Teachers' insights into the role of teamwork among students in public schools

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Abstract

Despite the fact that establishing a culture of teamwork among students is one of the most important functions and duties of the school, very few studies have addressed this issue in Saudi Arabia. This study investigates the role of all-female schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in promoting a culture of teamwork among its students from the point of view of teachers. The study followed the descriptive- analytical approach: a random sample of teacher participants were selected to represent the public school community. A questionnaire was distributed among all teacher participants for data collection, and the SPSS software was used to analyze the data. The study's results revealed that all areas regarding the culture of teamwork received high approval ratings. Further, the study recommends involving teachers and students in drafting the school's vision by providing all means of communication between departments, especially electronic platforms, including recognition of outstanding teamwork.

Keywords: collective achievement; public education, teamwork

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1. Introduction

Around the world, contemporary educational institutions are increasingly unanimous when it comes to the importance of the student-centered approach in the educational process. Because of this, institutions have devoted all efforts to support this approach, which includes educational systems, curricula, teaching strategies and evaluation. Student-centered learning is an educational approach that takes into account the differences between students in their learning pace, learning styles, interests, skills and needs. Through this approach, teachers develop structured learning environments, where support and guidance are provided to students to achieve skills in self-evaluation and independence when learning (Jaiswal & Al-Hattami, 2020). Teamwork is considered one of the most important modern trends in teaching. This trend seeks to integrate the students into the educational process by linking their learning with active work and positive participation. In many leading countries, this student-centered approach has been used as an alternative to the traditional method (Koueider & Shafiqa, 2017; Al-Shammari, 2016).

Teamwork is defined as "a group of individuals working together in order to achieve a common goal or goals" (Al-Takrouri, 2017, p. 40). Whereas the quality of education is related to the amount of knowledge possessed by individuals in any society, it has become imperative for educational institutions, especially schools, to make the culture of teamwork a primary way for them to improve the quality of their teaching and learning.

This study's problem focuses on establishing a culture of teamwork among students, which is one of the most important functions and duties of the school. If the culture of teamwork is established in the individual school community, it will turn into behaviours and practices observed by members of the larger community, which is of necessity in their personal and professional life (Khanfar, 2020). Many studies have looked into teamwork along with its implementation strategies and the behaviours of the team members. These studies have found teamwork to be one of the most important factors for the success of educational institutions and a key tool for change, development, and creativity, whether in work or in improving academic outcomes (Dehimi, 2016; Khanfar, 2020; Khuwaylid, Mas`udah, & Mas`udah, 2017). Therefore, this study identified the problem as the role of all-female schools in Saudi Arabia/Eastern Province (KSA) in promoting a culture of teamwork from the teachers' point of view. As far as the researcher is aware, this is an inaugural study in the context of female public education in the Eastern Province of KSA.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature

2.1 The Foundation of Teamwork

The beginnings of cooperative learning in the year 1900 was done by scientist Curt Kafka, one of the authors of the Gestalt theory in psychology, who emphasized that groups are complete active units in which the interdependence differs between members (Al-Samurai, 2019). The theory of cooperation has been developed by many researchers. Al-Samurai (2019) stated that more than 100 relational studies were carried out on cooperative learning; this indicates the importance of cooperative learning for educators in developing the educational learning process. As the study of Johnson et al. (1994) stated, cooperative groups were used in the education system in Britain in the late eighteenth century and then applied in New York in 1806. Scientist Parker developed the idea of applied cooperative learning, and John Dewey further promoted the method of cooperative educational groups, for which he became well-known (Al-Samurai, 2019). Recently, the cooperative learning strategy has been described as one of the most recent strategies in terms of controlling time and place with an emphasis

on participation and interactions, which leads students to success and enhanced learning (Al-Moaili, 2016). Thus, establishing a culture of collective achievement within educational institutions requires a supportive environment that embraces its philosophy and existence.

2.2 Definitions of Key Concepts Related to Teamwork Culture

• Future vision: This is "the ability of leaders in the educational institution to examine the reality of the institution and understand it and draw up the development plan of the institution in line with the expected future changes and in a way that achieves the highest levels of efficiency and quality" (Gibran, 2010, p. 15). The clear vision of the institution enhances its strength, supports its employees, and provides them with the best ways to overcome difficulties and translate this vision into a living reality (Khanfar, 2020).

• School environment: Providing an educational school environment that includes everything that can help students, teachers, administrators, and all the school staff to carry out the work expected. It is one of the most important factors for the success of teaching and learning. A positive school environment supports its teachers as well as motivates and supports its students by providing the appropriate atmosphere for achievements and excellence. It improves the performance of its employees along with their achievements and goals (Al-Dajani & Shaheen, 2016; Khanfar, 2020).

• Common culture: The prevailing culture in any educational institution with its systems, norms, and traditions that are directly responsible for shaping the behaviour of its members. The culture that urges, respects, facilitates, and supports common collective action successfully reaches positive achievements (Al-Mqimiah, 2014). An effective school defines its mission and achievement of work through integration with its prevailing culture, which ideally is reflected in student achievements (Fisher, Pumpian, & Ian, 2012).

• Spreading the culture of collective achievement: In order for an educational institution to be able to spread its culture, the institutional culture needs to represent a set of principles, most notably, a good example to which the educational leader adheres to as a basis for work within the institution. Collective achievement involves bridging the gap between theoretical education and practical reality, and continuous stimulation and encouragement. It also needs to include training employees on collective achievement, influencing others through the strength of reward, punishment, and experience, the personality of the leader, and the power of persuasion-based influence (Shaheen, 2013). Directing workers to benefit from others' experiences without compromising value norms is one of the most important incentives in order to spread the culture of teamwork achievements (Khanfar, 2020).

2.3 Related Research

Based on the importance of teamwork, many studies have dealt with the culture of achievement through various educational and non-educational institutions. Khanfar's (2020) study in Jordan investigated the role of the King Abdullah II School of Excellence in spreading the culture of acknowledging achievements for teamwork from the teachers' viewpoint using the descriptive approach. This study also included a questionnaire that was divided into four areas: future vision and mission, school environment, shared culture within the school, and spreading the culture of teamwork. Results showed no statistical differences between teacher specializations and spreading the culture of collective achievement. Some recommendations in order to enhance the student culture of teamwork included involving teachers and students in editing the school vision, providing all means of communication between departments, especially electronic ones, supporting the achievements of teamwork, and disseminating said achievements via electronic platforms.

Similarly, in Iraq, Shammari and Mahmoud (2019) conducted a study to find out the effectiveness of an educational program based on the strategies of flexible groups and teamwork in the achievement of fourth-grade computer science students. There were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group students and the average scores of the control group students in favour of the experimental group in the achievement test. In addition, in Dehimi's (2016) study in Algeria that identified the role of collective work in improving academic outcomes from the teachers' viewpoint, he found that low productivity of work in the educational institution was mainly due to the absence of a unified vision among the stakeholders in the educational process.

Likewise, Al-Dajani and Shaheen's (2016) study in Gaza identified the role of private school principals when promoting the culture of achievement among their teachers. The role consisted of developing an educational environment that included administrative arrangements and academic support for teamwork. Results showed that principals of private schools that were practicing their role in promoting and spreading the culture of achievement had a high degree of approval and ranked highest in this domain, while the domain of teacher training on achievement ranked last but with a large degree of approval as well. The study recommended increased collective teamwork methods and action plans in educational institutions, establishment of specific and systematic mechanisms that ensured a wider participation of teachers in formulating the vision and mission of the school, and the need to publish recognition of outstanding teamwork on the school's website.

From another perspective, Shaheen's (2013) study found a strong relationship between the leadership styles of public school managers in Gaza and their promotion of the culture of achievement. The study's recommendations included attention to quality work and self-reliance, taking responsibility and a cooperative attitude, positivity in participation, as well as innovation and perseverance. The Gibran (2010) study in Jordan, which sought to identify the role of educational leadership in building a positive environment, also concurred that leadership is essential in creating a culture of achievement. Its results confirmed the importance of this role through the leadership elements of cooperative building of future strategic directions, developing human relations, influencing others, motivation and encouragement, and quality training of personnel. Thus, it was recommended that the management of any educational institution should begin from the standpoint of leadership.

Even in international studies, MacNeil, Prater, and Busch (2009) found that students in Texas scored higher on standardized tests in schools when in a healthy educational environment, and that the goal of the interactions between managers within the school's atmosphere focused primarily on enhancing the student's learning. Ware's (2006) study pointed out that providing safe and stable environments for teachers would incline them to motivate their students to work harder and accomplish even more. Both studies emphasised in their recommendations the need to provide a safe and stable learning environment for learners in order to motivate them.

In the context of higher education, Khanfar (2018) investigated the role of the College of Education in a large Saudi university in promoting the culture of teamwork and supporting achievements among its students from the point of view of its faculty members. The results indicated that all dimensions received high levels of approval, the highest being the dimension of "future vision and mission." Statistically, there were no significant differences in the role of the college when pertaining to promoting a culture of achievement attributable to specialization or practical experience.

Khanfar's (2018) study recommended the necessity of involving students in not only setting the university's vision and mission, but also enacting policies and procedures that facilitate recognition of distinguished students in both areas of performance and achievement. This research also

recommended preparing colleges for periodic visits among members in order to exchange knowledge and experiences. As for Thomas (2006), he conducted his study in order to test the academic achievement of five talented brothers in the US, and showed that their production through cooperation based on the team, truly affected their university life, which created a culture of collective achievement. This study concluded that there is a need to participate in sports along with their academic studies, and encouraged cooperative work through means of teamwork.

Some studies have investigated the role of managers or other factors pertaining to promoting a culture of collective achievement according to several variables, which include academic qualification, years of experience, gender, and specialization, which is seen in the study conducted by both Khanfar (2020) in higher education and Shaheen (2013). Based on previous studies, there is a lack of research on the role of schools as an integrated whole in promoting the concept of teamwork achievement, whether in public schools or higher education. Thus, the current study focuses on the role of all-female schools in the KSA/East Dammam region in promoting the culture of teamwork among its students from the teacher's point of view through several dimensions. It also examines the relationship of this role while taking into account the various specializations and experiences of the teacher participants. As shown in related literature, this research builds upon previous studies in methodology and analysis methods. However, it is distinguished from other studies as no known research exists in the context of girls' schools in the Eastern Province.

2.4 Research Questions

The current study aims to investigate the role of all-female schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in promoting a culture of teamwork among its students from the point of view of teachers. Specifically, the study researches two questions:

1. What is the role education played in all-female schools in the KSA/Eastern Dammam region in promoting the culture of teamwork among its students from the teachers' point of view?

2. Are there statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the role of all-female schools in the KSA/East Dammam region in regard to promoting the culture of teamwork from the teachers' point of view due to the variables of specialization and experience?

3. Method and materials

3.1 Research Model

A descriptive research approach was used to explore the study's research questions. A total of 367 participants responded to a questionnaire of 34 items covering four dimensions: future vision and mission, school environment, shared culture within the school, and spreading the culture of teamwork.

3.2 Participants

Tables 1 and 2 show the distribution and details of the study sample according to specialization and experience. The data was analysed using the SPSS program.

Table 1. Distribution of the Sample According to Specialization.

Specialization	No.	Percentage
Scientific	186	50.7
Humanities	181	49.3
Total	367	100.0

Table 2. Distribution of the Sample According to Experience.

Experience (Yrs)	No.	Percentage
Less than 5 years	21	5.7
From 5-10 years	83	22.6
More than 10 years	263	71.7

3.3 Instrument and Data Collection Tools

The research questionnaire was built and adapted based on Khanfar (2020), Shaheen (2013), and Gibran's (2010) studies. The questionnaire consisted of 34 items distributed amongst four dimensions (see Table 3). A five-item Likert scale was used (strongly agree = 5, somewhat agree = 4, disagree = 3, somewhat disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1).

Table 3. Distribution of the Survey Items across the Study Dimensions.

Dimensions	Survey Item Numbers
University environment	1 – 5
Future vision and mission	6 – 18
Shared culture within school	19 – 26
Spreading the culture of teamwork	27 – 34

3.4 Data Collection Process

The questionnaire was prepared using Google forms and sent to public school teachers (N = 2,012) in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia via e-mail. After excluding incomplete questionnaires, a total of 367 female participants' responses were completed and used for this study.

3.5 Data Analysis

After input of responses, the data were analysed using SPSS statistical analysis software. Validity, reliability, descriptive, and inferential statistics were calculated through several statistical tests. Initially, content validity of the study tool was reviewed by seven professors from different educational specialties (curricula, curricula and teaching methods, and pedagogy). Survey items were added, modified, and deleted (80% of the arbitrators agreed to delete them) based on the experts' recommendations before the final instrument was approved for distribution. Pearson's correlation coefficient was also calculated between each survey item along with the total score of its dimension, between each dimension, and the total score of the questionnaire. Table 4 shows correlation coefficients between each item and the total score of the dimensions at the significance level of 0.01. Table 5 exhibits the correlation coefficients of the dimensions with the total degree of the questionnaire as positive and statistically significant.

Table 4. Item Correlation Coefficients with the Total Score of the Dimension.

Dimension	Item	Correlation Coefficient	Item	Correlation Coefficient
Future Vision and Mission	1	0.755**	4	0.820**
	2	0.851**	5	0.770**
	3	0.797**		
University Environment	6	0.736**	13	0.809**
	7	0.708**	14	0.823**
	8	0.776**	15	0.772**
	9	0.760**	16	0.775**
	10	0.833**	17	0.820**
	11	0.799**	18	0.773**
	12	0.831**		
Shared Culture within School	19	0.741**	23	0.843**
	20	0.838**	24	0.862**
	21	0.816**	25	0.805**
	22	0.833**	26	0.788**
Spreading the Culture of Teamwork	27	0.774**	31	0.752**
	28	0.769**	32	0.799**
	29	0.779**	33	0.858**
	30	0.766**	34	0.768**

**significant)0.01(

Table 5. Correlation Coefficients of the Dimension with the Total Score of the Questionnaire.

Domain	Correlation Coefficient
Future Vision and Mission	0.827**
University Environment	0.953**
Shared Culture within School	0.939**
Spreading the Culture of Teamwork	0.913**

**significant)0.01(

The reliability or internal consistency of the instrument was measured for the individual dimensions and the questionnaire as a whole (see Table 6). Cronbach's Alpha illustrated a high degree of internal consistency with an overall value of .973.

Table 6. Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for the Instrument.

Domain	Cronbach Alpha
Future Vision and Mission	0.857
University Environment	0.946
Shared culture within School	0.927
Spreading the Culture of Teamwork	0.907
Total	0.973

4. Results and Discussion

The mean averages were categorized to illustrate the overall trend in participant responses, as shown in Table 7, from very low approval to very high approval.

Table 7. Categories of Participant Responses.

Degree of approval	Mean
Very High	Above 4.2
High	3.4 -- 4.1
Medium	2.6 -- 3.3
Low	1.8 -- 2.5
Very Low	Less than 1.8

4.1 What is the role education played in all-female schools in the KSA/Eastern Dammam region in promoting the culture of teamwork among its students from the teachers' point of view?

As shown in Table 8, teacher participants from the Eastern Province had an overall high approval degree (M = 3.89) indicating that teachers perceived that education played a large role in promoting the culture of teamwork. This result is explained through the large amount of attention that is given by the Saudi Ministry of Education, responsible for planning and implementation of all curriculum and administration in public schools. The National School Development Program)2015) was launched to homogenize the concept of professional learning societies. The constant emphasis throughout this program was on the importance of cooperative learning as well as training school leaders, teachers, and the Ministry's employees on how to form effective work teams in schools and develop teamwork methods in order to achieve the goals of the educational institution (Khanfar, 2021). Also, the Ministry of Education is keen on providing everything that serves and enriches the school environment in terms of material and technical means that support and enhance the teaching and learning processes. In addition to this, the school is committed to international quality and accreditation standards that focus on collective participation in all aspects of the educational learning process within the school

environment. This further explains why the domains of "Future Vision and Mission" and "School Environment" had the highest mean average of 3.99 and a high degree of approval.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics of the Teachers' Viewpoint Regarding the Culture of Teamwork.

Domain	Mean	SD	Approval Deg.	Rank
Future Vision and Mission	3.99	0.776	High	1
University Environment	3.99	0.730	High	2
Spreading the Culture of Teamwork	3.79	0.814	High	3
Shared Culture within School	3.78	0.882	High	4
Total	3.89	0.730	High	

Following the highest-ranked domains, "spreading the culture of collective achievement" had a mean of 3.79 indicating a high degree of approval. The final domain of "shared culture within the school" comes had a mean value of 3.78 along with a high degree of approval. This result is consistent with the outcome of the Hayford (2014), Khanfar (2020), Khanfar (2018), and Al-Dajani and Shaheen (2016) studies, which showed a high level of agreement between the domains. These studies also found the domain of "future vision and message" ranked high with the exception of Khanfar's (2020) research. The current study results also differed from Dehimi's (2016) study in the order of the domains, in which the "future vision and mission" domain ranked last.

4.2 Are there statistically significant differences (α = 0.05) in the role of all-female schools in the KSA/East Dammam region in regard to promoting the culture of teamwork from the teachers' point of view due to the variables of specialization and experience?

4.2.1 Specialization

An independent-sample T-test was used to find out the significant differences in the role of all-female schools in the KSA/Eastern Dammam region in regard to promoting the culture of teamwork from the teachers' point of view according to the specialization variable. As shown in Table 9, the t-test revealed no significant differences from the teachers' point of view based on the specialization variable. This is explained by a similar level of interest in promoting and disseminating a culture of teamwork achievement among female teachers, as they belong to the same educational environment with similar capabilities in terms of components and are subject to a unified policy, philosophy, and policies for all. In addition to this, the school provides the same material and moral support to all its employees, regardless of their specializations, which removed the apparent differences between the study sample participants.

Table 9. Significance in Promoting the Culture of Teamwork According to Teacher Specialization.

Domain	Specialization	No.	Mean	SD	T value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level
Future Vision and Mission	Science	186	3.98	0.802	0.063	365	0.950
	Humanities	181	3.99	0.751			
University Environment	Science	186	3.97	0.732	0.522	365	0.602
	Humanities	181	4.01	0.731			
Shared Culture within School	Science	186	3.75	0.881	0.644	365	0.520
	Humanities	181	3.81	0.880			
Spreading the Culture of Teamwork	Science	186	3.77	0.830	0.679	365	0.498
	Humanities	181	3.82	0.800			
Promote a Culture of Teamwork as a Whole	Science	186	3.87	0.735	0.570	365	0.569
	Humanities	181	3.91	0.727			

4.2.2 Experience

The "Kruskal-Walls" test was used to investigate the significant differences in the role of education in all-female schools in the KSA/Eastern Dammam region in regard to promoting the culture of teamwork from the teachers' point of view according to the experience variable. As shown in Table 10, the Kruskal-Walls test revealed no significant differences with regard to the experience variable. These results illustrate and confirm the similarity of the level of interest in promoting and spreading the culture of achievement through teamwork regardless of specialization (as shown in Table 9) or experience. This is explained through the Ministry of Education's tendency to equitably spread and strengthen the culture of teamwork for all students and schools.

Table 10. Significance in Promoting the Culture of Teamwork According to the Experience Variable.

Dimension	Experience	No.	Rank Average	Kruskal-Walls	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level
Future Vision and Mission	Less than 5 years old	21	153.29	2.853	2	0.240
	From 5-10 years	83	175.95			
	More than 10 years	263	188.99			
University Environment	Less than 5 years old	21	170.05	1.986	2	0.371
	From 5-10 years	83	172.02			
	More than 10 years	263	188.89			
Shared Culture within School	Less than 5 years old	21	164.31	1.270	2	0.530
	From 5-10 years	83	178.04			

	More than 10 years	263	187.45			
Spreading the Culture of Teamwork	Less than 5 years old	21	170.74	0.627	2	0.731
	From 5-10 years	83	179.48			
	More than 10 years	263	186.49			
Promote a Culture of Teamwork as a Whole	Less than 5 years old	21	166.14	1.491	2	0.475
	From 5-10 years	83	175.67			
	More than 10 years	263	188.05			

5. Conclusion

As explored through this study, the role played by education in all-female schools in the Eastern Dammam region of Saudi Arabia with regards to promoting the culture of teamwork among students was high from the teachers' perspectives (M = 3.89) in all areas. The two domains: "Future Vision and Mission" and "School Environment" ranked first, which was then followed with the domain "Spreading the Culture of Teamwork". Throughout, the domain of "Common Culture within the School" ranked last. Furthermore, there were no significant differences in the role of education in regard to the culture of teamwork from the teachers' point of view when considering the variables of teacher specialization or experience. The study emphasizes the necessity of involving teachers and students in drafting the school's vision by providing all means of communication between departments, especially through electronic means. Furthermore, supporting and recognizing the achievements of outstanding teamwork and disseminating these achievements through electronic platforms and other means are highly recommended.

Acknowledgements

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