to be exposed to people of diverse backgrounds, the more effective leader you become. (Interview transcript, p. 3)

Structure, Faculty

As shown on the websites for both programs, the length of each program is two years. XYZ has a certificate program which is one year. At ABC, a thesis is estimated to take one year, and completing the course year is estimated to take one year. Regarding the professors' perspectives about the structure of the program, the faculty from both universities mentioned that two years were enough. For example, James stated "We believe that the duration of study in the program is two years, sufficient to enable the student to become familiar with the concepts of leadership and educational administration" (Interview transcript, p. 6).

Structure, Students

Students from both universities agreed with the faculty and said the duration was enough. They were satisfied with what they learn. Yasmeen from ABC said, the study was in two years, and for me, the amount that we studied was sufficient and adequate, meaning we cannot increase more courses because in the end it is two years of study and we cannot reduce it because it will affect two dimensions in the practical aspect, especially in the application of the thesis. (Interview transcript, p. 6)

Beth from XYZ stated that "the duration was fine and good especially for parents like me and we do learn so much from the program" (Interview transcript, p. 7). Dana supported Beth and she stated that "It's not that bad, that this is a good, a good timeline. I would say it is a good timeline. It's conducive" (Interview transcript, p. 13).

Delivery Modes, Faculty

The delivery modes of the program at ABC is face-to-face, and at XYZ, it is hybrid. The professors from both universities were satisfied about the delivery mode. ABC faculty mentioned that this year, because of the pandemic, they switched to online, and they faced some challenges

such as the internet being very slow and that some students cannot attend because they did not have a strong internet signal where they lived. Additionally, because ABC faculty are accustomed to teaching face-to-face classes, and because the university did not offer online classes in all areas prior to COVID-19, they missed face-to-face interactions during online classes. Dayan stated, “you still miss that face-to-face interaction and so forth” (Interview transcript, p. 14). Building on the differences between face-to-face and online delivery, Dayan noted a variety of advantages to face-to-face teaching. First, it allows professors and students to concentrate more pointedly on their learning because there are fewer distractions than if you were at home, especially if there are family or children around. A second observation is that in face-to-face teaching students are removed from their daily routines to sit in class with their classmates and their professors and can more easily create friendly relationships. Finally, the collaborative learning tends to be more active in face-to-face classes rather than in online classes.

Delivery Modes, Students

Students at both universities preferred the classes to be face-to face. For instance, Rose from XYZ complained about the online classes, and she said “I’m more of a hands-on type of learner needing to be in the classroom so everything on Zoom has been difficult. So, I think that’s been frustrating; not really anything that the university could help, but that has been disappointing” (Interview transcript, p. 2). She added “I really think the virtual aspect is the only thing that I would say was the negative part of it” (Interview transcript, 6). Dana felt the online class made people lazy. She said, “It is right that people should not need to travel more than four hours to the university, but it made people very lazy” (Interview transcript, p. 14).

Sun from ABC faced difficulties especially in the online statics course because Statics and Math need to work with a board. She stated, “I prefer face-to face class especially in statics

class because I felt lost. I needed to ask the professor each step and discuss several things with him which I cannot do it during online class because we need paper and pen” (Interview transcript, p.11).

Credentialing

Both universities offer master’s degrees. When the students graduate, they will have a master’s degree in educational leadership.

Pedagogy

The programs at both universities are scholarly and practice oriented. The departments at both universities focused on making the programs integrated from the theoretical and practical aspects; they want students to graduate with knowledge of the practical and theoretical aspects of educational leadership. Regular opportunities to integrate practice and theory are offered by the educational leadership department at XYZ (XYZ, College of Education, 2021).

The same is true at ABC, as shown in the department website: “the department has designed a study plan that combines the theoretical components of educational administration and the practical side related to application of these theories in the Gulf countries educational context” (p. 3).

Pedagogy, faculty. Faculty from both universities agreed that an effective program should integrate theory and practice because students need to apply what they learn from theories to real situations in the education field. So, they designed the program to be scientific and practical. Linda from XYZ saw the program as more practical because, as she mentioned, it was an advanced degree. She said, “it's a very practical program” (Interview transcript, p. 2). Alix saw that the program was doing a good job in integrating theory and practice; he described the effectiveness of the program by saying “one thing would just be the balance between the theory

and the practice, and that students have opportunities to really engage with and show a level of understanding for the coursework” (Interview transcript, p.6).

ABC faculty mentioned that they redesigned the program several times because they noticed that they did not give the students the practice they were looking for. In the current program, department tried to balance between theory and practice. They said both sides were very important for students. James stated,

The contents of the courses should keep pace with modernity and combine theoretical content with the practical side so that the student goes out on field visits in schools, colleges, and others. (Interview transcript, p. 4)

He thought the students should learn theory because that will help them when they practice in the field. Dayan had a different opinion and saw that practice is more important than theory. She stated,

The practical component is very important in the current program the practical component is its own course. So, students go apply for one whole semester. In the new program, we felt that there was a good disconnection between the application and the theory. So, we’ve included application and theory should go together. (Interview transcript, p. 11)

Pedagogy, students. Students from both universities confirmed what the faculty mentioned regarding integrated theory and practice in the programs. For instance, Lee from XYZ mentioned that the program gave the students opportunities to go to the field and be in real situations to apply what they learn from the class. She stated,

the strengths of our program are getting the opportunity to go out into the schools, they do a good job of making sure that we're going to a variety of schools and getting the experience through an internship. (Interview transcript, p. 9)

In addition, she described the program as an effective one because it works on both sides, theory and practice. She said, "I mean I think it would include both theory and both practical and how it can be tied together and that's what we discovered in our program" (Interview transcript, p. 8).

ABC students agreed with XYZ students, and that saw their programs did a good job to balance between theory and practice. For example, Zain declared that going out to the field and having courses which were practicum was the strongest point of the program. He stated,

Practical Applications course, of course, this is one of the strengths, because it is linked to a lot in the field, mainly to come up with problems that you address and take it into your thesis. This is considered a strength, because the problem that you extract from the field and you try to reach solutions. (Interview transcript, p.5)

However, Sun had a different view. She saw that the program still needs to have more practicum courses. She said,

We are tired of theoretical and cognitive things. We memorize and study for the exams. This is one of the most difficult things. I mean, we have had a long period in the field. We want a practical side to gain from and benefit us later in the field. It is true that the theoretical side has acquired knowledge from it, but we do not need knowledge. We need practical leadership things that will benefit us. (Interview transcript, p. 12)

Research Question 3

What are the similarities and differences that exist between XYZ and ABC?

The answers to this question came from the results that were discussed previously under research questions one and two.

The Similarities, Faculty

From the results of research questions one and two, I discovered the similarities between ABC and XYZ. These similarities are as follows:

- Both programs have standards (missions, visions, aims), and screening (admission requirements) that are very clear for the students.
- The faculty from both universities saw the standards (mission, vision, and aims) as guides for themselves and students.
- A point of strength for the programs at both universities is the academic faculty because they are well educated and have significant experience in the educational administration and leadership field.
- The duration for both programs is two years.
- Both programs tried to create a balance between theory and practice.
- Both universities offered master's degrees.

The Similarities, Students

Based on the findings from the first and second research questions, the similarities for both program from students' perspectives at both universities are as follows:

- The vision, mission, and aims of the programs were considered to be a framework for what will be covered by the programs.
- Regarding admission requirements, students saw the interview as the most important

factor for selecting candidates to the program.

- Academic faculty at the departments were a point of strength for both programs because they were very supportive.
- Online classes were a challenge that students faced this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Differences, Faculty

The differences between the two programs from the faculty perspective were:

- ABC faculty saw the exam as the most important factor for selecting candidates for the program while the faculty from XYZ saw it as the interview.
- The State Department of Education designed their curricula at XYZ, while the faculty at ABC based their curricula on ELLC standards.
- At both universities, the theoretical and practical aspects were taken into account when designing curricula; however, ABC faculty were more focused on the theoretical aspect. Moreover, ABC did not add partnership in their program
- ABC offered an on campus (face-to-face) program while XYZ offered a hybrid program.
- The courses offered by each program were different. ABC did not have courses related to law or ethics, while XYZ did.

The Differences, Students

The differences that were assessed from the perspectives of the students from both universities are as follows:

- Most students at ABC did not read the mission, vision, and aims of the program before enrolling because they cared more about the admission requirements. In addition, they mentioned that the department did not put the vision, mission, and aims

in the link of the program when they give it to the Ministry to send to them each year.

On the other side, XYZ students did not focus on the mission, vision, and aims because the reputation of the university was enough.

- The students at ABC wanted the university to put ‘discharge from work for studying purposes’ as an admission requirement. The students at XYZ did not mention anything related to being discharged from work while studying.
- The students from ABC mentioned six areas in which the program needed to improve, and most of them were related to the way that the department dealt with students during the writing of their dissertation. On the other hand, XYZ students only mentioned organization as an area that needed to improve.
- ABC students reiterated their demands that the department involve them in research and recreational activities, while most of the comments from XYZ students were about the issue of organization.

Research Question 4

What can ABC and XYZ professors and students learn from each other in ways that improve the programs?

Based on my analysis ABC can benefit from XYZ in terms of partnership, delivery modes of the program, curriculum, and offered certificated program.

Dayan from ABC suggested that the program should have partnerships with schools that help students learn in a real situation in order to become effective educational leaders. The partnership would be able to enhance learning opportunities by providing students with resources, experiences, and an environment that will work on after they graduate. In addition, the partnership would be a good way for ABC university to visit XYZ university and learn from its experience in the activities that gave to students to do and even saw the designing of the schools.

A second way in which the universities could learn from each other is in relation to modes of course delivery, where ABC could, for example, offer hybrid and online programs rather than only offering an on campus (face-to-face) program. Offering a hybrid program would encourage increased enrollments, especially from international students. This in turn could have a positive impact on the reputation of the program and the university by expanding to a worldwide audience. An added bonus from the student perspective would be a potential savings on tuition and fees, textbooks, school supplies and even their transportation costs.

Third, the courses offered by ABC focused exclusively on educational leadership itself, whereas XYZ offered courses relating to law. This was in recognition that school leaders need to understand their legal obligations and protections.

Noting the differences in curriculum design and the challenges for international students, there may be merit in XYZ university giving consideration to the inclusion of specific short courses in academic writing. Making suggestions about XYZ students who are not international, does not address the fact that they may already have these skills, developed in earlier studies and at college. Many school leaders do not have time for this but perhaps finding ways to publish and socialize relevant research would enable continuous improvement and support further innovation for place-based solutions (I mean that solutions are tailored or designed to fit into the different needs of schools, students and challenges).

In addition, offering course related to reading in educational administration\leadership in Arabic language and offer it as an elective course. Offering courses which take a comparative perspective with resources translated into the first language to incentivize engagement, also supports learning from international peers. The option to read international research in multiple languages may enhance accessibility depending on the number of bi- or multi-lingual students.

Increasingly multicultural school communities and populations may benefit from a greater understanding of minority cultural contexts to enhance inclusion and leverage the advantages of diversity. I suggest that faculty at ABC think about this when they design the program curricula.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrated the results of a comparative case study between ABC and XYZ regarding the preparation of educational leaders and master's programs. The cases were based on perceptions of the faculty and students' perspectives in the programs. The results showed that faculty and students from both universities shared similar perspectives about the program's vision, mission, and aims and their importance. The exam was the important requirement for admission for ABC faculty, while the interview comes at the top of the admission requirements factors for XYZ faculty perspectives. Moreover, the students and faculty from both universities agreed that the academic faculty were the strongest area in the program. The students from both universities saw the online class format as the greatest challenge that faced them because they preferred face-to-face classes. The only complaint from XYZ students about the program was the organization. Faculty from ABC were planning to have international students in their program. The next chapter will present a discussion of the findings and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the study and discusses its findings. The results discuss related to the conceptual framework, literature review, and culture. Finally, this chapter ends with several suggestions for future research.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this comparative qualitative study is to provide insight into the educational leadership preparation programs that are provided at ABC in Gulf countries and XYZ in the United States. The goals of this study included understanding the implications of any similarities or differences in the ways that these leading universities prepare educational leaders and identifying opportunities for these universities to learn from each other in the spirit of continuous improvement.

The research was guided by a hybrid conceptual framework consisting of the *Analysis of Principal Preparation Programs* (Webber & Scott, 2010) and the *Participants' Model for Developing Principals as Supervisors and Instructional Leaders* (Taylor-Backor & Gordon, 2015). In addition to combining these two frameworks, I also included factors such as mission, vision, challenges, goals, areas of strengths, and areas of growth. The Webber and Scott (2011) framework looks only at mapping for preparation programs, while Taylor-Backor and Gordon's (2015) framework contains the first step of preparation educational leaders at universities, which is the screening process and how it is important in admission requirements as shown in the following figure.

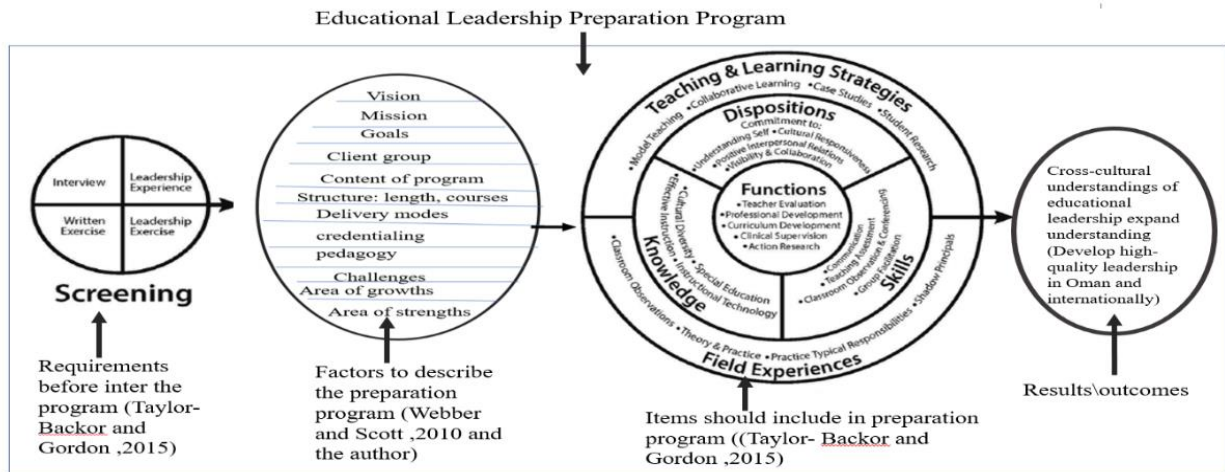


Figure 4. Combined Conceptual Framework – Educational Leadership Preparation Program

(adapted from Taylor-Backor & Gordon, 2015 and Webber & Scott, 2010).

Based on the aims of my study, I saw these two conceptual frameworks as complimentary and as guides as I analyzed my data, since I compared principal preparation programs in Gulf Countries and in the U.S This hybrid framework helped when undertaking thematic analysis of the data. From my perspective, I saw this conceptual framework was applicable for my study because it contains factors that I planned to study for both programs at both universities like structure, admission requirements, and curricula. (For example, Taylor-Backor and Gordon, 2015 supports analysis of Research Question one as it draws attention to "screening" which is included in admission requirements. Webber and Scott, 2010) notions of relate to Research Questions one and two in terms of focusing on themes like structure which include (mission, vision, and aims).

Taylor Backor and Gordon (2015) was integral to understanding the merits of curricula and was relevant to my consideration of the comparative structure and inclusions in the curricula offered by both universities. All of this work together to outcome of this study.

To satisfy the study's purpose, four research questions were asked.

1. What are the perceptions of the university leadership program's professors and graduate students at ABC and XYZ in terms of the (a) program's mission and vision, (b) program's aims, (c) admission requirements, (d) curricula, (e) areas of strength and areas for growth, (f) challenges, as well as (g) opportunities for improvement in the way that the educational leadership programs prepare principals to become effective leaders?
2. What are the perceptions of the university leadership program's professors and graduate students at ABC and XYZ in terms of the (a) client group, (b) structure, (c) delivery modes, (d) credentialing, and (e) pedagogy of the educational leadership preparation program at their respective universities?
3. What are the similarities and differences that exist between ABC and XYZ?
4. What can ABC and XYZ professors learn from each other?

In an effort to answer my research questions, the primary data sources for this study were personal interviews with academic faculty and master's students from educational leadership preparation programs at ABC and XYZ, and publicly available documents from both universities' websites describing the master's educational leadership program which were used in various combinations to respond to each of the four research questions. Interviews were performed via Zoom, the video conferencing program provided and supported by Auburn University. To answer the first research question, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the academic faculty and master's students from both universities; I transcribed these interviews, then analyzed the responses. The results from the second question are based on interviews with members of the faculty and master's students from both universities and the information available about the two programs from each university's website. The answers to research questions three and four came from the results that were discussed previously under research questions one and two.

Key Findings

The results of my research indicate that there are several similarities and differences between the two universities from both the academic faculty and graduate students' perspectives in terms of (a) admission requirements, (b) curricula, (c) areas of strength and areas for growth, (d) challenges, as well as (g) opportunities for improvement; delivery modes, of the educational leadership preparation program at their universities.

Program Similarities

There are two key similarities that I found between the two programs that were the focus of this research. First, is the importance of the academic faculty, and second is the similarity in admission requirements.

Importance of academic faculty. Academic faculty at both universities are the strength point in the program from students and academic faculty perspectives. Given that the conceptual framework of this study focuses on the importance of school leadership, the academic faculty play a significant role in student success. All participants interviewed agreed that their respective departments have strong faculty members with extensive experience in the leadership field and have good relationships with their students. Many participants remarked on the faculty being very supportive and always there if students need them. For example, one participant noted that “the faculty are very supportive and helpful, and I can say we have a professor, that is [the] best teacher I’ve ever [had]” (Lee, Interview transcript, p. 9). Additionally, all of the faculty are well published in the educational leadership field. Many researchers in the education field have mentioned that the good relationship between faculty and students is a key factor behind students’ success in postsecondary (Cuseo, 2018; Kim & Lundberg, 2016; Miller, Williams, & Silberstein, 2019). The result of this study supports the findings of all those studies.

From my own experience living and going to school in Arabian Gulf countries, I can say Arabian Gulf culture is shaped by religion, language, customs, and traditions. Teachers in my culture are very respected since they guide the nation to value health, education, and ethics. Part of this relationship is based in the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed which encourages people to learn, and also provides an impetus for scientists to have special status in both religion and society. This special status is derived from the Holy Quran where it is said that “Allah will raise up in ranks those who believed among you and those who have been given knowledge. Allah is Aware of what you do” (Al-Hilali & Khan, 2000, Holy Quran, Surat Al-mujadila, Ayat, 11). Thus, in Arabian Gulf culture, the phrase ‘raise up’ means having special positions in society, and being well known for educating the nation, in such a way that having great teachers means having a wealthy and healthy nation. From this perspective, my culture encourages teachers in any education sector to work hard and search for knowledge, and not solely as the sender of knowledge, but also as the creator of it. One of the ways to accomplish this holy job in a proper way is to create good relationships with their students and always support them. In essence, we can see how the Arabic culture motivates teachers to do their duties in an excellent way.

Regarding America, the place that I lived in for more than three years, I noticed there is a mixture of races; there are Whites, Blacks, Arabs, Europeans, Indians, Asians, and Latinos, each with their own customs and beliefs. Religion is a main part of culture in Alabama, considered the most religious state in the US. A vast majority of the Alabama population is Christian, and many Protestants, though the Southern Baptist Convention has a large following in Alabama as well. In addition, the state has smaller populations of Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists among other religions (World Travel Judie, 2021). There is no doubt that religion encourages education and I

noticed that many people donate for building colleges and provided scholarships for students. However, according to Goulas, Han, and Raymond (2021), in East Alabama the culture rarely supports education and people there see teachers and professors at universities as important people. The belief was that professors were examples of how educated people should act and the students needed to be guided by them, which enhances a better way of learning and speaking that enhances individuals (Vulperhorst et al., 2022). The professor's job was to educate those students and lead them down a path (Stewart & DeRonck, 2020).

Academic faculty is the lifeblood of the universities. They are directly responsible for providing the best knowledge and training that a school promises its students. It is their passion, hard work, and their good relationships with their students that help maintain the reputation upon which the university is built.

Admission requirements. Another similarity that came out of my research is that students from both universities saw the interview as the most important factor for selecting candidates to a given program. As noted in previous chapters, the interview is commonly one of the requirements that applicants need to pass in order to gain entrance into educational leadership preparation programs. In fact, Taylor-Backor and Gordon (2015), in their study about preparing principals as instructional leaders, found that the participants want the interview to be part of the admission process. "A professor stated, 'You want to hear the person's passion about becoming a principal and what that might entail'" (p.109). Due to this sentiment, most universities around the world put an interview as an admission requirement to apply to postgraduate programs. The reason behind including the interview is to know the applicant's knowledge, desire, and passion to join a given specialty, as well as the goal for their study. Everything I found in my study supports the same claims made about the interview in Taylor-Backor and Gordon (2015). In fact,

as I mentioned in Chapter Four, students saw the interview as the most important factor in the admission requirement process because it let students speak about their interests and gave the committee a clear picture about the applicant and their aims for joining the program as well as their personality. As an example, when I asked participants about the interview, one participant, Lee, stated that the “interview kind of gives the committee that is accepting or not accepting students an ability to see the students think on their feet. And see how their brain processes in different situations” (p. 2).

Students from both universities believed that the willingness to learn and the interest in the educational leadership field are the most important elements of applying for any kind of program, and from their perspective the interview is the best way to show that. Students from ABC believed that the exam is a kind of theory and may contains some topics that applicants did not have any idea of it yet because they believed that they gain this knowledge about the major when they join the program. Zain stated that “the exam was about the program that I apply for, I wonder how I can answer questions about something that I do not study yet. I think it was a kind of a challenge” (p. 2).

In the Arabian Gulf Countries, everyday citizens believe that the people who can speak fluently in front of the public are self-confident people who build relationships easily. With this idea in mind, many parents in this region encourage their children to speak without fear. Five years ago, most schools and even universities encouraged students to memorize the information from the books and they evaluated students based on their ability to memorize and recall information (A-Maskri, 2012). More recent educational trends, like the country vision 20-40, schools and higher education organizations should encourage skills like speaking in public and confidence while speaking so that in real situations, at work for example, because when you go

to the real situation at work you have to deal with people, not put all your memories in the papers. You will be a sender of the books by your tongue not by your written in exams papers. In addition, most of participants saw the exams for schools' grades and undergraduate studies not for the postgraduate studies. Among the many reasons why participants preferred the interview to another exam is because participants mentioned a fatigue from taking so many exams throughout K-16 education, and for my participants at least, they suggested that the interview is easier and less stressful than sitting another exam.

As well, students from XYZ university shared some opinions about the interview. From my notice of the education system in USA and my classmates in the class, I discovered that the students love to discuss and talk and share opinions during the presentation or discussions in class. I heard from my classmates that the education system in USA encourages speaking skills by different activities like speaking publicly. Moreover, the students from XYZ agreed with ABC students regarding the exam, and they can gain knowledge about the field when they enter the program, not before.

For the above reasons ABC and XYZ students shared the same opinion about the interview as an important factor to select the candidates to the programs. The next section will illustrate the programs' differences which are entrance exams, program output, and the presence of courses on ethics and law.

Program Differences

Entrance exams. One of the distinctions between the two programs that I studied and their admissions requirements is their reliance on entrance exams. For example, the academic faculty at ACB university stated that the exam is the most important requirement for getting

admitted to the program while the perspective of XYZ academic faculty saw the interview as the most important factor to select students into their program.

From my experience in the higher education field I saw the philosophy of accepting students in postgraduate studies is based mainly on the principle of selection, because most people want to complete their studies in higher education to get promotions or a good position at their job. So the person who applies for postgraduate programs is supposed to have a distinct level of knowledge and research skills that are not available in everyone who applies to join. For that reason, all universities around the world set conditions for admission, such as passing the written test in the major, the personal interview, the cumulative average in the bachelor's degree, and passing language tests such as TOEFL and IELTS. I noticed from my searching about the admission requirements for a master's degree in educational leadership programs at seven USA universities there is no requirement for passing a writing test. My participants — ABC students, students and faculty of XYZ — in this study confirmed that and all agreed that the interview is the most important factor for selecting candidates. The participants indicated that the interview can uncover a candidate's personality, their interests about joining the program, and their willingness to learn which are all great indicators of whether the potential candidate wants to study. This finding agreed with Al-Minayyi (2017) which found that the personal interview standard is statistically significant, meaning that the personal interview strongly predicts the academic performance for students who enter education policy studies at King Saud University and contradicts the study by Briihl and Wasieleski (2004), which indicates that the interview is one of the secondary admission criteria. On the other hand, the academic faculty interviewed at ABC university indicated that the exam prepared by the department was as an important factor for selecting candidates for the educational leadership preparation program. This finding agrees

with Alexandre (2009) and Tanilion, Segers, Vedderand, and Tillema (2009) about the admission requirements and its indicators for student performance as they found that the exam is the best indicator for selecting candidates and is highly reliable for predicting students' achievement capabilities once admitted. On the other hand, there is additional research in the field like Al-Minayyi's (2017) study which found that the entrance exam is not an important factor in predicting student performance and when viewing the process from the candidate's perspective, the students prefer the interview over the exam. In addition, Abu Hashim (2012) conducted a study entitled "Admission Criteria for Higher Education as It is Realized by Different Samples of Saudi Society", and the study aimed to identify the level of Saudi society members' knowledge of higher education admission criteria and their satisfaction. It also aimed to arrange the criteria for admission to higher education from the point of view of his study participants. The most important results indicated that the level of knowledge of the participants criteria was high, while the degree of satisfaction varied between the participants, and they agreed that the exam came last as an admission requirement from their perspective.

One potential reason for the difference between how each of the university programs view the criteria for selecting candidates for the program could be attributed to the fact that the number of applicants applying to ABC University is very large, as it is the only public university in the country that offers the program. While there are three smaller private universities that offer the same program, the reputation of the ABC in the country is quite high which could also explain why the applicant pool is so large and impact admission requirement decisions. Another reason that could explain ABC University's reliance on the entrance exam is the prevailing culture of the department which is that knowledge of the specialization prior to joining the program is very important as it contributes to predicting the achievement level of students

enrolled in the program. This reason was supported by a participant of this study who mentioned that students who obtained high scores in the admission test performed significantly better academically compared to those who received lower scores. For example, James stated that

The admission exam is very important because it gave us an idea about the students who deserve to join the program. We noticed as faculty that those students who got high grades in admission exam performed better than those who have low grades. (p. 3)

An interesting correlation is the presence of admission exams required for other educational leadership master's degrees at nearby Arab universities like in Jordan and Egypt, where many of the academic faculty who contributed to the design of ABC University's program went to school. For these reasons, the test was developed as a measure of differentiation, as the student who passes the test at the required rate is nominated to undergo a personal interview.

On the one hand, in the USA there are a variety of different universities with different costs that offer such programs and the USA has a long history of preparation programs for educational leaders (Levine, 2005; Silver, 1982). I think XYZ university faculty are more interested in hearing from the candidates and their aims to join the program in addition to the portfolio that illustrates their work. As noted by one of the participants, Linda stated that the "interview allows you to get to know the person and you can figure out whether or not you think they're going to be successful or if there's a way that you can help them grow" (p.4). They believe that those criteria would be a better indicator of the applicant work than an exam.

Program output. Another distinction between the two universities that I studied is the focus for their output, namely that the output of the ABC university are researchers while the output of XYZ university are practitioners.

In most countries around the world, especially Europe and the USA, government rules have begun to emphasize the importance of having a properly qualified social workforce (Forrester-Jones & Hatzidimitriadou, 2006). Given this mandate, the major focus of the higher education institutions around the world has shifted to helping students develop as professionals who will be capable to deal with real-world problems by putting theory into their practice (Choi & Lee, 2008). For example, both educational administration preparation programs at ABC and XYZ universities are based on the results of combined theory and practice focusing on real-world situations.

As shown in the previous chapter, ABC University focused more on scientific research which is highlighted through their reliance on research papers throughout its educational leadership preparation program. This understanding came through in participant interviews such as Zain who stated that “in each course student should write a research paper” (Interview transcript, p. 5). In addition, one year in the program is only for doing thesis work. The reason behind that is contributing to a regional and national priority which is from research. Scientific research in Arab universities has experienced a big crisis in all aspects compared with western universities (Almansour, 2016; Al-Shaqsy, 2006; Sabtan & Elsayed, 2019). One challenge is lack of contributions and partnership between universities (Almansour, 2016; Al-Shaqsy, 2006; Sabtan & Elsayed, 2019). So, ABC university recognizes research as one of the main pillars of academic excellence. The strategic plan and the vision of the university focuses on the scientific research and encourages academic faculty and students to do research by funding them. The president of the country of ABC university paid great attention to scientific research and urged higher education institutions to encourage students to do scientific research because of his belief that scientific research is the basis through which the people will be able to contribute to building

the requirements of the next stage. The ABC university believes that scientific research helps it to become a worldwide university and has a high ranking on SHANGHAI and other organizations that rank the universities around the world. Almansour (2016) stated that “international rankings have become the first priority of universities engaged in research across the world” (p. 1). Moreover, scientific research helps in discovering and diagnosing the problems that society and the educational sector suffer from in particular and finding the necessary solutions to these problems thus creating a healthy educational environment (Sabtan & Elsayed, 2019). So, the culture of scientific research spreading in Arab universities and between faculty members have greatly contributed to the design and preparation of graduate studies programs in these universities, especially programs for preparing educational leaders to be leaders armed with the weapon of scientific research, which, as I mentioned previously, is an effective treatment for many problems, especially in the educational field, and the way to advance the educational process. In addition, the Arab universities believe that scientific research is a major driver of social and economic innovation in that it produces new knowledge, skills, and attitudes which are crucial for economic growth and technological development. Arab countries need this to gain an academic competitive advantage and to improve the education and economy of its burgeoning population of young people (Almansour, 2016; Al-Shaqsy, 2006; Sabtan & Elsayed, 2019).

On the other hand, XYZ university, based on the findings of this study, trains the students at educational leadership preparation programs to become practitioners. The USA has a long history in education and in scientific research and most of its universities have top rankings around the world. In addition, it is a very big country with huge educational institutions, so universities focus on training educational leaders to be practitioners since they need them at the schools. One potential reason for XYZ University to focus on a practitioner lens is due to

increased demand for educational administrators across the country due to current administrators leaving for various reasons including retirement and increased stress. In fact, Hamil and Boyer (2008) mentioned that an alarming attrition rate of educational leaders is the most important issue that is facing the education system in the USA. Being an educational leader means having too many duties and responsibilities. In fact, it is a very tough job because there is an overwhelming level of pressure and responsibility associated with it. For that reason, many educational leaders do not adequately handle stressful tasks and cannot be stuck in the profession for any length of time (Hamil & Boyer, 2008). Moreover, according to an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, “U.S. public education employees had the fastest resignation rate in 2018 since the Department of Labor began its measurements in 2001” (Clays, 2021, para. 5). So, the culture of training educational leaders to be practitioners to bridge the gap in education in the United States due to the resignation and retirement of many school workers for reasons related to salary, educational environment, nature of the profession to name a few, which contributes to universities that offer educational leadership preparation programs that focus on practical practice and not scientific research as is the case in Arab universities.

The presence of an ethics and law course. There were Ethics and Law courses offered at XYZ university while ABC university did not. There is no doubt that ethics is a basic foundation for building societies, on which all laws and rulings are built. Because education is a heart of building good human life, the educational organizations should teach ethics. Gülcan (2015) stated that “we can easily reach all knowledge by technology. In education using technology reveals some ethical problems such as plagiarism. In order to understand the importance of ethics, ethics should be placed as a course in the educational system” (p.2622).

XYZ university, like many universities in the USA, provided courses in ethics and law in their educational leadership preparation programs. Part of the reason for including these types of courses is because of the diversity of the country. As educational leaders, students have a goal of promoting equity and equitable access to educational resources for all, regardless of the learner's background or status. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to create an ethical climate that contributes to the transfer of good morals, values, behaviors, standards, and attitudes based on respect, fairness, and openness. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2002) provides the following guidance:

Tomorrow's educational leaders must be able to work with diverse groups and to integrate ideas to solve a continuous flow of problems. This requires patience and perspective, the exercise of judgment and wisdom. It also demands sensitivities to other cultures and highly developed communication skills. It requires personal values that integrate the ethical dimensions of decision-making with those of a more technical variety. (Bowen, Bessette, & Chan, 2006, p. 4)

In addition to ethics courses, law courses are necessary for educational leaders in the USA because they help to provide effective feedback for a successful school and school communities since these institutions are governed by state and federal laws at USA. Moreover, in schools administrators and teachers face many problems which require knowledge of the law to solve. This is supported in the research by Doctor (2013), who stated that "the principal's knowledge of law issues and legal decision-making are essential to provide effective feedback for a successful school" (p.1).

While at ABC university all the students are from same nationality and as well as the staff. Teachers and students at public and private schools in the country of ABC university are

almost from the same background, same culture, same religion. In Arab countries, especially the country of ABC university educational system, in general ethics is associated with religion and customs. The parents taught their kids about the Islam and its ethics, so most people are aware of dealing and respecting others. The Holy Quran is the guide of ethics and law in ABC's university country. In addition, people in this Arab country are kind and tolerant by nature. They take this from the Islam and customs. The American physician Paul Harrison, who lived in ABC university country between 1928–1938 and author of the book *A Doctor's Journey in the Arabian Peninsula* says: "ABC university country is the land of tolerance and generosity." Such a phrase appears in abundance in the writings of European and American travelers who visited and lived in Amman throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Roaming in ABC university country, and other parts of the Arabian Peninsula, discovering its territories, communicating with its indigenous people, knowing their culture and getting to know Islam was considered an unprecedented scientific achievement. Travelers who came to it may have looked at society from different angles, but they all agreed that the people they met were generous, friendly and tolerant (Alhousyni, 2015). So, most of the problems that may happen at schools are solved by the educational leaders talking with the parents, teachers, and students.

To sum up, the culture, mission, and vision of the country play significant roles in designing the educational leadership program in Arabian Gulf countries and even in the US. The opinions of students who enter the program and academic faculty who design and teach about the program is the best way to evaluate it and improve it since the world changes every day. That leads to talk about the suggestions of future research in the following section.

Considerations for Future Research

Building on the findings and analysis of this research, a number of potential research opportunities exist. The first potential area of research could be a study that compares, in more detail, the curricula offered by American universities in the educational leader preparation programs with the curricula offered in Arab universities. This research could include a look at the extent of the school's impact on the preparation of effective educational leaders from the student's perspective. A second opportunity for future research could include the relationship between preparation programs in educational leadership at Arab universities and the success of schools as a way to assist universities in evaluating and reviewing their programs. Third, a study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on educational leadership preparation programs in terms of partnership and practicum courses from students and faculty perspectives at USA and Arab universities. The goal of this research would be to help the universities to understand the challenges and obstacles that they face as an institution in order to prepare themselves for pandemics in the future.

Another area for future research could be about the role of student exchange between Arab universities and American universities in the program for preparing educational leaders in preparing an effective educational leader. This kind of study would encourage cross-cultural studies and cooperation between Arab universities and USA universities to improve educational leadership programs in both countries.

A fifth area for future study could be toxicity culture in academic departments and how that affects the relationship between staff. Knowing this will help organizations to get rid of the toxicity and help to build a healthy work environment for all employees. Finally, future research

could compare the educational leadership preparation programs that are offered at public and private universities in Arab countries.

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Appendix A: Email Script

(Email to send to participants after receiving signed informed consent for participating in interview)

Dear -----,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview portion of my research study titled, " Educational Leadership Development in USA and -----: Preparing Successful School Leaders." You are receiving this email because I have received your signed informed consent form. My goal is to provide insight into the educational leadership preparation program that is provided at ----- to prepare educational leaders.

Interviews, which will be up to forty-five minutes, will be scheduled based on your availability during the month of May and June 2021. I will be flexible so that the date, place and time are convenient for you. A follow up interview, up to ten minutes in length, may be needed for clarification and will be scheduled within two weeks of the original interview.

Please find an attached copy of the consent document to keep for your records and as a reminder of the details of the study. The consent form included the following information: overview of the research study, data collection procedures, risks, benefits, how the information will be used, and how your privacy will be protected. Most importantly, it is a reminder that your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time throughout this process.

I really appreciate your willingness to be a part of the interview. Please contact me as your earliest convenience so that we may schedule our interview at haa0015@auburn.edu or 92576729. Also, feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have about this research and your participation in this interview. I look forward to hearing from you.

Much appreciation,
Houda Al-Housni
Doctoral Candidate
College of Education
Auburn University

Appendix B: Letters of Support

Letters of Support

The following table summarizes the views of local institutions benefiting from the program.

Beneficiary Institution	Evaluation	Recommendations	Department Response
The Royal Office	The program is consistent with the Sultanate's efforts to develop higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program should be taught in both Arabic and English. 	The program is offered in Arabic. However, in order to develop the students' English reading and writing skills, a core course tilted (Readings in Educational Administration (EDUC 6102)) is offered.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend the name of Strategic Planning to Educational Strategic Planning, 	The suggestion has been implemented.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a course "Educational Planning in the country" 	Educational Planning in the [REDACTED] part of the "Theories and Practices of Educational Planning" course (EDUC 6119).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an overlap between the two courses: Trends and Contemporary Issues in Educational Supervision, and Theories of Educational Supervision and Their Application. The second course suffices. 	The suggestion has been taken into consideration by re-describing the theories of educational supervision and their application course to include a part on contemporary issues in educational theories.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add two themes to the course "contemporary issues in higher education". These themes are planning of higher education and teaching approaches in higher education. 	The suggestion has been implemented in required courses such as: Practicum in Higher Education Administration (EDUC 6215).
Ministry of Education	This is a very good program, and the Ministry supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer all tracks at once in order to meet the needs of the ministry employees. 	The Department will consider opening all tracks according to the available resources.

Beneficiary Institution	Evaluation	Recommendations	Department Response
	offering the program with its four tracks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer the program to the ministry's full-time & part-time employees. 	The program includes both full-time & part-time options.
Ministry of Higher Education	The program is good and meets the Sultanate's needs for the sustainable development of its human resources .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for a general non-specialized track for other categories such as administration of institutions with special needs. 	Since the program is a specialized one, it is divided into specialized tracks. However, this suggestion can be considered in the Master's thesis topics.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of the two courses: 'Educational Philosophy' and 'Educational Administration Theories' in one course. 	The descriptions of these two courses were re-written & the existing overlap was removed.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The syllabus of "Seminar in Educational Administration" should not be limited to school administration and should include all four tracks. 	This course has been replaced by practicum courses for each track.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace the phrase "which to be chosen" in the description of the Master's Thesis. 	The wording has been modified.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the name of the "Research Methodology" course to "Scientific Research Methodology". 	The name is not changed because it is understood that in the masters' program we teach scientific research and not other types of research.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-describe the "Curriculum Design" course to avoid overlapping with what is offered in the Bachelor program. 	The Curriculum Department has been contacted to re-write the course description based on the Ministry's observation.
Ministry of Manpower	This is a good program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry needs the Higher Education track to be taught in English. 	This track will be taught in Arabic and the Ministry's request will be taken into consideration, provided that the Department possesses the necessary resources.

Beneficiary Institution	Evaluation	Recommendations	Department Response
The Sultan's Armed Forces	This is a good and important program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational institutions of the Sultan's Armed Forces will benefit from the program. 	Cooperation with educational institutions of the Sultan's Armed Forces during implementation of the program will be taken into consideration.
Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs	The program is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The faculty and staff of the Institute of Religious Sciences can benefit from the program provided that they are allowed to take remedial courses. 	<p>The program does not conflict with the discipline of Islamic studies, as university graduates of these disciplines can join the program and choose topics that suit their fields.</p> <p>In addition, given that The Institute of Religious Sciences is one of the institutions of higher education in ██████ and that one of the four tracks is administration of higher education, the staff members of the Institute can benefit from joining this track.</p>

Appendix C

Participant Informed Consent Letters



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS,
LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

(Faculty Staff and Students at [REDACTED] U) (NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT
for a Research Study entitled

“Educational Leadership Development in U.S. and [REDACTED]: Preparing Successful Leaders”

I am asking you to participate in a research study titled “Educational Leadership Development in U.S. and Oman: Preparing Successful Leaders”. I will describe this study to you and answer any questions that you may have. The study is being conducted by Houda Al-Housni. The faculty advisor for this study is Dr. Lisa Kensler, Professor in the Auburn University Department of Educational Foundation, Leadership, and Technology.

What this study is about: The purpose of this study is to provide insight into the educational leadership preparation program that is provided at [REDACTED] States to prepare educational leaders. The main focus for my research is gauging the academic faculty members' and graduate students' perspectives of these programs as well as reviewing publicly available documents from both universities. You were selected as a possible participant in this research study because of your status as an academic faculty staff or graduate student at [REDACTED].

What I will ask you to do: If you agree to participate in my research, I am asking for your permission to participate in 45-minute interview about the principal preparation program that offer at Department of Educational Foundation and Leadership. The interview will be audio-record, the purpose of the recording is transcription. Audio recordings of interviews will be deleted, once transcribed and checked for accuracy and transcripts shredded upon completion of analysis, no later than November 30, 2022.

Risks and discomforts: The risks that participants might encounter in this study include breach of confidentiality due to the use of identifiable information at collection. The identifiable information will be destroyed, deleted, or shredded, once information is collected and names are changed to pseudonyms.

Benefits: If you participate in this study, you can expect no direct benefits. However, an indirect benefit is that information from this study may be used to benefit the University to develop the program in the future. I cannot promise that you will receive the benefit described.

4036 Haley Center
Auburn, AL 36849-5221

Telephone:
334-844-4460

Fax:
334-844-3072

www.auburn.edu

Participant's Initials _____
Page 1 of 2

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
05/12/2021 to _____
Protocol # 21-136 EP 2105

Compensation for your participation: There will be no compensation offered.

Costs involved: There are no costs related to your participation in this study.

Privacy/ Confidentiality/ Data Security: Your privacy will be protected. Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. The researcher will use pseudonyms for all names and will not use any personally identifying information in the analysis or presentation. The findings of this research will be used to fulfill an educational requirement for a dissertation; and may also be used to create presentations or publications.

Taking part is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time during the study. You may refuse to participate before the study begins. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with A [REDACTED] or those people involved in this study.

If you have questions: The main researcher conducting this study is Houda Al-Housni, graduate student at Auburn University. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Houda Al-Housni at haa0015@auburn.edu or at 92576729, or the faculty advisor for this study, Lisa Kensler, Professor in the Auburn University Department of Educational Foundation, Leadership, and Technology at lak0008@auburn.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at IRBAdmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant's signature/ Date

Investigator obtaining consent / Date

Printed Name

Printed Name

Co-Investigator Date

Printed Name

Note: the certificate of translation in the next page

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
05/12/2021 to _____
Protocol # 21-136 EP 2105

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION

I, Houda Al Housni, am qualified to translate English to Arabic and Arabic to English. I am a native speaker of Arabic, and English is my second language. I completed my higher studies with English at Australia and USA. I certify that the translations for professors and master students at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] that are part of the study entitled "Educational Leadership Development in U.S. and [REDACTED] Preparing Successful Leaders", are accurate and represent a true reflection of the English language.

Name: Houda Abdullah Al-Housni
Signature: *Houda Al-Housni*
Date: 05/08/2021

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Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
05/12/2021 to -----
Protocol # 21-136 EP 2105



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS,
LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

(Faculty staff and Master Students at Auburn University) (NOTE: DO NOT
AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS
IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS
BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

**PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT
for a Research Study entitled**

**"Educational Leadership Development in U.S. and [REDACTED] in: Preparing
Successful Leaders"**

I am asking you to participate in a research study titled "Educational
Leadership Development in U.S. and [REDACTED] in: Preparing Successful Leaders".
I will describe this study to you and answer any questions that you may have.
The study is being conducted by Houda Al-Housni. The faculty advisor for
this study is Dr. Lisa Kensler, Professor in the Auburn University Department
of Educational Foundation, Leadership, and Technology.

What this study is about: The purpose of this study is to provide insight into
the educational leadership preparation program that is provided at [REDACTED] in
[REDACTED] to prepare educational leaders. The main
focus for my research is gauging the academic faculty members' and graduate
students' perspectives of these programs as well as reviewing publicly
available documents from both universities. You were selected as a possible
participant in this research study because of your status as a faculty staff or a
master student at A [REDACTED]

What I will ask you to do: If you agree to participate in my research, I am
asking for your permission to participate in 45-minute interview about the
principal preparation program that offer at [REDACTED]. The interview will be
audio-record, the purpose of the recording is transcription. Audio recordings
of interviews will be deleted, once transcribed and checked for accuracy and
transcripts shredded upon completion of analysis, no later than November 30,
2022.

Risks and discomforts: Breach of confidentiality is the risk associated with
participating in this research study due to the use identifiable data. To
minimize this risk, pseudonyms will be used once the transcripts are
downloaded.

Benefits: If you participate in this study, you can expect no direct benefits.
However, an indirect benefit is that information from this study may be used
to benefit the University to develop the program in the future. I cannot
promise that you will receive the benefit described.

4036 HARRY CENTER
AUBURN, AL 36849-5221

TELEPHONE:
334-844-4460

FAX:
334-844-3072

www.auburn.edu

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from 05/12/2021 to Protocol # 21-136 EP 2105
--

Participant's Initials _____

Compensation for your participation: There will be no compensation offered.

Costs involved: There are no costs related to your participation in this study.

Privacy/ Confidentiality/ Data Security: Your privacy will be protected. Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. The researcher will use pseudonyms for all names and will not use any personally identifying information in the analysis or presentation. The findings of this research will be used to fulfill an educational requirement for a dissertation; and may also be used to create presentations or publications.

Taking part is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time during the study. You may refuse to participate before the study begins. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with [REDACTED] or those people involved in this study.

If you have questions: The main researcher conducting this study is Houda Al-Housni, graduate student at Auburn University. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Houda Al-Housni at haa0015@auburn.edu or at 9257672 or the faculty advisor for this study, Lisa Kensler, Professor in the Auburn University Department of Educational Foundation, Leadership, and Technology at lak0008@auburn.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant's signature/ Date

Investigator obtaining consent / Date

Printed Name

Printed Name

Co-Investigator

Date

Printed Name

Note: the certificate of translation in the next page

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
05/12/2021 to -----
Protocol # 21-136 EP 2105

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION

I, Houda Al Housni, am qualified to translate English to Arabic and Arabic to English. I am a native speaker of Arabic, and English is my second language. I completed my higher studies with English at Australia and USA. I certify that the translations for professors and master students at College of Education at [REDACTED] part of the study entitled "Educational Leadership Development in U.S. and [REDACTED]; Preparing Successful Leaders", are accurate and represent a true reflection of the English language.

Name: Houda Abdullah Al-Housni
Signature: *Houda Al-Housni*
Date: 05/08/2021

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
05/12/2021 to -----
Protocol # 21-136 EP 2105

أعضاء هيئة التدريس وطلبة الماجستير بـ [REDACTED] : (ملاحظة: لا توافق على المشاركة إلا إذا تمت اضافته معلومات اعتماد IRB مع التواريخ الحالية إلى هذا المستند).

الموافقة المستنيرة للمشاركة لدراسة بحثية بعنوان: "تطوير القيادة التربوية في [REDACTED] : إعداد القادة الناجحين".

أطلب منكم المشاركة في دراسة بحثية بعنوان "تطوير القيادة التربوية في الولايات المتحدة و [REDACTED] إعداد قادة ناجحين"، وسوف أشرح لكم هذه الدراسة وأجيب على أية أسئلة قد تكون لديكم. مستشارة هيئة التدريس لهذه الدراسة هي الدكتورة ليزا كينسلر، الأستاذة في جامعة أوبورن، قسم الاصول التربوية، القيادة والتكنولوجيا.

ما تدور حوله هذه الدراسة: الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو توفير نظرة ثاقبة لبرنامج إعداد القيادة التربوية الذي يتم توفيره في [REDACTED] لإعداد القادة التربويين.

ينصب التركيز الرئيسي لبحثي على قياس وجهات نظر أعضاء هيئة التدريس وطلاب الدراسات العليا لهذا البرنامج بالإضافة إلى مراجعة الوثائق المتعلقة بالبرنامج والمتاحة في موقع القسم على الشبكة العنكبوتية. تم اختيارك كمشارك محتمل في هذه الدراسة البحثية بسبب مكانتك كعضو هيئة تدريس أو طالب دراسات عليا في [REDACTED]

المطلوب منك كعضو هيئة تدريس أو طالب دراسات عليا: إذا وافقت على المشاركة في بحثي، فأنا أطلب إذنك للمشاركة في مقابلة مدتها ٤٥ دقيقة حول برنامج الإعداد الرئيسي للقادة الذي يقدمه قسم الاصول والإدارة التربوية.

المخاطر والمضايقات: تشمل المخاطر التي قد يواجهها المشاركون في هذه الدراسة خرق السرية بسبب استخدام المعلومات المحددة للهوية عند الجمع. سيتم إتلاف المعلومات التي يمكن التعرف عليها أو حذفها أو تمزيقها، بمجرد جمع المعلومات وسوف يتم تغيير الأسماء إلى أسماء مستعارة. وسوف يستخدم الباحث التسجيل الصوتي. سيتم حذف التسجيلات الصوتية للمقابلات، بمجرد نسخها والتحقق من دقتها.

وتمزيق النصوص عند الانتهاء من التحليل، في موعد لا يتجاوز ٣٠ نوفمبر ٢٠٢٢.

الفوائد: إذا شاركت في هذه الدراسة، فلا يمكنك توقع أي فوائد مباشرة. ومع ذلك، هناك فائدة غير مباشرة تتمثل في إمكانية استخدام المعلومات الواردة من هذه الدراسة لإفادة الجامعة في تطوير البرنامج في المستقبل. لا يمكنني أن أعدك بأنك ستحصل على المزايا الموصوفة.

التعويض عن مشاركتك: لن يتم تقديم أي تعويض.

التكاليف المتضمنة: لا توجد تكاليف متعلقة بمشاركتك في هذه الدراسة.

الخصوصية / السرية / أمن البيانات: ستم حماية خصوصيتك. ستبقى أي بيانات تم الحصول عليها فيما يتعلق

بهذه الدراسة سرية، سيستخدم الباحث أسماء مستعارة لجميع الأسماء ولن يستخدم أي معلومات تعريف.

شخصية في التحليل أو العرض التقديري.

سيتم استخدام نتائج هذا البحث لتلبية المتطلبات التعليمية لأطروحة، ويمكن استخدامها أيضًا لإنشاء عروض تقديمية أو منشورات.

المشاركة اختيارية ويمكنك الانسحاب في أي وقت أثناء الدراسة، يمكنك رفض المشاركة قبل بدء الدراسة. إن قرارك

بشأن المشاركة أو عدم المشاركة أو التوقف عن المشاركة لن يعرض للخطر علاقاتك المستقبلية مع [REDACTED] ،

وإدارة المؤسسة التعليمية ، والقيادة ، والتكنولوجيا أو أولئك الأشخاص المشاركين في هذه الدراسة.

إذا كنت لديك أسئلة: الباحثة الرئيسية التي تجري هذه الدراسة هي هدى الحوسني، طالبة دكتوراة في جامعة

أوبورن. الرجاء طرح أي أسئلة لديك الآن. إذا كنت لديك أسئلة لاحقًا ، فيمكنك التواصل بهدى الحوسني على

haa0015@auburn.edu أو على ٩٢٥٧٦٧٢٩ ، أو مستشارة هيئة التدريس لهذه الدراسة ، ليثا كينسلر ، الأستاذة

يقسم الاصول التربوية والقيادة والتكنولوجيا بجامعة أوبورن على البريد الإلكتروني lak0008 @ auburn.edu. إذا

كانت لديك أسئلة بخصوص حقوقك كمشارك في هذه الدراسة ، فيمكنك الاتصال بمكتب الامتثال البحثي بجامعة

أوبورن أو مجلس المراجعة المؤسسية عبر الهاتف -٨٤٤-٥٩٦٦-٣٣٤ أو البريد الإلكتروني على

IRBadmin@auburn.edu أو IRBChair @ auburn.edu.

بعد قراءة المعلومات المقدمة ، يجب أن تقرر ما إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية أم لا. يشير

توقيعك إلى رغبتك في المشاركة.

الاسم :

توقيع المشارك:

ملاحظة : شهادة المترجم في الصفحة التالية

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
05/12/2021 to _____
Protocol # 21-136 EP 2105

Appendix D

Auburn University Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Research Protocol Review Form

Al-Housni Protocol Review Request #21-136 "Educational Leadership Development in U.S. and [REDACTED]: Preparing Successful Leaders"

A memorandum

IRB suggested changes	Changes I did based on IRB notes
Items refer to the application:	
<p>13.c. Please list the recording device, make/model. If the device is capable of connecting to the Internet or has a feature that allows auto-uploading to the Cloud, assure that the auto-upload feature is disabled as the Cloud is not a secure storage method/site.</p> <p>- Is the Zoom call recording audio and video, or just audio?</p>	<p>I added on 13 c, "I will open the zoom from my laptop, and I used my iPad and mobile phone as additional resources. The devices is capable of connecting to the internet. The zoom call recording will be audio and if the participant wants video it will be both".</p>
<p>- Informed Consent:</p> <p>- Paragraph 3 – Also include that the interview will be audio-recorded, the purpose of the recording (eg, transcription) and when the recordings will be destroyed.</p> <p>- Pleases also add a document that states that you are qualified to translate the English to Arabic Informed Consent and other documents and to transcribe the audio recordings. Sign and date the document.</p>	<p>I added on both consent forms and in Arabic form "The interview will be audio-record, the purpose of the recording is transcription. Audio recordings of interviews will be deleted, once transcribed and checked for accuracy and transcripts shredded upon completion of analysis, no later than November 30, 2022"</p> <p>Regarding document that states that you are qualified to translate: I provide certificate of translation on consent form in page 25</p> <p>Arabic copy in page 28</p>
<p>- CITI Documentation</p> <p>Ms. Al-Housni still needs the minimum requirements for CITI training; this includes completing the following basic modules:</p> <p>Curriculum Group: IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis</p> <p>Course Learner Group: IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis</p> <p>Stage: Stage 1 – Basic Course</p> <p>The Basic Course includes the Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction; Students in Research; History and Ethical Principles; Defining Research with Human Subjects; The Federal Regulations; Assessing Risk; Informed Consent; Privacy and Confidentiality and others.</p>	<p>The CITI certificate on page 21-22</p>

Phone: 334-844-5966 For information or help contact **THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC)**
e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/index.htm>

6. GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

6A. Research Methodology

Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology.

Data Source(s): ☒ New Data ☐ Existing Data

Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants?
☒ Yes ☐ No

Data collection will involve the use of:

- ☐ Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.)
☒ Interview
☐ Observation
☐ Location or Tracking Measures
☐ Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E.)
☐ Surveys / Questionnaires

- ☒ Internet / Electronic
☒ Audio
☒ Video
☐ Photos
☐ Digital images
☐ Private records or files

☐ Other: _____

6B. Participant Information

Please check all descriptors that apply to the target population.

☒ Males ☒ Females ☒ AU students

Vulnerable Populations

- ☐ Pregnant Women/Fetuses ☐ Prisoners ☐ Institutionalized
☐ Children and/or Adolescents (under age 18 in AL)

Persons with:

- ☐ Economic Disadvantages ☐ Physical Disabilities
☒ Educational Disadvantages ☐ Intellectual Disabilities

Do you plan to compensate your participants? ☐ Yes ☒ No

6C. Risks to Participants

Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research.

- ☒ Breach of Confidentiality* ☐ Coercion
☐ Deception ☐ Physical
☐ Psychological ☐ Social
☐ None
☐ Other: _____

*Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

6D. Corresponding Approval/Oversight

- Do you need IBC Approval for this study?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, BUA # _____ Expiration date _____

- Do you need IACUC Approval for this study?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, PRN # _____ Expiration date _____

- Does this study involve the Auburn University MRI Center?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Which MRI(s) will be used for this project? (Check all that apply)

☐ 3T ☐ 7T

Does any portion of this project require review by the MRI Safety Advisory Council?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Signature of MRI Center Representative: _____

Required for all projects involving the AU MRI Center

Appropriate MRI Center Representatives:

Dr. Thomas S. Denney, Director AU MRI Center
 Dr. Ron Beyers, MR Safety Officer

Version Date (date document created): _____

7. PROJECT ASSURANCES

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCES

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance of this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
 - b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Research Compliance
 - c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
 - d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Research Compliance in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise ORC, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Research Compliance before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Houda Al-Housni

Printed name of Principal Investigator

Houda Abdullah Al-Housni

Principal Investigator's Signature

3/08/2021

Date

B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES

1. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology.
2. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
4. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant incidents and/or adverse events and/or effects to the ORC in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the ORC by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.

Dr. Lisa Kensler

Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor

Lisa Kensler

Faculty Advisor's Signature

3/9/21

Date

C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSURANCE

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

Dr. James Satterfield

Printed name of Department Head

James Satterfield

Department Head's Signature

3/10/2021

Date

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8- PROJECT OVERVIEW: Prepare an abstract that includes:

(350 word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study):

a) A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal:

(Cite sources; include a "Reference List" as [Appendix A.](#))

8a) Scholars have acknowledged that school principals make a significant and measurable contribution to school improvement and student achievement (Fuller & Hollingworth, 2018; Jason, Mitani, & Wao, 2019). Daresh and Male (2000) compared the experiences of English and American school leaders when they shifted from teachers to principals. The authors concluded that the U.S. had a longer history of principal preparation than the U.K. In the U.S., according to Daresh & Male (2000) the principal must have at least three years of work years of teaching experience, should have a college graduate degree, and completed the educational requirements needed for them to receive their license. On the other hand, Britain was using an apprenticeship method in which the educational leaders were already trained through a hierarchical order, that is, from study hall instructors to educators, then to heads of departments, and then principals (Daresh & Male, 2000). Lin (2005) looked at the impression of Chinese and U.S. headships in urban regions concerning the choice, readiness, and expert improvement of primary school heads. The American and Chinese principals focused on the significance of educational quality and student learning while also recognizing the principal's capacity to improve educational plans and guidance. In Brazil, the readiness of the principal comes partially from what was addressed in the application to become principal of that school, which is very different than how administrators are appointed in the United States (Borges-Gatewood & McNeal, 2013). Altuwaijri (2015) used principal readiness program standards from Illinois and compared them to programs in Saudi Arabia, focusing on program prerequisites, entry-level position necessities, coursework prerequisites, and staffing necessities. Altuwaijri concluded that there were a number of similarities between the two, including the skills, knowledge, and behaviors principals need to fulfill their general obligations and duties. In addition, a four-year degree and previous work as a teacher was another commonality.

8b) This comparative case study is to determine the perceptions of 2 university educational leadership professors at ██████████ 2 p ██████████ U. As well 6 graduate students from each university. I will interview them and ask about the preparation program that offer in their department. Moreover, I will analyses the relevant program documentation which are available in the university's website.

b) A brief description of the methodology, including design, population, and variables of interest

8b) This comparative case study is to determine the perceptions of 2 university educational leadership professors ██████████ U and 2 ██████████ U. As well 6 graduate students from each university. I will interview them and ask about the preparation program that offer in their department. Moreover, I will analyze the relevant program documentation which are available in the university's website.

9- PURPOSE.

a. Clearly state the purpose of this project and all research questions, or aims.

9a) The purpose of this comparative case study is to provide insight into the educational leadership preparation program that is provided at ██████████ the United States to prepare educational leaders. The goal of this research is to understand the implications of any similarities or differences in the way that these leading universities prepare educational leaders as well as to identify opportunities for these universities to learn from each other in the spirit of continuous improvement.

Research Questions

1- What are the perceptions of the university leadership program professors' and graduate students at A ██████████ (██████████) in terms of the (a) program's mission and vision, (b) program's aims, (c) curricula, (d) areas of strength and areas for growth, (e) challenges, as well as (f) opportunities for improvement in the way that the educational leadership programs prepare principals to become effective leaders?

2- What are the perceptions of the university leadership program professors' and graduate students at ██████████ (██████████) in terms of the (a) client group, (b) structure, (c) delivery modes, (d) credentialing, and (e) pedagogy of the educational leadership preparation program at their universities?

3. What are the similarities and differences that exist between ██████████

4. What can American and ██████████ university professors and students learn from each other in a way to improve the programs?

b-How will the results of this project be used? (e.g., Presentation? Publication? Thesis? Dissertation?)

9b) The results of this study will be used for a dissertation; and may also be used to create presentations or publications.

10- KEY PERSONNEL. Describe responsibilities. Include information on research training or certifications related to this project. CITI is required. Be as specific as possible. (Include additional personnel in an attachment.) All key personnel must attach CITI certificates of completion.

Principle Investigator: Houda Al-Housni Title: PhD candidate E-mail address: haa0015@auburn.edu

Dept / Affiliation: College of Education – Educational Foundations Leadership and Technology

Roles / Responsibilities: recruitment, consenting of participants, data collection, data analysis, transcription: translate Arabic interviews to English, and report the study. I am an Arabic native speaker and English is my second language

Individual: Dr. Lisa Kensler Title: Professor E-mail address: lak0008@auburn.edu

Dept / Affiliation: College of Education – Educational Foundations Leadership and Technology

Roles / Responsibilities: advisor, collaboratively review data during analysis stage

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address: _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address: _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address: _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address: _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

11- LOCATION OF RESEARCH. List all locations where data collection will take place. (School systems, organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) Be as specific as possible. Attach permission letters in Appendix E. (See sample letters at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>)

Location data collection will take place: Interviews: AU server using ZOOM

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12- PARTICIPANTS.

- a. Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project including inclusion or exclusion criteria for participant selection.

☐ Check here if using existing data, describe the population from whom data was collected, & include the # of data files.

12a) The participants will be academic faculty staff at AU and SQU and graduate students from AU and SQU. I will recruit one program coordinator and one clinical professor from AU, and as well one program coordinator and one clinical professor from SQU. The faculty are from Educational Leadership departments in both universities. I will also recruit six master's students from each university.

In addition, I will analyze the documents, files and information about the principal preparation program reported in the websites of each university.

- b- Describe, step-by-step, in layman's terms, all procedures you will use to recruit participants. Include in Appendix B a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate.
(See sample documents at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>.)

12b) I will recruit the professors and graduate students using a prepared script (APPENDIX B) about the research study by e-mail using the text from the script. My committee will help me access to graduate students at AU, and the department head of EFA at SQU, will help me access the graduate students at SQU. They will receive a copy of informed consent form as attachment. If they agree to participate, I will obtain written consent before beginning. My recruitment script will include an example of how I will use the data I collect from them. I will let participants know that they may turn in a consent form regardless of whether or not they chose to participate so that it will not be obvious to others what they decide by e-mail. Participants will be given a copy of the consent documents to keep for their record as attachment via email.

c- What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study? 12

How many participants do you expect to recruit? 16

Is there a limit on the number of participants you will include in the study? ☐ No ☒ Yes – the # is 16

- d- Describe the type, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants.

(If no compensation will be given, check here: ☒)

Select the type of compensation: ☐ Monetary ☐ Incentives

- ☐ Raffle or Drawing incentive (Include the chances of winning.)
☐ Extra Credit (State the value)
☐ Other

Description: NA

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13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.

a- Describe, step-by-step, all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants. If a waiver is being requested, check each waiver you are requesting, describe how the project meets the criteria for the waiver.

- ☐ Waiver of Consent (including using existing data)
- ☐ Waiver of Documentation of Consent (use of Information Letter)
- ☐ Waiver of Parental Permission (for college students)

13a) All research activities included use participants' names, which will be changed to pseudonyms. I need the participants' name for my records, to help me when I will do a follow up interview for clarification if needed, but as I mentioned in the previous sentence all the names will be changed to pseudonyms. I seek the consent of each participant by explaining what the research study is about, discussing what they are being asked to do, how long it will take, what the risks and benefits are, how data will be used, how their privacy will be protected, and by reminding them their participation is voluntary.

Before participating in the study, participants will return signed consent for interviews by emailing me a signed document. When received, I will have sent them an email which will include information summarizing study, the time that they chose to do interview via zoom by using zoom call, the comfortable place for them to do the zoom, and then sent them the zoom link and contact information.

b- Describe the research design and methods you will use to address your purpose. Include a clear description of when, where and how you will collect all data for this project. Include specific information about the participants' time and effort commitment. (NOTE: Use language that would be understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Without a complete description of all procedures, the Auburn University IRB will not be able to review this protocol. If additional space is needed for this section, save the information as a .PDF file and insert after page 7 of this form.)

13 b) The research design is a qualitative comparative case study. This strategy provides an "all-encompassing method" for systematically studying and describing a phenomenon (in this case, the implementation of principal preparation programs) within a real-life context (Merriam, 1998).

1. After receiving consent and obtaining signature written copy via email from the participants who agreed to take part in a forty-five-minute interview, the interviewee will pick a date and time convenient for their schedule, and it will be done via zoom. The interview will be recorded for the purpose of transcription only. I will ask the participants if they want to see me during the interview or not. The participants who will say yes. I will instruct them to turn on video, and for those who said no I will tell them to turn off the video. In addition, I will tell the participants that I will use the Voice memo app on iPhone or iPad as an additional way to record interviews. A follow up interview may be needed for clarification and will be done within two weeks of initial interview and would take no more than ten minutes of participants' time.

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13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS. *Continued*

c. List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in [Appendix C](#).

(e.g., surveys and questionnaires in the format that will be presented to participants, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)

13 c) The data collection instrument that will be used, in the format presented to the participants for this study is the interview protocol. The interview data will be collected using Auburn's teleconferencing zoom (zoom call) and using the Voice memo app on iPhone or iPad as additional resources. I will open the zoom from my laptop, and I used my iPad and mobile phone as additional resources. The devices is capable of connecting to the internet, the auto-upload feature is disabled as the Cloud is not a secure storage method\site. The zoom call recording will be audio only to avoid participant confusion.

d. Data analysis: Explain how the data will be analyzed.

13d) To complete my analysis, I followed the strategies suggested by Merriam (1998) as well as Braun and Clarke (2006). Since I completed all of my interviews in the language most comfortable for my participants, either English or Arabic, I needed to add additional measures to ensure accurate translations. Therefore, prior to analyzing the data, I fully transcribed the interviews in the language they were conducted. For the interviews conducted at SQU there were two additional translations performed. First, each interview was translated by myself from Arabic to English, then I translated each interview back to Arabic. This process of transcription between the two languages allowed for a level of comparison between the original Arabic translation and the second Arabic translation to ensure that the meaning had not changed and to ensure reliability and validity of the data.

Once all of the interviews were translated to English, and the Arabic translations were verified, I used thematic analysis to begin organizing my findings.

To the end, the researcher followed the five main phases for this type of analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first step of this process is becoming familiar with the data. To do this, after transcribing the interviews, I read and re-read the notes that she took and transcriptions a number of times. While I was reading the transcriptions and notes, I highlighted the points that were important to the study like those directly related to the research questions. After reading through the transcripts a number of times, I started to generate an initial coding structure. More specifically, I coded the interesting features in the notes and then moved to the codes and at the same time collected more data relevant to each code. Third, after coding, I searched for emerging themes. Put differently, I collected codes that were all related to one topic and began the process of creating potential themes that might explain the relationship between those chosen codes. Next, I reviewed all of the potential themes by gathering all data relevant to a theme and moving back and forth between the data collected, the codes created, and the potential themes to ensure symbiosis. Finally, I identified the overall story the analysis tells, and generated clear definitions and names for each theme.

In addition, I will do a content analysis from principal preparation program document to get a closer look at the professors' and students' perspectives.

14. RISKS & DISCOMFORTS: List and describe all of the risks that participants might encounter in this research. If you are using deception in this study, please justify the use of deception and be sure to attach a copy of the debriefing form you plan to use in [Appendix D](#). (Examples of possible risks are in section #6D on page 2)

14. The risks that participants might encounter in this study include breach of confidentiality due to the use of identifiable information at collection. The identifiable information will be destroyed, deleted, or shredded, once information is collected and names are changed to pseudonyms.

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15. PRECAUTIONS. Identify and describe all precautions you have taken to eliminate or reduce risks as listed in #14. If the participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, please describe additional safeguards that you will use to assure the ethical treatment of these individuals. Provide a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D. (Samples can be found online at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm#precautions>)

1.5 a) Original data with the identifiable information will be destroyed, deleted, or shredded, once information is collected and names are changed to pseudonyms. Pseudonyms are necessary for matching data from interviews. The audio files will be deleted once transcribed.

If using the Internet or other electronic means to collect data, what confidentiality or security precautions are in place to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during both the collection and transfer of data.

16. BENEFITS.

a. List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.

(Do not include "compensation" listed in #12d) Check here if there are no direct benefits to participants.



1.6a) Participants will not directly benefit

b. List all realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.

1.6b) Realistic benefits may be transferable; and include an increased understanding from insights gained of the professors and students' perspectives and experience which may be used to inform planning for future preparation programs.

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17. PROTECTION OF DATA

a. Data are collected:

- ☐ Anonymously with no direct or indirect coding, link, or awareness of who participated in the study (Skip to e)
- ☐ Confidentially, but without a link of participant's data to any identifying information (collected as "confidential" but recorded and analyzed as "anonymous") (Skip to e)
- ☒ Confidentially with collection and protection of linkages to identifiable information

b. If data are collected with identifiers or as coded or linked to identifying information, describe the identifiers collected and how they are linked to the participant's data.

17 b) Interviews contain two identifiers: voice and name of participants. The identity of participants will be pseudonyms.

c. Justify your need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.

17c) Pseudonyms need to be used since I am studying professor's and student's perspectives. The names need to be consistent through audio data for interview transcript.

d. Describe how and where identifying data and/or code lists will be stored. (Building, room number?) Describe how the location where data is stored will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security. If applicable, state specifically where any IRB-approved and participant-signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.

17d) The only way to link real names to participants would be to access the code list, which will be stored in a separate and secure location. Once all data is collected and are replaced with pseudonyms, this code list will be destroyed by shredding document and deleting files. Files with pseudonyms will be saved using Auburn's cloud storage, BOX.

e. Describe how and where the data will be stored (e.g., hard copy, audio cassette, electronic data, etc.), and how the location where data is stored is separated from identifying data and will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security

17e) The transcripts from interviews along with the audio recordings from interviews, will be stored electronically on computer and will be saved using Auburn's cloud storage, BOX, and kept on secure, password-protected laptop in locked office at home in my absence.

f. Who will have access to participants' data?

(The faculty advisor should have full access and be able to produce the data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.)

17f) Dr. Lisa Kensler, my faculty advisor, will have full access to all participants' data.

g. When is the latest date that identifying information or links will be retained and how will that information or links be destroyed?




(Check here if only anonymous data will be retained ☒)

17 g) Audio recordings of interviews will be deleted, once transcribed and checked for accuracy and transcripts shredded upon completion of analysis, no later than November 30, 2022.

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Dr. Kensler's CITI

		Completion Date 26-Oct-2020 Expiration Date 26-Oct-2023 Record ID 37826561
This is to certify that:		
Lisa Kensler		
Has completed the following CITI Program course:		
IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher	(Curriculum Group)	<div>Not valid for renewal of certification through CME. Do not use for TransCelerate mutual recognition (see Completion Report).</div>  Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel	(Course Learner Group)	
1 - Basic Course	(Stage)	
Under requirements set by:		
Auburn University		
Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w9b1ef80a-650f-432f-9e79-1031d8d195e0-37826561		



Completion Date 25-Jan-2019
Expiration Date 24-Jan-2024
Rernrd ID 30207689

This is to certify that

Houda Al-Housni

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Responsible Conduct of Research for Humanities (Curriculum Group)
Humanities RCR (Course Learner Group)

Under requirements set by:

Auburn University



Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify?wf97240bd-abOd-449c-ac26-e9b0a47149dc-30207689

The IRB only accepts forms posted at <https://cws.auburn.edu/vpr/compliance/humansubjects/?Forms> and submitted electronically.

Dear Ms. Al-Housni,

Your protocol titled "Educational Leadership Development in U.S. and : Preparing Successful Leaders" has received approval as "EP" under federal regulation 45 CFR 46.110(b)(6,7). Please find approval of your protocol attached.

Official notice:

This e-mail serves as official notice the protocol has been approved. By accepting this approval, you also accept your responsibilities associated with this approval. Details of your responsibilities are attached. Retain a copy for your records.

Consent documents:

Attached is a copy of your consent form. You must provide a copy for each participant to keep.

Expiration:

Continuing review of this Expedited protocol is not required; however, all modification/revisions to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB.

When you have completed all research activities: have no plans to collect additional data and have destroyed all identifiable information as approved by the IRB, please submit a final report.

Best wishes for success with your research! IRB Admin
Office of Research Compliance
Auburn University 540 Devall Drive Auburn, AL 36832