

Experiences of Leadership in Rural schools in Saudi Arabia: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

In line with other Arabic countries, Saudi Arabia is currently undergoing large scale school reform in response to key factors brought about by globalization. While there is a growing body of research exploring these systemic changes in urban environments, there is very little published research regarding rural schools. In fact, rural schools are still under-examined globally comparing to their urban and suburban counterparts over a range of reform dimensions. In Saudi Arabia, there are around 1128 rural areas that contain about 3200 schools. Several challenges face rural schools especially in relation to recruitment, retention and professional development opportunities for teachers and school leaders. However, there is very little in depth research which explores these issues “on the ground”.

The aim of this research is filling this knowledge gap and explore teachers’ and leaders’ perceptions and experiences of working in rural schools in KSA. In Saudi Arabia, there is a growing body of research into school leadership. However, there is very little published research specifically exploring rural schools. By using an in-depth case study approach and adopting an analytical framework based on the interlinking concepts of leadership practices, culture and CPD this study offers a significant and original contribution to knowledge in this area. This study also will adopt a qualitative multiple case studies which is going to employ semi-structured interviews, focus group and documentary analysis.

Keywords: Rural school, retention, leadership practice, culture, continuing professional development