

RESEARCH TITLE

The extent to which the principles of independent schools can be applied as an approach to general education The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the light of the American experience

Abdulaziz Ahmed Alharazi¹

¹ Assistant Professor of Educational Administration and Planning at the College of Education. Umm Al-Qura University.

Email: abadysmily@gmail.com

HNSJ, 2023, 4(2); <https://doi.org/10.53796/hnsj4251>

Published at 01/02/2023

Accepted at 21/01/2023

Abstract

The study aimed to identify the extent to which the principles of independent schools can be applied from the point of view of directors of education departments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as an entry point for public education reform in the light of the American experience. In the current study, the researcher used the descriptive survey method as the most appropriate method for this study. The study population consisted of all directors of education departments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which numbered (42) principals. Therefore, the study sample consisted of all individuals (the comprehensive community) due to the smallness of the study community. For the purpose of the study, a tool was designed (the questionnaire) to measure the extent to which a set of principles related to the nature of the current study can be applied. The researcher used the appropriate statistical methods to analyze the data to reach the results of the study. The results of the study showed that the possibility of applying the principles of independent schools came to a low degree. Therefore, in light of the results of the current study, the researcher presented a number of recommendations that hopefully will be useful in applying the principles of independent schools as an entry point and an attempt to reform public education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in terms of holding courses and workshops to introduce independent schools in terms of their nature, objectives, importance and mechanisms And the need to work on conducting more studies and research on the subject of independent schools.

Key Words: Principles of Independent Schools, public education reform.

1. Introduction

The educational and educational systems in all developed and developing countries have witnessed a series of reforms in order to reach more efficient and effective systems and the ability to deal with the developments the world is witnessing as a developmental movement and rapid and intentional development. Individuals in all societies and countries seek to obtain their opportunities in order to improve their lives and reach satisfactory social positions, both material and moral. Therefore, the society aspires from education to achieve development that contributes directly and effectively to its ability to achieve advanced positions in global competition and reach a level of well-being and prosperity (Al-Dhahab, 2017).

Therefore, education is an urgent and necessary societal demand, which is among the priorities and at the forefront of the sustainable development map, and it is the means and way to invest human capital, which represents the main and main element of economic and social progress, and the main and effective driver to keep pace with global developments and the transition towards a modern knowledge economy.

As it is known that education has a great and direct impact on the progress and development of thought and society alike, because the educational and educational system is one of the important and main systems of society and as open systems that interact and overlap with other systems, whether they are political, social or Economic, so it is necessary to work on the development and renewal of the educational system in order to accommodate what has been produced and reached by development and progress through the explosion of knowledge, as well as technological development and modern means of communication. Where rapid transformations and changes have become a major and essential characteristic of this era. In view of these changes, there was a need for proper educational development, improvement and reform processes based on scientific and strategic planning for the educational reality and the various challenges facing it. It became necessary for all diverse institutions to fuse with contemporary life, which is required by information technology (Al-Shanbari, 2017).

For this, societies in the twenty-first century must contribute directly and effectively to reforming educational systems and restructuring them in order to be more effective, flexible, more focused on goals, and more humane in terms of their connection to the human element.

Within the framework of reform and striving to improve and reform educational systems, developed and developing countries alike seek to develop their relevant educational systems; A desire to enhance the quality of education and improve its outcomes, which included the elements of educational systems. Within the framework of those efforts, those developed countries have tended to further decentralize the management of their educational systems and contribute to making the school a stand-alone organizational and administrative unit that operates under the supervision of a conscious leadership and management, and makes its decisions freely and independently, independent of any pressures and other interventions, and enhances the The capabilities of its educational staff, and participates in setting new standards and criteria to evaluate its performance and hold it accountable as required (Abdulaziz, 2012).

In light of this, many approaches and methods were used as an attempt to reform educational systems, and among those reform approaches was the creation of types of schools called independent schools. This type appeared in the United States, which directly allows a wide-ranging right of choice linked to the concept of administrative independence. , and is linked to the principle of accountability with high transparency, as this is not only by the official authorities, but also by the members of society themselves, as it is characterized by a high and high degree of transparency, allowing the practice of the concept of accounting from more than one side, which contributes to providing- in Often - a high degree of performance and effective practice, which is reflected on the educational outcomes in terms

of their crystallization, quality, and function (Al-Zuhairi, 2014).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not isolated and immune from these challenges and changes, as a number of initiatives have emerged that seek to develop the education system with different educational systems and objectives in developed countries from the educational system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its objectives, it is possible to benefit from these models and reform approaches. Modern development in the management of public education schools in a manner that is consistent with the privacy and philosophy of society, especially that the reality of Saudi education is in urgent need of a qualitative management capable of addressing problems, developing education, and advancing the wheel of progress.

Looking at the state of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it becomes clear that it has developed clearly and tangibly under favorable conditions in terms of the availability of capabilities and resources, and valuable policies and ambitious goals have been drawn up for it, but the current situation has undergone many changes and faced many challenges. Which he must take his path and his way in light of a local climate that calls for restricting government spending and searching for various funding sources and reducing public spending (Swed, 2017).

Therefore, through the foregoing, the independent schools model can be taken as an entry point for reforming the Saudi education system, because the independent schools model and its principles and aspects may contribute to bringing about development, the intended change, the desired reform, and the upgrading of public education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

2. Study problem and questions

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, like other countries, faces many challenges, and its education system suffers, like other educational systems in the rest of the different countries, from many problems and obstacles that stand in the way of the educational process, which needs a serious pause to advance it and work on reforming and developing it. These challenges vary between internal challenges directly related to the educational system, as well as external challenges related to the surrounding environment, as the educational system is a dynamic interactive system. Although many development attempts have been made, these developments have not been matched by changes in the style and methods of school administration. Many studies have shown that the school administration suffers from a number of administrative difficulties, and various organizational problems that limit its effectiveness in performing its mission and fulfilling its duties; Achieving its goals and perhaps this is due to the severe centralization and the complex bureaucratic procedures that resulted in many problems, in addition to the delay in work, wastage of efforts, and low and weak participation in the decision-making process. The school administration also faces several problems in the issue of accountability and participation. The community in the management and financing of public education (Al Bishr, 2009, fall, 2018, Al Arifi, 2011). Where the study of Al-Jabri and Al-Omari (2019) showed the need to expand the approval of independent schools annually until the transformation of public education into independent schools becomes complete because of its positive and tangible results achieved in many countries that took this model. While Al-Fayez's study (2017) stressed the importance of involving the private sector in providing support services to the educational system, in an attempt to contribute to giving the Ministry of Education the opportunity to devote itself fully to carrying out its supervisory and senior leadership tasks in the required manner and working to reduce financial burdens and contribute to reducing costs and expenditures. borne by educational institutions. The statistics of the National Center for Evaluation and Evaluation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the results of the top ten schools in the Kingdom in the achievement test showed that all the schools that obtained these centers are private schools, and none of them were public schools (National Center for Measurement, 2018), where these statistics show weakness

Government education outputs through the use of traditional administrative methods that require a change in management style. Al-Qahtani's study (2018) revealed the need to search for methods and models for the future investment of the private sector in public education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in line with contemporary global aspirations and trends in an attempt to reduce government expenditures and the need to search for innovative financing alternatives. Whereas the Al-Huwaishel study (2020), the Watban study (2020), the Al-Fahd study (2019), the Demirbag study (2019) and the Gross study (2019) revealed the need to benefit from global experiences and expertise to achieve positive results in the implementation of independent schools, and their role in achieving excellence in education.

In line with the aspirations of the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to search for initiatives and contributions that help in promoting what is known as the knowledge economy and investment in human capital, as well as benefiting and taking from the recommendations of previous research and studies, and openness to the leading and distinguished global models in development attempts. What is meant and reform is as the model of independent schools that appeared in the early nineties, and is now receiving tangible and increasing acceptance, as their number is increasing at high and rising rates, and because of the many advantages and benefits they are based on, making them worthy of study to clarify the model through which they operate, and how to benefit from it in developing Management of public education schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Therefore, the study problem revolves around the following question:

To what extent can the principles of independent schools be applied as an approach to public education reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in light of the American experience?

3. Objectives of the study

The current study aims to reveal the extent to which the principles of independent schools can be applied in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the aim of reforming education, according to the American experience in applying these principles.

4. Study Approach

Since the main objective of this study is to determine the extent to which the principles of independent schools can be applied as an entrance to public education reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in light of the American experience, this study followed the descriptive survey approach. . As one of the appropriate scientific methods.

5. study community

The population of the current study consists of all directors of education departments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whose total number is (42) education directors distributed over the regions and governorates of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

6. View and discuss results

This part answers all the questions of the study after applying its tool, and then presents and discusses the results of the study, as follows:

To what extent can the principles of independent schools be applied as an entrance to public education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

To answer this question, the arithmetic averages and the standard deviation of the study terms (the questionnaire) were calculated according to the following:

- Educational principles:

Table No. (1) shows the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the response of directors of education departments to items related to the field of educational principles:

No	Ferries	Arithmetic averages	Standard deviation	Degree of appreciation
1	The independent school contributes to the development of students' abilities with creativity and the ability to use technological tools and means and effective communication	2.76	0.66	low
2	The independent school develops students' abilities and skills for critical thinking and decision-making	2.83	0.63	low
3	The independent school encourages the development of innovation in students	2.71	0.68	low
4	The independent school contributes to the development of students' abilities to solve problems and work together	2.93	0.69	low
5	The independent school provides teaching methods specific to each course	2.67	0.77	low
6	The independent school provides training programs to raise the level of the faculty	2.85	0.62	low
7	The curricula of the independent school are built according to international standards in harmony with the requirements of the present.	2.68	0.85	low
8	The independent school is flexible in choosing its educational plan and methods of implementation	2.85	0.69	low
9	Parents of students have the right to choose the school that best suits their children's needs.	2.83	0.77	low
The total		2.79	0.70	low

Table (1) shows the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the paragraphs of the first field (educational principles) for independent schools to the responses of education directors in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Where the arithmetic averages ranged between the paragraphs in this field (2.93) at its highest level, and the paragraph “the independent school contributes to the development of students’ abilities to solve problems and teamwork” and between 2.68 at the minimum, and the paragraph “the independent school provides teaching methods specific to each course, while the rest of the paragraphs related to this field were given a low degree of importance by the directors of education departments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As the result of this implicitly agreed with the result of the study of Al-Osaimi (2019) and the study of Seihan (2018), where the researcher attributed this to the development and technological progress that occurred in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the fields of education in terms of the inclusion and introduction of modern means and technology in The Saudi education system, and the development of the capabilities and competencies of school administration and teachers to keep pace with the era of the knowledge economy. However, this progress and development necessitates the education system to take advantage of global experiences in the field of education, which are in line with and keep pace with the philosophy of

education and education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As the application of the principles of independent schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not impossible, and the best evidence of the existence of this type of schools in a number of neighboring Arab countries. This is a motivating aspect to adopt this model, which has proven to be successful and distinguished, as these schools contain a stimulating environment for students and teachers in terms of their support for independence and the ability to solve problems on their own and to play renewed roles in this type of schools.

- Economic principles:

-

Table No. (2) shows the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the response of directors of education departments to the items related to the field of economic principles:

No	Ferries	Arithmetic averages	Standard deviation	Degree of appreciation
0	The Ministry of Education funds independent schools to support students	2.93	0.85	low
1	The Ministry of Education funds independent schools to support innovative educational programs and activities	2.90	0.80	low
2	The Ministry of Education supports and assists independent schools in supervising their plans	2.85	0.76	low
3	Independent schools have a board of trustees that contributes to increasing their resources and financial capabilities	2.80	0.78	low
4	Independent schools have the freedom to dispose of the budget according to their needs and requirements.	2.76	0.73	low
The total		2.84	.78	low

Table (2) shows the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the paragraphs related to the response of the study sample, represented by the directors of education departments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the field of (economic principles) for independent schools that can be applied in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Where the arithmetic averages ranged between the paragraphs in this field (2.93) at its highest level and for the paragraph "The Ministry of Education finances independent schools to support students" and between (2.76) at its minimum, and for the paragraph "Independent schools have the freedom to dispose of the budget according to their needs and requirements." While the rest of the paragraphs of the economic field came to a low degree of importance by the respondents, represented by the directors of education departments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where they were implicitly compatible with the results of the study of the Al-Osaimi study (2019) and the Seihan study (2018). The researcher attributes this to the deteriorating global economic conditions in light of the contemporary international economic crisis, as this type of school is in dire need of huge budgets and large expenditures in terms of establishing this type of school, which is characterized by large buildings, modern equipment, techniques and technological means and As well as high quality services and operating expenses.

But the contemplator on the economic principles of this type of schools that can be applied in the Saudi environment, where it is possible in the light of the current conditions to find solutions and application alternatives for these principles, including reforming and renovating public schools, and then working on converting them into independent schools within the specifications and Required

standards, also through the participation of the local community and the private sector, providing the necessary funding and support for independent schools.

- Principles of Monitoring and Evaluation:

Table (3) shows the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the response of directors of education departments to the paragraphs related to the field of evaluation control principles:

No	Paras	Arithmetic averages	Standard deviation	Degree of appreciation
5	The Board of Trustees contributes to providing parents, students and officials with information on the extent to which their role has been fulfilled as they are accountable and accountable.	2.76	0.70	low
6	Independent schools have an effective incentive system for all employees.	2.73	0.74	low
7	Availability of an effective accounting system to implement performance evaluation procedures.	2.78	0.73	low
8	Independent schools help students improve and develop their performance	2.85	0.79	low
9	Independent schools provide a system to continuously monitor student performance without exception	2.90	0.80	low
10	Independent schools report students' performance scores to relevant authorities	2.93	0.80	low
11	Independent schools are subject to periodic and continuous evaluation by the responsible authorities	3.05	0.90	medium
The total		2.85	0.78	low

Table (3) shows the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the paragraphs related to the response of the study sample, represented by the directors of education departments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to the paragraphs related to the third area, which is the principles of control and evaluation for independent schools, which can be applied and implemented in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Where the arithmetic averages ranged between the paragraphs in this field (3.05) at its highest level, and it was for the paragraph "These schools are subject to periodic and continuous evaluation by the responsible authorities" and between (2.73) at its minimum, and it was for the paragraph "has an effective incentive system for all school employees The independent "and this was confirmed by the study of Blitz (2018) the need to pay attention to the accounting and control aspect of the application of this type of schools While the rest of the paragraphs related to this field were of low importance by the directors of education departments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as this is due to the fact that the educational system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on the principles of accountability and accountability, and that all education departments in the Kingdom are subject, like other administrative sectors, to programs Administrative and educational supervision and follow-up. And that the school administration is obligated to inform students of the results, whether through the Noor system or in the schools, while the development and training programs in the Ministry of Education follow up on the progress of teacher development through a number of programs such as a program of experiences and competencies, as well as intensive summer courses to raise the level of the teacher and develop it, The regulation of educational jobs was also approved as a condition for promotion to obtain a license to practice the teaching profession. With all these developmental measures, there is no

objection to benefiting from the experiences of others in the process of developing the educational system for the better. We note in the results of the study that the total average of the domains of the extent to which the principles of independent schools can be applied from the point of view of the directors of education departments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia came with a (low) degree, and Table No. (4) shows this.

Table (4) The general average of the fields of study as a whole

principles	Arithmetic averages	Grade degree
Educational principles	2.79	Low
Economic principles	2.84	Low
Principles of Monitoring and Evaluation	2.85	Low
Total	2.82	Low

Through the foregoing, the results of the study indicate that the overall average of the extent to which the principles of independent schools can be applied from the point of view of the directors of education departments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reached (2.82) for the principles as a whole and with a degree of appreciation (low), and this result is in general agreement with the results of previous studies, which confirm the existence of Weakness in the reality of the dimensions covered by the study. This constitutes greater support for benefiting from the independent school's model in reforming and developing public education.

The adoption of these modern models of public education is in line with the direction called for by the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by approving the Kingdom's vision (2030) and the programs, initiatives, projects and targets of those programs in the field of transition towards a knowledge economy and the search for innovative financing sources and benefit from One of the global experiences in developing the education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and among those experiences that have achieved results in other countries is the model of independent schools and the educational and educational goals they achieve for the development and development of students, as well as this type of schools meeting the community partnership in education and working to develop Education in a way that contributes to achieving the requirements of development and the needs of the labor market.

7. Study recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the researcher recommends the following recommendations:

- ✓ The necessity of adopting the principles of independent schools and trying to activate them on the ground by the Ministry of Education and those in charge of them.
- ✓ It is necessary to work on holding training courses and specialized workshops to introduce independent schools in terms of their nature, objectives, importance, and the mechanism of work for this type of models.
- ✓ Integration and coordination between the Ministry of Education and other bodies such as the Education
- ✓ Evaluation Authority and colleges of education to join efforts and create possibilities to adopt this type of modern schools.
- ✓ Encouraging researchers to conduct more studies and research on independent schools.

References

- Al-Wattban, India (2020). The reality of the application of education financing in a specific project for educational vouchers at the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *The Arab Journal of Educational and Psychological Sciences*. 4(17), 345-382
- Al-Dhahib, Yasser (2017) *The development of administrative leaders in Saudi universities in light of the Horizons plan*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Umm Al Qura University.
- Al-Shanbari, Fahd (2017) A proposed conception for the implementation of Baldrige's total quality standards in Saudi universities. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Umm Al Qura University.
- Abdelaziz, Mohamed (2012). Applications of the comprehensive school reform entrance in Australia and the possibility of benefiting from it in Egypt: a comparative study. *Journal of the College of Education in Ismailia*. 23, 189-223
- Al-Zuhairi, Ibrahim (2014). Accountability in schools of the right to choose an entrance to support the concept of decentralization in the management of education in Egypt. *Journal of the College of Education*. 22(1), 309-405
- Alkhorayef, Ahmed (2018). *Accounting in school administration, a proposed vision for application in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation
- Al Bishr, Fatima (2009). *Developing secondary school administration based on the curriculum system in light of the school-centered administration*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation
- Al-Arifi, Sultan (2011). *The role of community participation in public education reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a proposed scenario*. Unpublished PhD thesis: King Saud University. Riyadh
- Swed, Mohammed (2017) *Education system and policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. Dar Al Shukri
- Al-Fayez, Haila (2017) *A proposed strategy for the privatization of some educational services in public education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. Unpublished PhD thesis: Al-Imam University. Riyadh
- Al-Jabri, Nayaf, Amani, Al-Omari (2019) The experience of delegated schools in the United States of America and the possibility of benefiting from them in the privatization of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *The Fifth Annual Meeting of the Saudi Educational Society*.
- Sihan, Nazir (2018) The possibility of applying the principles of independent schools from the point of view of educational experts. *Jinan University Magazine*
- Al-Qahtani, Mohammed (2018) *The future investments of the private education sector in education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. An unpublished doctoral dissertation. Umm Al-Qura University: Mecca
- Badria, Al-Osaimi (2019) *A proposed strategy for developing the management of Saudi public education schools*.
- Al-Assaf Saleh (2003) *Scientific Research*. Dar Wael
- Obeidat, Thouqan and Abdel-Khaleq, Kayed (2012) *Scientific research, its concept and tools*. Dar Al-Fikr
- Al-Nafi'i, Hala Abdullah (2020) *Diversifying Education Funding Sources in Independent*

Schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Light of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 and Some International Experiences, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Umm Al-Qura University

- Helal, Ihab Ahmed (2019) The Independent School System in England and How to Benefit It in Egypt.” *Journal of the Faculty of Education: Kafrelsheikh University - Faculty of Education*, 19(1) 467-500
- Blitz, M. (2018). Market-based and Authorizer-based Accountability Demands and the Implications for Charter School Leadership. *Journal of School Choice*.
- Gross, B. (2019). Inside Charter Schools. National charter school research project center on reinventing public education, Washington, USA
- Kuscova, S., & Buckley, J. (2004). The Effect of Charter School Legislation on Market Share. Education Policy Analysis Archives, A peer-Reviewed Scholarly *Journal Charter Schools USA*. National Council of Education Providers, Washington, D.C.
- Keefe, C. (2008). *Organizational analysis of teacher decision making and its effects in charter schools*. University of Pennsylvania.