

*Original Research Article*

# Problems of Administrations of Public Schools in Sharurah Province (KSA) and Requirements for Solution

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## Abstract

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The study aims to identify the problems encountered by school administrations with regard to teachers, parents, policies of the Ministry of Education (MoE Department in Sharurah), curricula and textbooks, and school facilities and supplies. It highlights the differences in viewpoints – if any – of the members of the study community toward such problems on basis of specific variables, i.e. gender, educational qualification, administrative experience, and school stage (primary, intermediate, and secondary). The study sample consists of 37 public school principals, including 19 males and 18 females, randomly selected from the study population in Sharurah during the school year 1438-1439 AH. For this purpose, a questionnaire was developed, consisting of 47 items distributed on six domains. The reliability and validity of questionnaire items were attested and demonstrated. Data analysis was conducted using mean averages, standard deviation, and  $F^2$  test. Based on the values of averages and standard deviations obtained in the study, the main problems facing school principals in the school year 1438-1439 AH are – in a descending order – were related to parents, school facilities and supplies, teachers, students, DoE Department, and curricula and textbooks. It is observed that there are no statistically significant differences in the domains of problems and study instrument in general that can be attributed to gender. But the study has come out with interesting findings related to context, i.e. most of the teachers are from outside Sharurah province; there is an urgent need to hold training programs for school teachers in the province; most teachers lack the sense of professional stability and are trying to get transferred; and there is a need to hold training courses for principals of public education schools in Sharuarh. In light of the findings of the study, it is recommended to provide teachers with motivation, incentives and adequate support to encourage them to stay in the region and have a sense of stability. Students should also be engaged through awareness programs and activities to promote their interest in education. Finally, public school principals should be involved in trainings to ensure their skill enhancement and career advancement.

**Keywords:** Problems, School administration, Principal, Sharurah

## INTRODUCTION

Education today faces a lot of challenges, requirements, problems and – most notably – a need for scientifically-driven administration, represented by school principal, whose very existence and leadership and administrative skills not only symbolize authority but are also part and parcel of successful school administration and organization, and are also essential

components to maintain effectiveness and efficiency at school.

Effective management is, of course, the key to progress in societies and a pre-requisite for development. The way to progress and prosperity does not depend solely on material wealth, but more on the presence of a conscious and creative management capable of investing

human potential and wealth in a manner that is beneficial to the individual and, eventually, the entire society. Management is basically a human social process, and is a human element that functions as a driving force for the implementation of administrative activities. To achieve that, the management personnel should ideally be in possession of the knowledge, administrative know-how, work-related capacities, and skills necessary for the fruitful utilization of available resources, effective interpersonal communication, ability to activate and solicit work-team's cooperation spirit to achieve desired goals and objectives. Sayed Al-Hewari defines management as "performance of work through others, by planning and directing their efforts and taking care of them" (Ahmad, 2006: 12; Researchers' translation).

The concept of "school administration" can be defined as "every purposeful, organized activity intended to achieve the desired educational goals of the school.... [It] is not an end in itself but a means to achieve the objectives of the educational process" (Morsi, 1996; Researchers' translation). As an entity, school administration is the unit vested with implementation of the educational policy, and is headed by a principal whose responsibility is to direct the school towards the performance of its mission and to implement the educational rules and regulations issued by the Ministry of Education (Motawe and Hasan, 1994). School administration is a unit in its own right, managed by a school principal, whose responsibility is to implement the laws, rules, regulations, and school-oriented instructions of the educational authorities (Khashman 2011: 418).

In fact, school administration is a complete body composed of school staff, a school principal, deputy principal(s), administrators, student counselor(s), teachers and students – i.e. a work team that cooperates with each other to form an organic unity and is interconnected by a shared responsibility to achieve common targets. We believe that school administration requires the involvement of students' parents in taking responsibility, setting goals, and participating in the solution of school-related problems. As such, school administration includes more than the principal only; it should rather involve all school personnel, including administrators, technicians, workers, deputies, senior teachers and other teaching staff, students, parents, and other education stakeholders in community so that the school can perform its mission and realize its educational goals.

As a human endeavor, school administration does not go without associated difficulties and challenges. Such challenges and problems vary from one school to another depending on several factors, e.g. type of school (male or female), or stage (elementary, intermediate, and/or secondary), environment (city, village, etc.), conditions of school, and school staff (in terms of their qualifications, experience, personal characteristics, thoughts, etc.).

Generally, the difficulties and problems encountered

by school administration are classified as follows (Ahmed, 2006: 29-30):

I) difficulties related to the educational process:

- shortage in teachers
- low performance level of some teachers/employees due to professional or psychological reasons
- diversity of teachers' approaches and behaviors
- ill-disciplined students
- tendency to resort to private tutoring, and its impact on school work
- constant changes in timetables due to faculty mobility or deficiency in teachers of some school subjects;

II) Difficulties related to the reconciliation of administrative aspects and technical supervision;

III) Difficulties related to performance of duties:

- excessive absence rates
- excessive number of students in classrooms
- pressure to admit / re-enroll too young students
- non-adoption of the full-day system at school due to several circumstances.

Broadly speaking, administration has a big influence on modern life, considered as a means to create a better life for people. The experience of developed countries demonstrates that progress goes hand in hand with proper administration and management of resources (Hellriegel and Slocum, 2006: 523- 527).

In the present time, emergency management has evolved into a full-fledged discipline, academically as well as practically, with one of its constituent parts being education in emergency. The delivery of such humanitarian aid hinges on educational institutions, given that school leadership is the institution responsible for the leadership and management of the "citizen factory", i.e. school, which aims to produce good citizens and develop their personalities. However, emergency/crisis situations have unique features and elements that distinguish them from other ordinary situations: e.g. surprise (unexpectedness), threat, and lack of information, speed, overlapping, complexity, and time constraints. Usually such situations are dealt with on basis of crisis type and severity. The past has witnessed unpractical, devious, random and non-systematic ways in handling crises and emergencies, including media blackout, ignorance of crisis, unwillingness to acknowledge the existence of crisis etc. Such scenarios remain unrealistic, as they only either provide temporary – rather than permanent – solutions or cannot alleviate the repercussions of the emergencies. Dodging of responsibilities by principal or manager – whether by temporary disappearance from the scene until the problem is solved, using sick leaves or any other excuses, or by grafting blame on others – cannot provide solutions, and may often lead to exacerbation or re-emergence of problems.

Methodological approaches should be used to solve problems effectively (Hariri, 2005). Gainey (2009) points out that crisis management refers to strategies developed with intent to deal with the effects of a crisis, to prevent or

alleviate the impact of crisis on organization/institution. Shower (2010) opines that classroom management refers to the rules and procedures applied to maintain the education and learning environment. Jones and Patterson (1992) consider that responsibility and important guidelines should be clarified during the formulation of policies and measures in relation to problem management plans and with community support to help to overcome crisis. Decker (1997) regards that, as problems persist, province-oriented education policies must adapt continuously to cope with emerging and likely school problems, and that each school needs to develop an operational safety plan to mitigate problems and ensure the safety and well-being of students.

“It can be said that the school principal is responsible for everything related to the administrative and technical aspects, such as curriculum, teaching methods, textbooks, the relationship of school to the community and to other schools” (Hamdan, Al-Shibaniyah, 2007: 168-169). Obviously, school principal is shouldered with a grand and huge responsibility to ensure progress of school in every respect, be that administrative, technical, and/or supervisory. On the other hand, Abidin (2005; in Khashouq, 2011: 435) stressed that the main hurdles that hinder school progress can include the following: teachers’ low performance level, teacher shortage, vast variations in teachers’ professional conduct, lack of cooperation and coordination among teachers, school’s lack of resources, lack of support and incentives for school from educational authorities, and the tendency to hold school principal solely accountable for the conduct of the entire educational process in the school. Therefore, it is necessary for us to pay attention to the problems and constraints facing the principals of public schools in Sharurah province, with a view to highlight the requirements to solve such problems.

### **Study’s Problem and Questions**

The study is concerned with the various problems encountered by the administrations of public schools in Sharurah in relation to specific fields, i.e. teachers, students, parents, curricula, textbooks, and school facilities and equipment. Just as any type of organizations, schools and their administrations face myriad of problems. Interestingly, it is observed that not many researches or reference books that are related to school administration do not provide comprehensive accounts of the problems facing school administrations and the requirements for solution. That being said, this study is intended to answer the following questions:

1) What are the problems encountered by principals of public schools (primary, intermediate, and secondary) in Sharurah?

2) Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level 0.05 between the views of principals of public schools (primary, intermediate, and secondary) in Sharurah regarding such problems on basis of gender, qualification, experience and type of school?

### **Importance of the study**

It is perceived that the importance of the study stems from the following points:

- This is the first study to address the problems faced by the principals of public (primary, intermediate, and secondary) schools in Sharurah province with regard to teachers, students, parents, MoE policies, curriculum and textbooks, and school facilities and equipment.
- The study is intended to draw MoE’s attention to the various problems of public schools in Sharurah province.
- The results of the study is expected to enlighten those on charge and stake holders regarding the need to address the problems, shortcomings, and challenges faced by public school principals, in an attempt to enhance the efficiency of the educational process and help public school administrations address problems through appropriate solutions.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study aims to

- identify the problems faced by school administrations with regard to teachers, students, parents, MoE Department, curriculum, textbooks, and school facilities and equipment.
- highlight differences – if any – among the study population in their identification of the problems facing school administrations according to the variables of gender, qualification, experience, and School stage (primary, intermediate, and secondary).
- come up with suggestions and proposals to overcome such problems faced by principals of public school from the point of view of the sample of the study.

### **Procedural Definitions**

#### ***Problems***

The material or moral obstacles facing school principal and standing in his/her way to realize and achieve the desired educational goals.

#### ***School administration problems***

These refer to defects, deficiencies or impediments preventing school administration from the achievement of

its goals and affecting its efficiency and effectiveness.

## **METHODOLOGY**

To achieve the objectives and answer questions, the study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach. A comprehensive review of relevant reference books and previous studies is used to provide theoretical foundation for the analysis of the material data collected from the field, outlining the problems faced respondents of both sexes. After the data collection process, appropriate statistical analysis is conducted to come up with results. Results are then discussed, and recommendations made, accordingly, to help overcome the problems and obstacles faced by the principals of the public education schools.

### **Tools**

The study uses questionnaire as the main information collection tool. It was designed in three parts. The first part includes respondent bio-data; the second part was divided into six domains to reflect types of problems faced by school administration (i.e. teachers, students, parents, local MoE Department, curricula and textbooks, and school facilities equipment); and the third part provides remedies to problems by school principals. The questionnaire was adjusted, and its validity and reliability verified by some experts, specialists and education stakeholders. After it was measured statistically to ensure stability, the questionnaire was administered to study sample and was then collected. Data were entered, and analyzed using SPSS. The results were ultimately analyzed, interpreted and discussed.

### **Study Community**

The study population consisted of the principals of all public schools, affiliated to MoE Department, Sharurah province, totaling 51 respondents as a whole (26 males and 25 females) during the school year 1438-1439 AH.

### **Study Sample**

The study sample included 37 male and female school principals, randomly selected from the study population mentioned above.

### **Study Limitations**

At the level of thematic limitations, the study is limited to

the problems faced by principals of public schools in Sharurah province in relation to teachers, students, MoE Department, parents, curricula and textbooks, and school facilities and equipment. At the level of human limitations, the study is limited to a representative sample of the public school principals randomly selected from the public education sector, under the umbrella of MoE Department in Sharurah province. Finally, at the level of time limitations, this study was conducted in the school year 1438/1439 AH.

### **Study Variables**

The study included the following independent variables:

- Gender (two levels: male / female)
- Academic qualification (two levels: Bachelor's, Bachelor's and above)
- School stage (three levels: primary, intermediate, and secondary)
- Experience (three levels: Less than 5 years, 5-10 years, and 10+ years).

The dependent variable revolves around the response of the study sample reflecting the problems they face in relation to teachers, students, parents, MoE Department, curricula and textbooks, and school facilities and equipment.

### **Previous Literature**

Christensen (2001) aimed to highlight the significance and components of emergency planning and crisis management as reflected by Nebraska primary school principals. The data was collected using a survey tool sent to a random sample of 300 primary school principals in Nebraska. A large proportion of school district respondents reported having a written policy, and that they had safe schools, with strong focus on the educational aspect, involvement of parents, and the relationship with the community. A large proportion of school staff were also highly able to identify early warning signs: social withdrawal, isolation, violence, anger, drug abuse, and control problems. Besides, Nebraska school principals maintained that crisis management plans were important even if staff were not fully prepared to prevent or respond to violent incidents in school premises. The respondents emphasized the necessity to develop crisis management plans, train school staff in problem prevention and response, and provide them with the skills required to intervene and remedy problems regardless of position or situation.

Ruhaily (2012) sought to identify the problems faced by Saudi teachers in private schools Hafr Al Baten (KSA), as revealed by the response of a sample of such teachers. The study concluded that the main problems included low salary (compared to their peer Saudi

teachers in public schools) and random assignments (i.e. forcing teachers to teach subject matters outside their fields of specialization).

Saeed (2012) intended to formulate a perspective that can assist in mapping the potential role of MoE to address the problems faced by women working in the educational field. Adopting a descriptive approach, her study sought to identify the most important educational requirements to overcome the problems facing women. Several obstacles and problems have been identified, notably absenteeism and lack of commitment and punctuality – caused mainly by lack of regular and timely means of transportation, and personal emergencies (e.g. illness, or death or illness of a family member, relative or friend).

Changing context, a study conducted by Khashouk (2011) aimed to identify the problems facing secondary education in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan from the point of view of school principals, as well as suggestions of principals of targeted schools to overcome some of these problems. Targeting 132 high school principals in Erbid, Jarash and Liwa Al-Korah, the study found that the main problems faced by secondary school staff include non-suitability of school buildings, lack of adequate incentives for staff, overcrowded classrooms, and uncooperative attitude of parents.

In the same vein, Uqeilan (2011) aimed to identify the problems face by administrations of primary schools in (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>) Irbid MoE Directorate. Adopting a descriptive analytical method, with a sample consisting of 128 primary school principals, the study used Pearson correlation coefficient and mean averages, and found that the highest impact was caused by student-related problems, followed by teacher-related problems, problems related to school environment, and finally the problems related to teaching methods, means and activities.

The study of Khashman (2011) was designed to diagnose the problems faced by primary schools administrations in Amman MoE Directorate (Jordan), determining the strengths and weaknesses in the educational process. Based on the views of a sample of 128 principals, the study found that the most prominent problems included: poor acquisition levels of many early grade students, and excessive leaves by school staff, inadequate number of computers, and students' poor performance in English.

Ibrahim (2010) attempted to identify administrative problems facing school principals of Irbid - District III (Jordan), based on the views of school principals and assistants (88 in number). Adopting a quantitative approach, the study showed that school-centered and community-centered problems topped all types of administrative problems faced by school principals, followed by student-centered and teacher-centered problems. According to the study results, there are no statistically significant differences ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) attributed to

the impact of academic qualification, School stage, job title and experience in all domains except for the domain of school-centered affairs, particularly for the category 5-year+ experience.

Based on the points of view of study sample, Hatamleh (2008) set out to identify the problems faced by principals of public primary schools in the UAE, and indicate them in an order of priority, taking into consideration the variables of gender, age, years of experience, and qualification. The sample consisted of 210 respondent principals (90 males and 120 females) from the seven emirates of UAE. Adopting a descriptive analytical method, the study found that principals of schools in rural areas complained about understaffing, delays in transportation, and untimely response of MoE departments to enquiries. The study also reflected several other financial and administrative problems, such as inadequacy or lack of maintenance of school buildings, shortage of equipment, inadequate school facilities, and absenteeism (mainly for medical purposes). Besides, there is a common problem of transfer of teachers (more particularly female teachers), causing teacher shortage and sometimes leaving students without teachers for long periods of time, thus heavily affecting students.

Zuhairi (2006) aimed to explore the leading role of secondary school principals, revealing obstacles to this leadership role, and presenting proposals that contribute to overcome these obstacles. Using a descriptive analytical approach, the study was conducted in the provinces of Dakahlia and Damietta (Egypt). A number of 359 questionnaires were distributed among 139 public schools (for girls) in Dakahlia; 288 of the collected questionnaires were valid for analysis. In Damietta province, 195 questionnaires were distributed. The study revealed that social obstacles came in first, followed by organizational obstacles and personal obstacles. Society seems to marginalize women's role in school administration, and does not encourage women to apply leadership, innovation and creativity in the administrative work. The organizational obstacles included excessive number of school meetings (considered also as a waste of time) and the difficulty in timetable preparation. The personal constraints included the resentment of principals for not getting promotion, and the inadequate level of cooperation between parents and school.

Rodaini (2006) aimed to determine the role of community participation in solving the problems of modern school administration. The study was also intended to identify pressing problems associated with school administration in Saudi Arabia, so as to make relevant and practical suggestions and recommendations to enhance the role of community participation in this regard. The study tool (questionnaire) was applied to a sample of 300 girl school principals and deputies in Buraydah and its villages (Qassim, KSA). The study revealed that community participation could lead to the

**Table 1.** Sample Distribution

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	19	51.4
	Female	18	48.6
<b>Experience</b>	Less than 5 years	17	45.9
	5 Years to 10 years	10	27.0
	10 Years and more	10	27.0
<b>Qualification</b>	Less than bachelor	7	18.9
	BA	28	75.7
	Bachelor + Diploma	2	5.4
<b>School stage</b>	Primary	17	45.9
	Intermediate	10	27.0
	Secondary	10	27.0
<b>Total</b>		37	100

**Table 2.** Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of Internal Consistency

Domain	Internal Consistency
Teacher-related problems	.8189
Parent-related problems	.6522
Student-related problems	.8334
Problems related to MoE department	.8815
Problems related to curricula and textbooks	.6834
Problems related to school facilities and equipment	.7571
Total	.9282

implementation of material and moral initiatives to address school problems, e.g. donations to build/expand schools, sponsorship of (annual) celebrations and festivities, provision of incentives to encourage innovation and creativity, etc. Again, the study also pinpointed that one of the relevant problems facing school administration was the ineffectiveness of the parent councils, the all-too-often non-cooperative relationship between school administration and MoE department, and the poor involvement of school administration in community-centered activities.

Khleifat (2005) wanted to investigate problems faced by school principals in Karak province (Jordan) and the relation of these problems to the variable of qualification, gender, MoE department's policies, and years of experience. The sample included 103 respondents. The study results indicated that the most common problems faced by school managers were, respectively, as follows: lack of parental supervision and follow-up, parents' lack of commitment to attend school meetings, lack of theaters and play yards, high illiteracy rates among parents, teacher mobility, and students' low acquisition. The results have also indicated that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  due to the variables of experience and MoE department's policies, while there are statistically significant differences at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  attributable to the gender variable, in favor of males.

### Comment on Previous Studies

Based on the above, it has been noted that all studies converged on the importance to address the problems faced school principals, teacher, administration, and the educational process in general. Some of the above studies dealt with the problems of Saudi teacher in private schools, the problems of secondary education (i.e. Khashouk (2011)), the problems of school principals (i.e. Uqeilan (2011), Khashman (2011), Ibrahim (2010), Hatamleh (2008), Zuhairi (2006), Rodaini (2006), and Khleifat (2005)). (Table 1)

### Study Tool Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the study tool, the internal consistency was measured on a pilot sample of six(6) respondents (other than the study sample), using Cronbach's alpha. The table below reflects this process, yield ingratios considered adequate for the purposes of this study. (Table 2)

### Tool Validity

The content validity method was applied to ensure the validity of the tool, presenting the initial questionnaire to 6

**Table 3.** Averages and Standard Deviations of Types of Problems, in a Descending Order

Rank	S	Domain	Mean Average	Standard Deviation
1	2	II) Parent-related problems	2.54	.354
2	6	VI) Problems related to facilities and equipment	2.27	.495
3	1	I) Teacher-related problems	2.24	.408
4	3	III) Student-related problems	2.20	.438
5	4	IV) Problems related to MoE department	2.06	.546
6	5	V) Problems related to curricula and textbooks	2.06	.515
		Tool as a whole	2.23	.337

specialist arbitrators from the Faculty of Science and Arts (Sharurah, Najran University). Based on their comments, 4 items of the initial questionnaire were deleted, on consideration of potential repetition of content or irrelevance. Also, minor modifications were made to some items. The final questionnaire contained 47 items.

**Fieldwork**

After the measurement of the study reliability and validity, fieldwork was initiated, distributing the questionnaires to the sample respondents. A week later, the filled-in questionnaires were retrieved and prepared for statistical analysis. Data were entered into computer for analysis and processing using SPSS. The analysis yielded arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the items of the tool, measuring the impact of the study variables.

**Statistical Processing**

The following statistical methods have been used:

- To answer Question I, arithmetical averages and standard deviations have been calculated by reviewing all domains of the study, listed in a descending order by arithmetical averages. The averages were distributed as follows: From 1-1.67, no problem; from 1.68 - 2.34, a problem to some extent; and from 2.35 - 3, certainly a problem.

- To answer Question II, arithmetical averages and standard deviations have been calculated to measure the impact of qualification, gender and experience on the problems faced by school principals in Sharurah.

Question I is “What are the types of problems faced by principals of public schools (primary, intermediate and secondary) in Sharurah province?” The table below illustrates the results obtained with reference to this question.

Table (3) shows that the arithmetic averages have ranged between 2.06 - 2.54, with “Parent-related problems” topping the list with a mean average of 2.54, compared to “Problems related to curricula and textbooks”, which was ranked last with a mean average

of 2.06. The total mean average came to be 2.23. The arithmetic averages and the standard deviations of the sample respondents for the domains of the questionnaire came as follows:

Table (4) shows the values of averages and standard deviations of the items reflecting the problems faced by principals of public schools in Sharurah province. These problems are associated with teachers, parents, students, MoE Department, curricula and textbooks, and school facilities and equipment. It appears that Item No. (6) – “Shortage of teachers at the beginning of school year” – obtained the highest average, 2.81, followed by Items No. (29), (16) and (14): i.e. “Slow response to school needs”, “Poor cooperation between parents and school”, and “Parents’ preoccupation with other concerns of life”, respectively, with a mean average of 2.64. The third rank has been filled by Item No. (15): “Parents’ disinterest in parents-teacher councils”, with a mean average of 2.62, followed by Item No. (45) – i.e. “Lack of adequate budget for school maintenance”. Both Item No. (12) – i.e. “Parents’ low awareness of the importance of education” – and Item No. (7) – i.e. “Teachers’ frequent mobility and instability” – have come up with a mean average of 2.54. By contrast, Item No. (8) – i.e. “Lack of training programs for teachers in curricula and teaching methods” – has achieved a mean average of 2.29, followed by Item No. (11) – i.e. “Teachers’ inadequate knowledge of modern teaching methods” – with a mean average of 2.27. In the same vein, Item No. (32) – i.e. “Multiplicity of external supervisors visiting school” – achieved a low rank, with a mean average of 1.81, followed by Item No. (39) – i.e. “Difficulty of curriculum and textbook content” – with a mean average of 1.78. The lowest rank has been realized by Item No. (34) – i.e. “Decreased number of visits by external supervisors to school”.

Question II is “Are there statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the views of principals of public schools (primary, intermediate and secondary) in Sharurah province regarding the problems facing them on basis of gender, qualification, experience, and School stage?”

To answer this question, the statistical averages and standard deviations have been extracted on basis of the

Table 4. Mean Averages and Standard Deviations

Rank	No.	Items	Mean Average	Standard Deviation
1	6	Shortage of numbers of teachers at the beginning of school year	2.81	.397
2	29	Slow response to school needs	2.64	.587
3	16	Poor cooperation between parents and school	2.64	.538
4	14	Parents' preoccupation with other concerns of life	2.64	.538
5	15	Parents' disinterest in parents-teacher councils	2.62	.545
6	45	Lack of adequate budget for school maintenance	2.54	.605
7	12	Parents' low awareness of the importance of education	2.54	.557
8	7	Teachers' frequent mobility and instability	2.54	.691
9	44	Lack of teaching aids at school	2.45	.691
10	17	Lack of parents' engagement in school activities	2.43	.728
11	5	Inadequacy of professional training of teachers	2.43	.688
12	25	Weak student motivation	2.40	.643
13	24	Clear weakness in academic achievement	2.37	.594
14	22	Repeated absence of a large number of students	2.37	.681
15	13	Parents' illiteracy	2.37	.594
16	41	Lack of up-to-date references in school library	2.35	.675
17	42	Lack of laboratories	2.32	.747
18	8	Lack of training programs for teachers in curricula and teaching methods	2.29	.661
19	11	Teachers' inadequate knowledge of modern teaching methods	2.27	.651
20	30	MoE Department's poor performance in solving school problems	2.24	.722
21	28	Poor cooperation between MoE Department and school	2.24	.722
22	46	Ineffective use of school tools, equipment and resources	2.21	.712
23	35	Weak communication between MoE Department and school	2.21	.854
24	1	Late attendance to school	2.21	.750
25	26	Spread of some bad habits among students	2.18	.700
26	18	Delay to morning exercise by a large number of students	2.18	.739
27	27	Sabotage of school property by unruly students	2.16	.687
28	23	Students' failure to do homework	2.16	.646
29	21	Students' disrespect of school's rules and regulations	2.16	.687
30	20	Students' disrespect of school's cleanliness	2.13	.713
31	3	Lack of cooperation between teachers and principal	2.10	.657
32	43	Insufficient classrooms	2.08	.829
33	31	Unwarranted interference of some supervisors with principal's responsibilities	2.08	.829
34	10	Teachers' inadequate computer knowledge	2.08	.682
35	47	Poor condition of school building	2.05	.814
36	40	Inadequacy of curricula and academic content to reflect practical needs	2.05	.743
37	38	Too much content of curriculum and textbooks	2.05	.743
38	9	Teachers' poor classroom management skills	2.05	.779
39	2	Frequent absence from school	2.02	.832
40	36	Weak role of resident supervisor to improve teacher performance	1.97	.798
41	37	Obligation of school to literally abide by MoE Department's instructions	1.91	.862
42	33	Multiplicity of bodies supervising school	1.91	.893
43	4	Irregularity of taking attendance on a daily basis	1.91	.721
44	19	Students' high dropout rates	1.86	.751
45	32	Multiplicity of external supervisors visiting school	1.81	.810
46	39	Difficulty of curriculum and textbook content	1.78	.712
47	34	Decreased number of visits by external supervisors to school	1.62	.720

**Table 5.** Analysis of Quadruple Variance for the Impact of Gender, School stage, Qualification and Experience

Source of Contrast	Total Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Average Squares	P Value	Statistical Significance
Corrected Model	.755(a)	7	.108	.936	.495
Intercept	55.579	1	55.579	481.787	.000
Gender	.022	1	.022	.193	.664
Experience	.135	2	.068	.587	.562
Qualification	.157	2	.079	.682	.514
School stage	.288	2	.144	1.247	.302
Error	3.345	29	.115		
Total	188.828	37			

a R Squared = .184 (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = -.013)

variables of gender, qualification, administrative experience, and specialization – as reflected by Table (5) below.

Table (5) shows the following:

- No statistically significant differences (= 0.05) attributable to gender, as P Value came to be (.193) and at a statistical value of (.664).
- No statistically significant differences (= 0.05) attributable to experience, as P Value came to be (.587) and at a statistical value of (.562).
- No statistically significant differences (= 0.05) attributable to qualification, as P Value came to be (.682) and at a statistical value of (.514).

No statistically significant differences (= 0.05) attributable to School stage, as P Value came to be (1.247) and at a statistical value of (.302).

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Table (3) displays that public school principals face many problems. First, there are problems related to parents. These problems are due to poor cooperation between parents and school. Also, most parents are so preoccupied with the different life concerns that they hardly cooperate with schools. In addition, parents appeared to be reluctant to participate in teacher-parent councils. The obtained averages in this regard – i.e. 2.62 -2.64 – are high and pose a serious problem to school principals. This may be attributed to the high illiteracy rates among parents and their ignorance of the importance of education for their children. The results here tally with the results obtained by Khleifat (2005) – which indicated the prevalence of illiteracy among parents – and with Rodaini (2006) – which referred to the lack of effectiveness of teacher-parent councils.

The next in line are the problems related to the lack of sufficient budget for school maintenance (i.e. at an average of 2.54, positing it at the level of a “serious problem”), lack of educational means (i.e. consistent with the results of the study of Ruhaily (2012)) and lack of up-to-date reference books in school library.

From the point of view of the principals of public schools in Sharurah province, the third place is occupied by the problems related to teachers. These came at a mean value of 2.24, suggesting that this type of problems is ranked at “moderate” or “problems to some extent”. These problems include the following. The first is lack of adequate numbers of teachers at the beginning of school year (with an average of 2.81, i.e. a “serious problem”), followed teachers’ mobility and instability (with an average of 2.54, i.e. a “serious problem”). Then, there is the problem of inadequate professional training of teachers (with a mean average of 2.43, representing also a “serious problem”). The weak performance of teachers may be attributed to their lack of professional experience, as most of them were appointed recently and have not accumulated much experience or got engaged in professional teacher trainings – e.g. planning, teaching methods, classroom management, assessment, time management, etc. Moreover, the lack of teacher training programs with regard to curriculum and teaching methods (with an average of 2.29) and the issue of teachers’ inadequate knowledge of modern teaching methods pose a problem “to some extent”.

The fourth place has been occupied by the problems related to students, and these consist in the following. Students’ lack of motivation to learn came to be a “serious problem”, with a mean average of 2.40, maybe due to lack of incentives offered by school to students and the lack of guidance and awareness promotion by school as to the importance of education. The results indicated a clear weakness in academic achievement, with an average of 2.37, suggesting the existence of a “serious problem”. This weakness may have been caused by multiple reasons. One reason is lack of interest by parents in their children’s education, as reflected by the lack of follow-up by parents on their children’s performance at school. Another reason may be the pervasive weakness of the majority of teachers’ performance and their lack of experience, considering that most of the teachers are recent graduates and have not received sufficient professional training. Another reason may “to some extent” be attributed to the tendency of many students to come late to school, i.e.

after morning exercise. Perhaps, this is fueled by lack of interest and follow-up by parents and their lack of cooperation and coordination with school. The cause of the problem may as well be shared by parents, students and school administration itself. Sometimes, school administration's disregard or lack of commitment to the application of school's rules and regulations can contribute to this problem, perhaps due to the fact that the principals of most public schools in the province of Sharurah have inadequate administrative experience, are outsiders (not from the region), are not specialized in administration, and/or do not have educational administrative qualifications (such as central administration or supervision).

Additionally, one more problem related to students is the sabotage/destruction of school property by unruly students. This issue came up with a mean average of 2.16, and is considered as a problem "to some extent". The reason for that may be the lack of guidance to students by specialized persons. The study results also revealed that the visits to schools by supervisors are considered adequate, and that this does not represent a problem from the point of view of school principals – i.e. the mean average came to be 1.62, implying that it is not a problem. One helpful factor here that can be indicated is the fact that the majority of school sites in the province are close to each other and do not take long time to conduct school visits.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need to hold regular and periodic meetings with parents to strengthen relations with them and ensure their cooperation in solving the problems that may face principals.

- There is a need for illiteracy programs for parents.
- Adequate budget should be allocated for annual school maintenance.
- There is a need to ensure continuous communication between school and MoE Department to obtain the necessary educational tools and deploy them effectively in the learning process.
- MoE Department of Sharurah province should develop a plan to address current and future shortage of teachers, particularly at the beginning of school years.
- There is a need to set rules and conditions to reduce ongoing annual transfers and mobility of teachers, and encourage teachers to settle in the local community.
- The need to hold training courses for teachers of public schools in Sharura, i.e. on modern teaching methods, assessment strategies, and classroom management, etc.
- There is a need to hold training courses for school principals to provide them with skills of effective administration, management, planning, leadership, time management, teamwork control, decision-making,

design of operational plan for school, and running administrative roles and responsibilities of school principals.

- There is a need to develop plans, programs and awareness leaflets for students to motivate them and promote their passion for learning.
- There is a need to motivate teachers and encourage them to settle down where their jobs are.

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