



**The Implementation of Children's Rights as
Identified Through the UNCRC (1989) in Primary
Education in Saudi Arabia: Principals', Teachers',
and Children's Perspectives**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the implementation of children's rights in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) from the perspectives of the educators (i.e., teachers and principals) and children regarding their awareness of these rights. This study also aims to investigate the barriers preventing the implementation of the UNCRC by assessing the educators' perspectives. To accomplish these aims, I used a mixed-methods approach by collecting data from principals, teachers, and children. I collected the data through interviews with principals, a questionnaire for teachers, and a focus group with teachers and children. I used sociocultural and ecological theories as a theoretical framework for my study. The study sample contained five principals, 36 children, 635 teachers who answered the questionnaire, and five teachers who participated in a focus group.

The findings of the study revealed that educators were underinformed about the UNCRC, and significant have a lack of awareness about the UNCRC. However, they are aware of some of children's rights principles in general and their awareness of children's rights was mostly driven by Islamic culture. The findings also revealed that most children were aware of some aspects of their rights and have a lack of awareness about the UNCRC. The study also showed that authorities have made significant efforts to implement the UNCRC. The implementation has not succeeded, however, due to primary schools' many violations of the UNCRC. The violation of children's rights impacted four main rights: the right to spread knowledge about the UNCRC, the right to protection, the right to participate at school, and the right to education. Regarding the barriers preventing the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia, the study showed that the following obstacles interfered: Saudi society, insufficient efforts by the authorities, shortages of qualified employees, and inadequate school buildings and equipment. This study provides some recommendations for future research and actions to tackle potential challenges. The recommendations seek to improve the future plans to implement the UNCRC, which should begin with social changes. The study findings reveal that there will be no quick and easy solutions, but there is a glimmer of hope to improve the situation of children's rights in primary education in Saudi Arabia, especially with the rapid changes that are currently happening in the country.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BECM	Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers in Saudi Arabia
CRE	Child Rights Education Toolkit
EU	Europe
HRC	Human Rights Commission
MoE	Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia
NCC	National Committee for Childhood in Saudi Arabia
NFSP	National Family Safety Program in Saudi Arabia
NSHR	National Society for Human Rights in Saudi Arabia
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
NICEF	United Nations Children’s International Emergency Fund
ZPD	The Zone of Proximal Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abbreviations	iii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study	3
1.3 Context of the Study	5
1.4 Aims of the Study	7
1.5 Research Questions	8
1.6 Structure of the Study	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)	10
2.3 Children’s Rights in Islam	14
2.4 Children’s rights policies in Saudi Arabia	24
2.5 Implementation of the UNCRC	28
2.5.1 The implementation of the UNCRC.	28
2.5.2 Awareness about the UNCRC.	30
2.5.3 Educational rights.	38
2.5.4 Children’s right to participation.	41
2.5.5 Children’s protection rights.	43
2.6 The Barriers of Implementing the UNCRC	50

2.7 Theoretical Framework	56
2.7.1 Sociocultural theory.	58
2.7.2 Ecological theory.	64
2.8 Summary of the Chapter	66
Chapter 3: Methodology	68
3.1 Introduction	68
3.2 My Positionality and its Impact on the Research	68
3.3 Mixed-Methods Approach	72
3.4 Study Location	76
3.5 Selection of Participants	76
3.6 Research methods	80
3.6.1 Interviews.	81
3.6.1.1 Interview construction.	81
3.6.1.2 Pilot study	83
3.6.1.3 The application of the interviews.	83
3.6.2 Questionnaire.	84
3.6.2.1 Questionnaire construction.	85
3.6.2.2 Pilot study.	86
3.6.2.3 The application of the questionnaire.	87
3.6.3 Focus group	88
3.6.3.1 Focus groups with children.	89
3.6.3.1.1 The construction of the focus groups with children.	89
3.6.3.1.2 Pilot study.	90
3.6.3.1.3 The application of the focus groups with children.	90
3.6.3.2 Focus group with teachers.	91
3.6.3.2.1 The construction of the focus group with teachers.	91
3.6.3.2.2 The application of the focus group with teachers.	91
3.7 Ethical Considerations	92
3.7.1 Informed consent.	92
3.7.2 Official permissions.	93
3.7.3 Confidentiality and anonymity.	94
3.7.4 Ethical Dilemma.	94
3.7.5 Power relations.	95

3.8 Ensuring Trustworthiness	95
3.9 Data Analysis	97
3.9.1 Analysis of quantitative data.	98
3.9.2 Analysis of qualitative data.	98
3.9.3 Reporting the findings.	100
3.10 Summary of the Chapter	100
Chapter 4: Analysis and Results of the Interview	101
4.1 Introduction	101
4.2 Principals' Awareness of Children's Rights	101
4.3 Principals' Perspectives on the Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education	106
4.3.1 Official efforts to apply children's rights in primary education.	106
4.3.2 Principals' efforts to protect children's rights in primary education in Saudi Arabia.	109
4.3.3 Violations of the UNCRC in schools.	113
4.4 Barriers to the Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education	117
4.4.1 Society.	118
4.4.2 The official authorities.	121
4.4.3 Lack of qualified employees.	122
4.4.4 Lack of student awareness about the UNCRC.	124
4.4.5 School buildings and equipment.	124
4.5 Summary of the Chapter	126
Chapter 5: Analysis and Results of the Questionnaire	127
5.1 Introduction	127
5.2 Teachers' Awareness of Children's Rights	127
5.2.1 Teachers' previous experience of children's rights.	127
5.2.2 The teachers' awareness of the UNCRC's articles.	130
5.3 Teachers' Perspectives on the Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education	137

5.4 Barriers to the Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education in Saudi Arabia From the Teachers' Perspectives	144
5.4.1 Analysis of teachers' answers to the closed-ended questions.	144
5.4.2 Analysis of teachers' answers to the open-ended questions.	147
5.5 Summary of the Chapter	152
Chapter 6: Analysis and Results of the Focus Group With Children	153
6.1 Introduction	153
6.2 Children's Awareness of Their Rights	153
6.2.1 The definition of children's rights.	153
6.2.2 Examples of children's rights.	154
6.2.3 Children's awareness regarding the UNCRC.	155
6.2.4 Children's attitude to children's rights.	156
6.2.5 The responsibility of adults.	157
6.3 The Children's Perspectives About the Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education	158
6.3.1 Children suffer from teachers' cruelty.	158
6.3.2 The culture of power.	160
6.3.3 Children do not complain.	161
6.3.4 No action to solve children's issues.	162
6.3.5 Fear of adults.	162
6.3.6 Bullying at school.	164
6.3.7 No freedom of expression.	165
6.3.8 No freedom of choice.	165
6.3.9 Activities do not achieve their aims.	166
6.3.10 Discrimination in school.	167
6.3.11 Unsuitable environment for children.	168
6.3.12 Healthcare.	169
6.4 Summary of the Chapter	170

Chapter 7: Analysis and Results of the Focus Group With Teachers	171
7.1 Introduction	171
7.2 The Teachers' Awareness of Children's Rights	171
7.3 Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education	173
7.3.1 School activities.	173
7.3.2 Discrimination at school.	177
7.3.3 Children's freedom of expression, thought, and religion at school.	178
7.3.4 Children's safety at school.	181
7.4 Barriers to the Implementation of Children's Rights at School	185
7.5 Summary of the Chapter	189
Chapter 8: Discussion of the Findings	191
8.1 Introduction	191
8.2 Awareness of Children's Rights	191
8.2.1 Educators' awareness of children's rights in general.	191
8.2.1.1 Educators' awareness of the UNCRC.	192
8.2.1.2 Educators' awareness of children's rights in Islam.	195
8.2.1.3 Misunderstanding of children's rights by educators.	196
8.2.2 Children's awareness of children's rights.	198
8.3 The Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education in Saudi Arabia	201
8.3.1 The right to spread knowledge about the UNCRC.	201
8.3.2 The child's right to protection.	203
8.3.3 The child's right to health and the health services.	210
8.3.4 The child's voice at school.	211
8.3.5 The child's right to education.	214
8.4 Barriers to the Implementation of the UNCRC	218
8.4.1 Saudi society.	218
8.4.2 Insufficiency of authorities' efforts.	224
8.4.3 Lack of qualified employees.	227
8.4.4 School buildings and equipment.	228
8.5 Summary of the Chapter	230
Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations	232

9.1. Introduction	232
9.2. Summary of the Findings	232
9.3. The Study's Limitations	235
9.4. Implications of the Findings	235
9.5. Recommendations for Further Research	238
9.6. The Study's Contributions	238
9.7. Personal Reflections	239
References	241
Appendix	261

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1. The ecological environment structures.	65
Figure 3.1 Research Design.	75
Figure 3.2 Process of conducting the mixed-methods study.	76
Figure 3.3 The process of choosing the sample of principals.	78
Figure 3.4 Process of choosing the children's sample.	79
Figure 3.5 Questionnaire construction and application.	88
Figure 8.1 Child Helping Hotline clients' gender.	204
Figure 8.2 Child Helping Hotline Clients' age.	204
Figure 8.3 The subjects of the children's calls to Child Helping Hotline	204

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Similarities between children's rights in Islam and the UNCRC	21
Table 3.1 Participants in this research.	80
Table 5.1. Have teachers learned or heard about children's rights before?	128
Table 5.2. Teachers' awareness about the UNCRC's articles.	130
Table 5.3: Teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the UNCRC in primary schools in Saudi Arabia.	138
Table 5.4: Teachers' perspectives about the factors that hinder the implementation of the UNCRC in primary schools in Saudi Arabia.	144

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Convention on the Rights of the Child	261
Appendix 2: Ethical Approval from the University of Sheffield Ethics System for Implementing the Interviews with Principals, Focus Groups with Children, and Questionnaires with Teachers	274
Appendix 3: Ethical Approval from the University of Sheffield Ethics System for Implementing the Teachers' Focus Group	275
Appendix 4: The Interview Questions	276
Appendix 5: The Questionnaire	277
Appendix 6: The Video Used in the Focus Group With Children	284
Appendix 7: The First Book Used in the Focus Group with Children	285
Appendix 8: The Second Book Used in the Focus Group with Children	286
Appendix 9: The Assumed Scenario of the Focus Group With Children	287
Appendix 10: The Assumed Scenario of the Focus Group With Teachers	288
Appendix 11: Principals' Information Sheet	295
Appendix 12: Consent Letter for Principals and Teachers	298
Appendix 13: The Information Sheet for the Participants of the Questionnaire	299
Appendix 14: Children's Information Sheet	302
Appendix 15: Parent's Information Sheet	303
Appendix 16: Consent Letter for Parents	306
Appendix 17: Teacher's Information Sheet	307
Appendix 18: The MoE Permission to Collect Data	310
Appendix 19: A Sample of the Interviews With Principals	311
Appendix 20: A Sample of the Focus Group With Children	313
Appendix 21: A Sample of the Focus Group With Teachers	315

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Countries predict their future by looking at the characteristics of their children, as children will be the adults of the future. From this perspective, we can help the society of the future by focusing on the best ways to prepare suitable adults for the future (Cunningham, 2005; Vasabhai, Chaudhary, & Bhagyalaxmi, 2014). However, Corsaro (2011) rejected this concept, which he called a 'forward-looking' view of children because it focuses on society's own aspirations instead of viewing each child as a human being. Kehily (2004) argued that it is unacceptable to treat children as adults of the future, as they have their own capacities, needs, and hopes that adults should focus on.

Regardless of the way adults view children, childhood is the most important period of a person's life. It is the period during which all aspects of a person's character—physical, mental, and social aspects—are structured (Isaac, 2010). In addition, it is known as a period of innocence, happiness, and natural development, and as the most dependent period in human life. Therefore, children need to be cared for and protected from any kind of harm. It is adults' responsibility to care for children's health and help children live their childhoods, become responsible adults, and secure the well-being of society's future (Cunningham, 2005; Vasabhai et al., 2014).

To care for children, nurture them, secure their future, and protect them from any kind of neglect or abuse, there is a need for an internationally binding document to set a standard (Meray, 2014). Due to the importance of childhood and the necessity of protecting children from potential harm, item 2 of Article 25 of the International Declaration of Human Rights states that children must receive special care with no discrimination (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). This right was detailed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which was established in 1989 and obligates countries that have signed it to implement these rights as a part of their legislation (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 1989). Meray (2014) mentioned that the UNCRC is the most critical advancement for children's rights.

Children's rights have been a subject of interest for many researchers, in light of the fact that rights give children the capability to make decisions for their own lives,

as opposed to having their lives determined by others (Freeman, 2007). Freeman (2007) explained that rights give children the opportunity to act as an agent as they participate in decision-making and have freedom of speech, association, and information. He mentioned that 'the most fundamental of rights is the right to possess rights' (Freeman, 2007, p. 8).

Lundy (2012) explained that the UNCRC can possibly be a noteworthy driver of an education strategy change. She added that the UNCRC contains the most comprehensive universal articulation of rights regarding education and is the most widely adopted human rights convention worldwide; it has already induced changes in children's experiences at schools in the signatory countries. Covell (2009) explored the idea that children who are taught about their rights in school display positive changes in their behaviour, learn better, and become more responsible adult members of society.

Siaciwena and Lubinda (2008) mentioned that the UNCRC could be understood in differing ways, which have different consequences for children, parents, and educators. They argued that the focus should be on how these rights are understood and implemented instead of focusing on the rights themselves. Mohammed (2013) said that while this international document provides certain rights for the children of the signatory nations, the proper authorities need to work to implement these rights adequately. Mohammed (2013) added that 'unfortunately, it is the implementation that so often lets children down' (p. 31). The implementation of the UNCRC should be investigated to understand and assess the inadequacies of implementation.

Maboe (2013) said that since children spend most of their time at school, educators are the ones who spend the most time with children. Thus, parents and other members of society expect the education system and the educators to protect children and their rights. Devine and McGillicuddy (2016) emphasised the influence that education has on the implementation of the UNCRC, as the education affects the power and position of children in society, which has a profound impact on the implementation of the UNCRC. Therefore, as institutions of education are where children spend most of their time, these institutions are responsible for the development of children. Furthermore, since the implementation of the UNCRC is affected by people's interpretations of these rights, this study will examine awareness of the UNCRC and its implementation in the education system in Saudi Arabia.

1.2 Background of the Study

Saudi Arabia is one of the countries that adopted the UNCRC in 1996, with the exception of all articles that are inconsistent with Islam (National Society for Human Rights [NSHR], 2008). Furthermore, there are many regulations put in place to ensure the rights of every child in Saudi Arabia, such as the Child Protection Law, which was established in 2015.

However, passing legislation on children's rights does not ensure its implementation. Mangamu (2013), Mohammed (2013), and Smith (2007) confirmed that despite national policies to protect the UNCRC, these rights are still not practiced in Zambia, Iraq, and New Zealand, respectively. In addition, Mhaka-Mutepfa, Maree, and Chiganga (2014) found that children's rights were not implemented in Zimbabwe. Similarly, Vasabhai et al. (2014) found that children's rights are violated in India. This confirmed that there is a problematic issue with the implementation of the UNCRC worldwide.

Almohaimeed (2009) mentioned that there are numerous laws in Saudi Arabia to protect children's rights. However, despite the existence of these laws, there are some shortcomings and inconsistencies in the implementation of children's rights, which require immediate intervention to resolve the problem, correct mistakes, and avoid deficiencies in these laws. Moreover, the Saudi National Committee for Childhood [NCC] (2012) admitted that there are problems in the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia. They revealed that achievements regarding children's rights still fall short of their hopes and expectations and that there is a lack of proper care and attention. In addition, Alfaryan's study (2014) showed that even though there are policies in place for protecting children in Saudi Arabia, they are not effective. Al-baker (2013c) argued that producing legislation and laws to protect children will not ensure the child's safety if these legislations and laws are not embedded within the structure of the society and its culture. In her articles (2013a, 2013b), she mentioned that the implementation of these legislations and laws will interfere with the social and cultural beliefs in Saudi Arabia.

Siaciwena and Lubinda (2008) said that the UNCRC takes on differing interpretations depending on the people and their culture, which affects the awareness and practice of these rights. The implementation of the UNCRC is affected by people's understanding of these rights, as they are influenced by people's culture and beliefs (Alshail, Hassan, Aldowaish, & Kattan, 2011).

Despite the availability of legislation and laws to protect children's rights, violence against children still takes place around the world (Freeman & Saunders, 2014). Maboe (2013) confirmed that despite legislation that protects children's rights, schools still breach the UNCRC. Maboe (2013) said that the practice of child abuse and neglect is still widespread in schools, as physical punishments, sexual abuse, and discrimination still take place in the hands of educators in South Africa.

There is an expanding body of research regarding children's rights in education. A huge amount of research has also studied children's participation in school, including whether or not a child's voice is heard. For example, Wyse's (2001) study found that children in primary and secondary schools in the UK do not express their opinions, which suggests that the right to participate is not implemented in these schools. Lundy (2007) said that there is a gap between the government's obligations regarding the right to participation and actual practices in the field of education in the UK.

The child protection rights in school have been studied by many researchers, including Ju and Lee (2010) and O'Leary et al. (2018), who have found that corporal punishment is the most common violent practice against children in South Korean and Afghani schools, respectively. Almahroos (2007) found that children living in the Arabian Peninsula experience every form of abuse and neglect, and Alanazi (2008) confirmed that physical punishment is especially common in Saudi Arabia.

A large number of researchers, such as Boushel (2014) and Mohammed and Ibrahim (2011), studied awareness about the UNCRC among professionals whose work with children, and they found a lack of awareness towards children's rights. Ali (2013) and Isaac (2010) both explored kindergarten teachers' awareness of children's rights in two different regions of Saudi Arabia. Isaac (2010) found a lack of teachers' awareness about the UNCRC, while Ali (2013) found that teachers have some awareness about the UNCRC but do not allow children to practice these rights. Other studies have focused on children and their awareness about their rights, such as Almannai (2014), who found that Qatari children do not have awareness about their rights.

Lack of awareness about the UNCRC might be a reason for the insufficient implementation of these rights. The concept of children's rights will not be made effective only by creating policies or improving laws but by transforming them into values, attitudes, and methods that make those rights workable. Moreover, children will not realise their rights except through the intervention and support of adults. If adults do not have sufficient awareness regarding the rights of children, those rights will not

be effectively applied. If children's rights are to become their lived experiences, then attention must be paid to how these rights are implemented in the social structures, processes, and values within any society.

Adults and organisations are responsible for providing services to children, and their attitudes towards children's rights play significant roles in making these policies practicable. Almannai (2014) mentioned that children's rights will not be achieved unless knowledge about them is spread across communities. Boushel (2014), Campbell and Covell (2001), and Mohammed and Ibrahim (2011) emphasised the importance of educating communities about children's rights.

Education is responsible for informing children about what rights they have and how to best demonstrate and utilise them. Furthermore, the education system should protect children and their rights (Maboe, 2013). Thus, the present study has identified concerns regarding the protection of children and their rights in the education system. A key focus of this study is to explore whether the education system in Saudi Arabia, as represented by schools, is implementing the rights of children in accordance with the UNCRC. This research needs to be understood from the socio-cultural and historical contexts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as described in the following section.

1.3 Context of the Study

The country of Saudi Arabia covers the largest area of the Arabian Peninsula, and it is the third largest country in the Middle East, with an area of 2,253,300 square kilometres. In addition, Saudi Arabia has a strategic location between three continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe. It is situated in the southwest of the Asian continent, it is separated from Africa by the Red Sea on the west side, and it is not so far from the continent of Europe. To the east is the Arabian Gulf. Along with other Arab countries located along the Arabian Gulf, Saudi Arabia has created a regional intergovernmental group known as the Gulf Cooperation Council, whose members are Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain. Arabic is its official language, and Islam is the official religion (General Authority for Statistics [GASTAT], 2017). The political system and legislation in Saudi Arabia are based on the Islamic law called Sharia. The constitution of Saudi Arabia is the Quran and Al-Sunna (Prophet Mohammad's utterances) (Alsharkh, 2012).

Regarding the population of Saudi Arabia, the latest census from 2017 shows that the Saudi population is at 32,552,336, with 10,301,136 from 0 to 19 years old, representing almost 33% of the population (GASTAT, 2017). Thus, protecting and implementing the rights of children is the implementation of the rights of 33% of the Saudi population.

Saudi society is a conservative society, and as such, it does not readily accept change but instead strives to protect its traditions. The source of Saudi culture and traditions is the religion of Islam. Alrweeta (2002) mentioned that the most powerful element in Saudi culture is religion. It is the key factor that affects any aspect of lifestyle, determines people's values and norms, and shapes people's demeanours.

Following the discovery of oil at the end of the 1930s, Saudi Arabia experienced a significant transformation from being isolated from the world to being one of the most significant oil producers in the world (Alsharkh, 2012). The rapid economic changes and improvements have greatly impacted people's life in terms of work, profitability, and lifestyle, which has required some changes in their attitudes, especially when dealing with foreigners after the oil and gas exploration companies were brought to the country to help develop the oil industry. In regard to dealing with changes in the country, Alsharkh (2012) said that people are divided into two different groups. The first group believes that change is imperative and people must adjust to it, as the country has a lot of resources that must be exploited, not just to be one of the developed countries but also to compete with others. On the other hand, the second group adheres to customs and traditions, and they think that modern society's pursuits have a negative impact on their beliefs, norms, and other aspects of life. Moreover, they attribute their rejection of such modernising changes to Islam. Al-sharkh (2012) added that people are usually confused about Islamic issues and the Saudi norms, so they mix the two categories in their own worldviews. In addition, they ascribe some of their beliefs, values, and attitudes to Islam, even when these may derive from other cultural influences. According to the Quran, Islam does not refuse change, and evidence of that appears in the sayings of Allah in Sūrat Ar-Ra'd, Verse No. 11: 'Verily, Allah will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change their state themselves' (Alhilali & Khan, 2017, p. 12). Islam encourages people to accept transformation and work to better themselves.

Islam is the most influential factor on the education system in Saudi Arabia; the educational focus on religious subjects such as Islamic jurisprudence is essential in all

stages of general schooling (Alsarhany, 2003). The economic situation is another factor that has an impact on education, especially in relation to oil exploration. The increases in the state's income have resulted in the allocation of more funds to education.

In 1970, the Education Policy Document was issued, which was the foundation of the education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It includes the need to ensure that education is effective in meeting the social, religious, and economic needs of the country and eradicating illiteracy among adults in Saudi Arabia. General education in Saudi Arabia consists of four stages: kindergarten; six years of primary school, which is compulsory and prepares children for the next stage; intermediate school, which students enrol in for three years; and high school for three years. After that, the student is qualified to undergo and complete studies in higher education, where they receive a monthly salary until they graduate (Ministry of Education, 2003). Higher education began with King Saud University in Riyadh in 1957, and it was under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education until 2015, when the Ministry of Education [MoE] took over its responsibilities and the number of universities around the country reached 26 (Ministry of Education, 2018).

These developments of Saudi's education system present concerns about providing access to all stages of education for boys and girls, based on the Saudi concepts of justice, consultation, and equality. The education system has conferred certain rights as well as responsibilities of the state when developing policies and providing funding for primary, secondary, and tertiary education. In order to support these developments, policymakers have looked outwards towards the UNCRC on the provision of children's rights, and inwards towards Islamic Law and the Saudi Arabian system.

1.4 Aims of the Study

This research aims to examine the extent to which children's rights, as stated in the UNCRC (1989), are implemented in primary education in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, this study has three main objectives:

- To explore educators' (i.e., teachers and principals) and children's awareness of children's rights as identified through the UNCRC (1989).
- To explore educators' and children's perspectives regarding the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia.
- To identify the barriers preventing the implementation of children's

rights in primary education in Saudi Arabia from the educators' perspectives.

1.5 Research Questions

The key focus of this thesis is to answer the following question: Is the education system in Saudi Arabia, as represented by schools, implementing the rights of children in accordance with the UNCRC? There are three underlying questions that this study aims to answer:

- Do educators (i.e., teachers and principals) and children understand children's rights in a way that accords with the UNCRC?
- What are the perspectives of the principals, teachers, and children regarding the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia?
- What are the principals' and teachers' perspectives regarding the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia?

1.6 Structure of the Study

This section contains the outline of the thesis, which aims to explore the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia. This thesis consists of the following nine chapters:

- Chapter one presents the introduction, background, context, aims, questions, and structure of the study.
- Chapter two contains the literature review, which presents the literature related to the history of the UNCRC, children's rights in Islam, children's rights policies in Saudi Arabia, the implementation of the UNCRC, and the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC. The chapter ends by outlining the theoretical framework of the study, which has adopted sociocultural and ecological theories.
- Chapter three reveals the methodology of the study, which outlines the study paradigm and methods.
- Chapter four presents the findings from the interviews with principals.

- Chapter five presents the findings from the questionnaire, which was answered by teachers (male and female).
- Chapter six reveals the findings from the focus group with children.
- Chapter seven presents the findings from the focus group with teachers.
- Chapter eight presents the discussion of the study findings.
- Chapter nine presents the conclusion of the study.

As shown above, the study findings are divided into four chapters, depending on the participants and the methods used to collect the data; this is because the use of a mixed-methods approach provided rich and diverse data. This data needs to be presented in full to give a whole picture of the issue researched in this study. For full understanding of the issues surrounding the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia, I prefer to segregate the findings from the discussion.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A review of the literature in the field of study revealed many studies which address the issue of children's rights. According to both the topic and aims of the current study, this chapter will be divided into six sections. In order to understand the development of the international convention of children's rights, the circumstances surrounding their establishment, the purpose of their appearance and their spread around the world, the history of the UNCRC is explained in **Section 2.2**. As Saudi Arabia is the location of my study, and since Saudi culture is driven by the Islamic teachings, this might prove to affect the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia children's rights in Islam will be discussed in **Section 2.3**. As the current study aims to investigate the implementation of children rights in primary education in Saudi Arabia, it is thus important to explore the policy of children's rights within this country, which is what will be discussed in **Section 2.4**. **Section 2.5** then review the studies of the implementation of children's rights around the world, including Saudi Arabia. This section includes five subsections related to the subjects that the studies referenced are discussing. The literature review analyses the barriers to implementation of the UNCRC and will be discussed in **Section 2.6**. **Section 2.7** indicates the theoretical framework of the current study, which has adopted both sociocultural and ecological theories as a theoretical framework. **Section 2.8** summarises the chapter.

2.2 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The early idea of children's rights was established in 1924, when the League of Nations, which was established in 1919 to encourage international cooperation and assure peace and security worldwide, adopted the first multi-national treaty concerning the rights of children: the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child (Pare, 2003). This declaration stated the following:

Men and women of all nations, recognising that mankind owes to the Child the best that it has to give, declare and accept it as their duty that, beyond and above all considerations of race, nationality or creed:

1. The child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually;

2. The child that is hungry must be fed; the child that is sick must be nursed; the child that is backward must be helped; the delinquent child must be reclaimed; and the orphan and the waif must be sheltered and succoured;
3. The child must be the first to receive relief in times of distress;
4. The child must be put in a position to earn a livelihood, and must be protected against every form of exploitation;
5. The child must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of fellow men (UNICEF, 2003, pp. 164-165)

The issues covered by the Geneva Declaration indicate that children are objects in need of protection, which is what the Geneva Declaration aims to provide for children (Pare, 2003). Pare (2003), however, argued that the Geneva Declaration does not embody children's rights entirely, as it only emphasises children's basic needs, such as nutrition, nursing, and protection.

On 20 November 1959, the UN General Assembly adopted a new Declaration on the Rights of the Child, which came into existence on 24 October 1945 (Beigbeder, 2001). The second declaration was built off the first, with a focus on extending the first declaration and shaping it to line up with the prevailing situation at that time (Pare, 2003). According to Beigbeder (2001), the reason for the issuance of the new declaration for children's rights was that children need special care and protection, including legal protection with their interests in mind. Ten principles for children's rights were laid out in the new declaration. The new declaration stated the rights of protection for children, such as non-discrimination and protection from negligence (Principles 1, 2, 8, 9, and 10); legal rights, such as the rights to name, nationality, and social security (Principles 3, 4, and 6); and the rights of survival and developments, such as healthcare and education (Principles 5 and 7) (United Nations [UN], 2003). Freeman (2000) argued that both the declarations from 1924 and 1959 were aspirational and emphasised parenthood, as there was no indication of the concept of empowerment or a child's autonomy in either declaration, nor the recognition of the importance of a child's views. Both declarations, however, served as the basis for the current children's rights convention, which was adopted in 1989 (UN, 2003).

A substantive international change began in 1979, the International Year of the Child, when the drafting of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) began (Beigbeder, 2001; Pare, 2003). After ten years of negotiation betw-

een government delegations and governmental and non-governmental organisations, the UNCRC was adopted almost unanimously by the UN General Assembly in 1989 (Beigbeder, 2001; Freeman, 2000; Pare, 2003). No international convention prior to the UNCRC had received the support of so many countries. Only two countries have not ratified the UNCRC, and those are Somalia, due to its lack of government, and the United States (Freeman, 2000).

The UNCRC contributed to an emerging paradigm shift in the perception and treatment of children in all countries. It introduced a new definition of the child as 'every human being below the age of eighteen', which had not been adopted before by any other declarations (Beigbeder, 2001). Additionally, one of the main innovations of the UNCRC was its recognition of the importance of children's voices and their participation in all decisions that affect them (Beigbeder, 2001; Pare, 2003).

The UNCRC contains 54 articles divided into three parts (see Appendix 1). The first part is the main section, which covers every child's rights, including the right of life, healthcare, education, freedom of expression, protection of a child's dignity, and assurance of a child's safety. In addition, it includes other rights that affect either the child or the guardian, such as the rights to live with a family and have a nationality (UNICEF, 1989).

Roose and Bie (2007) argued that the UNCRC should not be considered as just an act for children's rights, as it is also an international agreement that determines the obligations of the states with respect to children and their parents alike. The UNCRC is, therefore, an instrument that formulates the responsibilities of governments towards their citizens. To ensure the implementation of this instrument, 'states Parties undertake to submit to the Committee, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, reports on the measures they have adopted which give effect to the rights recognized herein and on the progress made on the enjoyment of those rights' (UNICEF, 1989, p 13).

There are many regional children's rights instruments, such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam. Those instruments aim to address children's rights in the context of the community. Therefore, The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) stresses that the aim of implementing an Islamic instrument for children's rights is that Islamic values and principles are essential for Muslims, and they play an important role in the life of Muslims (OIC, 2004). Moreover, Olowu (2002) mentioned that the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child the and the United Nations Convention on the

Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are complementary because the UNCRC considers a child to be a human being with rights while the Charter recognises the importance of including African cultural values and experience when considering issues related to children's rights in Africa. Furthermore, these instruments highlight the importance of the UNCRC and reaffirm the need for countries to adhere to them (The Organisation of African Unity [OAU], 1990; OIC, 2004).

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child was adopted in 1990 by the OAU and it was enforced in 1999 (Olowu, 2002). The Charter has four chapters. The first chapter, which contains 31 articles, addresses a child's rights and welfare. It includes the definition of the child, which is the same definition used by the UNCRC; it also addresses children's rights for survival and equality, their rights to have their best interests taken into consideration, their legal rights, such as their right to their name and nationality, and rights related to freedom, protection and education, as well as many other rights. The second and third chapters focus on the Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and its obligations. The fourth chapter contains other provisions, such as the Charter's sources, the provisions of the states' signature and adherence to the Charters and the provisions of amendments of the Charter (OAU, 1990). Olowu (2002) mentioned that there is much similarity between the African Charter and the UNCRC; for many of its aspects, the Charter uses the same language found in the UNCRC and its provisions. These similarities are clear when one reads the Charter and its articles.

The other instrument is the Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam. It was adopted by the OIC in 2004, and was built on Islamic teachings and children's rights in Islam (which will be discussed in Section 2.3). It was ratified by Saudi Arabia in 2005 (Said, 2007). The most important objectives of this Covenant, as described in its second article, are caring for the family, strengthening its capabilities and providing necessary support, ensuring a safe and secure childhood, ensuring the development of generations of Muslim children who believe in their Lord and adhere to their faith, providing compulsory and free primary education for all children, regardless of their gender, colour, nationality, religion or any other consideration and developing education by improving curricula, strengthening the skills of teachers and providing vocational training opportunities (OIC, 2004). This Covenant contains 26 articles, beginning with the definition of the child, which is: "every human being who, according to the law applicable to him/her, has not attained maturity" (OIC, 2004, p. 2). This definition of a child is different from the one used by the UNCRC, and, as will be discussed in Section

2.3, this definition is one of the most important differences between children's rights in Islam and the UNCRC. In its third article, the Covenant emphasises the need to respect Sharia law and Islamic teachings, as well as the internal affairs of other states. The fourth article clarifies the state's obligations to this Covenant and its implementation. Articles 5 to 21 contain the main rights for children, such as the right to equality, life, identity, freedom, education and protection, as well as other rights. Articles 22 to 26 identify the provisions of states' signing and adopting the Covenant, and the provisions of amending and implementing it (OIC, 2004). Some of the aspects of the Covenant are similar to those found in the UNCRC, including children's right to life, education, non-discrimination, freedom, identity and protection; however, the Covenant takes into account the reality of the Muslim community and Islamic law, which guarantees the rights of a child (Alkaabi, 2012).

Those two instruments are examples of regional children's rights approaches that some organisations have adopted to support children's rights and improve their situation in some societies, taking into account social and cultural contexts.

However, the UNCRC's importance is evidenced by the nearly unanimous agreement of the whole world, with the exception of two countries and it would lose its importance if its articles were not implemented. To ensure the effectiveness of the UNCRC, specifically in Saudi Arabia, current research will explore the implementation of this convention in primary education in this country. Since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country, and the Quran and Sunnah are its constitutions, the next section will review Islamic legislation and children's rights in Islam.

2.3 Children's Rights in Islam

Islam gives much attention to children in all stages of their life (NSHR, 2016; Said, 2007), and insight into Islamic jurisprudence finds that children have been given the utmost care under Islamic teachings in terms of ensuring their rights in all spheres (Alkahlan, 2016; Alsindhi, 2008). Olowu (2008) argued that the recognition of a child's need of special care and attention has not been a recent phenomenon; it started thousands of years ago under different religious laws, such as Islamic law, which clearly demonstrates the importance given by Islam to human's and children's rights.

Numerous studies have focused mainly on children's rights in Islam, including Abdullah's study (2003) and Alloweehig's study (2011). Both studies confirmed that Islamic law considers many rights for children, even before birth. Alloweehig (2011)

stated that children's rights in Islam are implemented in three stages. The first stage, according to the author, is the child's rights at the foundation stage (i.e., before his or her parents meet), the second stage is the rights of an unborn child, and the third stage is the rights of the child after his or her birth. Children's rights at the foundation stage are represented by the parents' decisions in choosing their spouses. Alloweehig (2011) deduced this from the Prophet Muhammad—peace be upon him—who said, 'Choose the best for your sperm, and marry compatible women and propose marriage to them' (Alloweehig, 2011, p. 14). In a similar manner, Alkahlan (2016) mentioned that a child's right before creation is one in which each parent should choose another good parent for the child. Alsindhi (2008) said that a child not only obtains certain physical and mental traits from his or her parents, but also moral qualities, which a child acquires from the environment in which he or she lives. Islamic law emphasises the importance in a child's parents selecting his or her own spouse before the marriage precisely, as it is one of the child's rights in Islam.

The second stage of children's rights is the rights of an unborn child, which includes the right of the foetus to survive (Alkahlan, 2016; Alloweehig, 2011; NSHR, 2016). In this regard, abortion is forbidden by Islamic law except in some special cases, such as if it is necessary in order to save the mother's life or if the unborn child is predicted to suffer from some severe health condition or disability (Olowu, 2008). Olowu (2008) added that abortion is considered a crime punishable by Islamic law if an unborn child is aborted as a result of an assault against a pregnant mother. Furthermore, to protect any unborn child from harm that might occur as a result of acts of worship, Islamic law lightened some acts of worship for pregnant women; for example, it gives pregnant women permission to not fast during Ramadan (Alloweehig, 2011). Alsindhi (2008) mentioned that it is acceptable for pregnant women to not fast in Ramadan, as the Prophet Muhammad—peace be upon him—said, 'Allah has relieved the traveller, the pregnant, and the nursing mothers of the duty to fast' (Alsindhi, 2008, p. 451). Pregnant and nursing mothers therefore have the right to not fast in Ramadan by Islamic law, in case they feel that it will affect them or their child, which is one of the unborn child's rights for life and protection. Islamic law thus emphasises protecting the unborn child from any harmful practice that may affect them in any way.

The unborn child also has financial rights, such as the right to expenses paid for his or her pregnant mother by the father (Alsindhi, 2008; Olowu, 2008). Alsindhi (2008) deduced these financial rights from the sayings of Allah in Sūrat At-Talāq, Verse No. 6, which says, 'And if they are pregnant, then spend on them till they lay down their

burden' (Alsindhi, 2008, p. 53). In addition, the unborn child, as any other person, has a right to the inheritance of his or her parents or any other relative, with accordance to the Islamic inheritance law (Alloweehig, 2011; Olowu, 2008). Islamic law therefore deals with the unborn child as a living person in regard to financial rights, including the right to inheritance.

The last stage of a child's rights is rights after birth. These rights include the right to life and sustenance, as Islamic law forbids infanticide by parents, which occurred in the Jahiliyyah, pre-Islamic society, as a result of fear of penury (Alloweehig, 2011; Olowu, 2008). In this regard, Allah says in Sūrat Al-Isrā, Verse No. 32, 'And kill not your children for fear of poverty. We shall provide for them as well as for you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin' (Alloweehig, 2011, p. 3). Female children were more subject to infanticide than male children due to fear of disgrace, but this is also forbidden by Islamic law (Olowu, 2008). In this regard, Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—said, 'Allah has forbidden you to be undutiful to your mothers . . . and to bury your daughters alive' (NSHR, 2016, p. 11). Islam gives children the right to life by forbidding the killing of children, which was practiced in pre-Islamic society.

Since having a girl was not the preference in pre-Islamic society, Islam sought to eradicate this attitude. Islamic law calls for the better treatment of girls. For parents who treat their daughters well, Islamic law promises a great reward on the Day of Resurrection (Alsindhi, 2008). Alsindhi (2008) adduced the Prophet Muhammad—peace be upon him—who said, 'Whoever is in charge of (put to test by) these daughters and treats them generously, then they will act as a shield for him from the (Hell) Fire' (Alsindhi, 2008, p. 481). This quote demonstrates the Islamic interest in protecting girls from abusive treatment from their parents, which often went as far as burying them while they were still alive.

A child's right to nutrition is also considered by Islam, as nursing is considered the mother's duty to her child (Alkahlan, 2016; Alloweehig, 2011; Alsindhi, 2008; Olowu, 2008), and it is the father's duty to spend money on the child and the mother as needed (Olowu, 2008). Alloweehig (2011) explained how these rights arose from the Quran, as Allah says in Sūrat Al-Baqarah, Verse No. 233, 'The mothers should suckle their children for two whole years, (that is) for those (parents) who desire to complete the term of suckling, but the father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis' (Alloweehig, 2011, p. 18). The father's duty is to spend money on his children until the boys are capable of working and earning money and until the girls get married (Alsindhi, 2008).

Having a proper name is another one of the children's rights in Islam. According to NSHR (2016), it is one of the children's rights to have a name that differentiates them from others in the society, and this name should be an appropriate name, meaning that it should not involve humiliation, insult the child's dignity, or conflict with Islam. This is explained by Prophet Muhammad—peace be upon him—who said, 'On the Day of Resurrection you will be called by your names and by your father's names, so give yourselves good names' (Alloweehig, 2011, p. 17). Alsindhi (2008) said that names have an effect on people. If a name has a meaning that a child does not like or one that hurts him or her, the child will be negatively affected psychologically. In contrast, a good name leads to a child's happiness and pride in his or her name, which reflects positively on his or her behaviour.

Each child should also have a family name, which must be linked to the natural father (Alsindhi, 2008; Olowu, 2008). This is related to another right, which is the right of the orphaned child. Islamic law gives orphaned children the right of *kafalah*, which dictates that it is the responsibility of Muslim society to take care of children who cannot be cared for by their parents. These children are to be raised by other families who must treat them as their natural children, but the children need to maintain the protection of their original family name, as it is prohibited in Islam to call someone by another family name as opposed to acknowledging his or her real parentage (Olowu, 2008). This is confirmed by the letters of the Holy Quran, in Sūrat Al-Ahzāb, Verses No. 4 and 5:

Nor has He made those whom ye claim [to be your sons] your sons. That is but your saying with your mouths. But Allah says the truth, and he guides to the (Right) way. Call them (adopted sons) by (the names of) their fathers, that is more just with Allāh. But if you know not their fathers' (names, call them) your brethren in faith and Mawalikum (your clients). (Olowu, 2008, p. 73)

Children thus have the right to keep their family names, even if they are adopted. This is done to protect the natural relationships and parentage, which might affect related judicial rights and duties such as inheritance (Alsindhi, 2008; Olowu, 2008). In addition, Islamic law prohibits the assault on an orphaned child's money, which he or she may have received through inheritance, wills, or gifts (Alloweehig, 2011).

Children should, furthermore, live with their biological families. If a child's parents are divorced, the mother has the right to raise her child (*hadhanah*) with the protection of the child's biological link to the father (Abdullah, 2003; Olowu, 2008). If for any reason the mother cannot take the responsibility of raising her child, however,

this responsibility could be passed to the maternal grandmother, the father, or even maternal aunts (AlAjlan, 2015; Alsindhi, 2008). Muslim society is also responsible for providing poor families with what they need to ensure the children's survival (Abdullah, 2003; Olowu, 2008).

Another right for children in Islam is the shaping and upbringing of children in a proper manner morally, physically, mentally, and psychologically (Alsindhi, 2008). Many parts of the biography of Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—explain that he taught children about the matters of their religion and their world (Alloweehig, 2011). Also, Islam motivates people to be educated, regardless of their gender, and Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—said, 'Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim' (Alkahlan, 2016, p. 2). Education should be the responsibility of parents and society. In this regard, Prophet Mohammad—peace be upon him—said the following:

All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards; the Imam (governor) of the people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects; the man is a guardian and responsible for his family; the woman is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring; and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. (Alloweehig, 2011, p. 18)

In addition, Islam does not determine a specific way for child education and development which mean that the child has the right to get their information from any source regardless of what is this source if it does not conflict with Islam.

The responsibilities of the parents and of society also include good treatment of children. Islamic law forbids parents from discriminating between their children for any reason (Alkahlan, 2016). This is because discrimination generates jealousy and hatred between children, which leads to the disintegration of the family and society (Alsindhi, 2008). Discrimination should also not be practiced in society, as Islamic law calls for equality between human beings. As Allah says in Surat An-Nisa, Verse No. 1, 'O mankind, be dutiful to your Lord, who created you from a single person and from him, He created his wife, and from them both He created many men and women' (Alhilali & Khan, 2017, p. 118). This revealed that people were created from the same origin—as were Adam and Eve—and so there are no differences between them. It is thus clear that equality among people is obligatory in Islam. Children who belong to minority groups within Muslim society have the right to good treatment, as Allah says in Sūrat Al-Mumtahanah, Verse No. 8, 'Allah does not forbid you to deal with justly and kindly

with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves who deal with equity' (Kahinah, 2016, p. 121). Islam thus protects minority groups, as the moral and legal basis for dealing with minorities is love and justice.

Al-Rahman, the name for Allah, meaning 'Most Merciful' refers to the good treatment of children (Alloweehig, 2011; Alsindhi, 2008). In this regard, Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—said, 'Who is not merciful to others, will not be treated mercifully' (Alloweehig, 2011, p. 27). He also said, 'He is not one of us who shows no mercy to youngers' (Alsindhi, 2008, p. 476). 'Mercy' includes the prohibition of any kind of violence against children, even if it is under the guise of discipline by the parents. Alloweehig (2011) said that violence against children under the name of discipline is not acceptable in Islam, as Allah has forbidden punishable penalties for children. Kahinah (2016) added that children should not be described as criminals or sinful until they become mature. It is therefore not acceptable to punish children by beating them or by committing any other act of violence, since they are not considered sinful by religious laws (Alloweehig, 2011). Beating children is mentioned once in Islam regarding the order of prayer. As Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—said, 'Command your children to perform Salat (prayer) when they are seven years old, and beat them for (not offering) it when they are ten' (Alloweehig, 2011, p. 32). Alloweehig (2011) said that the beating in this saying is determined by specific reasons and time and that the act should be simple and not harm the child, only intimidate them and inform them about the importance of the prayer. So, as this act is restricted by a specific purpose, it should not be used for any other purpose.

Children also have the right to play with parents and friends (NSHR, 2016). This is demonstrated in Prophet Mohammed's—peace be upon him—biography, as it provides many stories of him playing or joking with his grandsons or other kids (Alloweehig, 2011; Alsindhi, 2008).

Abdullah (2003), Alajlan (2015), and Kahinah (2016) expanded on the child's right to freedom of expression and views. Abdullah (2003) mentioned that Islam educates a child to have an independent opinion and pointed out that this is shown in the story of Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—in the following excerpt:

He was given a drink, and he drank from that, and there was on his right side a boy, and on his left some old men. He said to the boy: Do you permit me to give it to them (the old men), but that boy said: by God, I will not give preference at your hand over me in my share. He (the

narrator) said that Prophet Mohammed then gave it in his hand. (Abdullah, 2003, p. 135)

Islamic teachings instruct people to respect elders, but also, people who are sitting on the right always take priority; the Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—did not skip the child who was sitting on the right side. He asked the child for permission to skip him. The child did not agree with this, and his view was respected. Kahinah (2016) said that it is a child's right in Islam to have adults listen to his or her views on matters that affect them.

Islamic law, furthermore, determines some conditions for children to participate in war. The first condition is that they must be at least 15 years old, as illustrated in the following story, which has been narrated on the authority of Abdullah ibn Umar:

Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—inspected me on the battlefield on the Day of Uhud, and I was fourteen years old. He did not allow me (to take part in the fight). He inspected me on the Day of Khandaq, and I was 15 years old, and he permitted me (to fight). (Kahinah, 2016, p. 127)

This story confirms that a child should be 15 years old to join the army. The other condition is the availability of fitness and combat skills; as narrated by Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—he prevented two children who were 15 years old from participating in the Islamic army until some witnesses proved the children's competence in combat (Kahinah, 2016). In order to participate in the war, a person must be 15 years old or older and have the capability and competence to do the work.

Many studies that compared children's rights in Islam to the guidelines of the UNCRC have confirmed that the UNCRC is similar to Islamic law regarding children's rights (Bilbakay, 2014; Kahool & Al-Khwaldah, 2015; Said, 2007). These similarities can clearly be seen in Islam's emphasis on the child's rights to life and survival, the child's rights for protection from harm and treating them in a proper manner, the child's right to health care, including nutrition, the child's right to have a name, to live with his or her family and to be in touch with both of parents, the child's right to an education and to his/her moral, physical, intellectual and psychological development, the child's right to non-discrimination, the right to play, the right of freedom of speech and expression, the rights of minority children, and the right of protection from participating in war. Furthermore, it promotes the right of children from poor families to be provided with a standard of living that helps meet their basic needs because, in Islam, it is one the responsibilities of a Muslim society to help poor families under the alms-giving practices of 'Zakat' and charity. Moreover, Islam is similar to the

UNCRC in that it bestows upon a child the right to obtain proper information using any sources such as reading or from more experienced people. Furthermore, Islam mandates that parents have many responsibilities toward their children, and it emphasises the need to respect these responsibilities. The similarities between Islam and UNCRC are shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Similarities between children's rights in Islam and the UNCRC

Children's rights in Islam	UNCRC
Non-discrimination	Article 2
The parents responsibilities toward their children which should be respected	Article 5 and 18
The child's right for life and survival	Article 6
The child's right for having a name	Article 7
Protecting the child's identity.	Article 8
The child's right to live with his or her family and being in touch with both of them	Article 9 and 10
The right for freedom of expression and views	Article 12, 13, and 14
The child the rights to get suitable information by the use of any sources.	Article 17
Child's rights for protection from harm and trating them in a proper manner	Article 19, 33, 34, 35, and 36
The rights of orphan children (Kafala)	Article 20 and 21
Health care for child including the child nutrition	Article 24
The right of every child to a standard of living that meets his or her basic needs.	Article 27
The right for education and to improve all aspects of the child	Article 28 and 29
The rights of the minorities children	Article 30
The right for play	Article 31
Islam forbids punishable penalties for children and children should not be described as criminals or sinful until they become mature.	Article 37 and 40

Said (2007) argued that children's rights in Islam discuss the main rights for the child in general language which is suitable for any time and place while the UNCRC discusses children's rights in detail which is more suitable for the modern era. Abdullah (2003) and Kahool and Al-Khwaladah (2015) agreed that even though the UNCRC is highly similar to children's rights in Islam, there are some differences between them in regard to the unborn child's rights; for example, the UNCRC does not forbid abortion, but Islam does. Olowu (2002) said that, in contrast to the UNCRC, Islam emphasises an unborn child's right to life and survival, so abortion is forbidden. Islam prevents abortion of the unborn child for no acceptable reason. Bilbakay (2014) said that, although the UNCRC emphasises providing a pregnant mother with good healthcare before and after the birth of the child, it ignores some other important rights for the unborn child, such as the right to life and financial rights. Under Islam, a child has many financial rights, even before he/she is born. It also treats the child as an adult in relation to some financial issues, such as inheritance, which is not addressed in the UNCRC. Furthermore, Islam specifies that an orphan child has many rights, such as the right for Kafalah, financial rights and their right to protect their birth family's name. In contrast, the UNCRC does not distinguish between orphaned children and any other children in some rights (Alajlan, 2015).

There are three main discrepancies between Islam and the UNCRC, which are the end of the childhood age, adoption law, and the freedom of religion and thought. In regard to the end of the childhood age, Abdullah (2003) and Bilbakay (2014) mentioned that the UNCRC determines that all people under the age of 18 are children. This does not comply with Islamic law, which defines the age of puberty as a condition of adulthood; consequentially, 18 is usually the *maximum* age for a child to become an adult under Islamic law. Alajlan (2015) considered the age of 15 as the end of the childhood period, even if signs of puberty had not appeared for a child before that. Islamic law thus linked the end of the childhood period to puberty, which usually comes before the age of 18.

The second issue is the adoption law. As mentioned before, Islamic law puts *kafalah* over adoption. Alajlan (2015) said that the UNCRC, in contrast with Islam, allows adoption as a way to provide an alternative family for a child who does not have one for any reason. Abdullah (2003) mentioned that the adoption law in the UNCRC allows adoptive parents to give their name to the adopted child, which conflicts with

the Islamic law that forbids the linking of a child to a parent who is not his or her natural parent. The UNCRC, however, considers *kafalah* under Islamic law as one way in which a family can be provided for a child (Olowu, 2008). Kahool and Al- Khwaldah (2015) stated that the UNCRC does not consider adoption to be the only recognised option; rather it is viewed side by side with *kafalah*. The adoption system in Article 20 of the UNCRC is therefore one of the options to provide alternative care for children who are deprived of their family, but this is considered for the countries with laws that have an adoption system allowance. In addition, the UNCRC has adopted *kafalah*, as stated in Islamic law, in consideration of Islamic countries with laws that forbid the adoption system.

Freedom of religion and thought is another problematic issue, as stated in Article 14 of the UNCRC. Alajlan (2015) confirmed that Islamic law is in line with the UNCRC regarding freedom of religion in general, but they contradict each other in the details. In Islamic law, people should not be persuaded to be Muslim; as the Holy Quran proclaims in Sūrat Al-Baqarah, Verse No. 256, ‘There is no compulsion in religion’ (Bilbakay, 2014, p. 45). Alajlan (2015) said that freedom of religion is for children whose parents are non-Muslim, since children with Muslim parents are considered by Islamic society to be Muslims. Similarly, Bilbakay (2014) confirmed that Islam does not persuade anyone to be a Muslim and does not prevent any from being Muslim, as Allah says in Sūrat Al-Kahf, Verse No. 29, ‘And say: “The truth is from your Lord.” Then whosoever wills, let him believe; and whosoever wills; let him disbelieve’ (Bilbakay, 2014, p. 45). Bilbakay (2014) added that freedom of religion in the UNCRC is a complete freedom, but in Islam, the basis is to teach children about Islam and accustom children to worship. If they do not obey, then that is their choice. For that reason, Freeman (2000) said that the actual implementation of the UNCRC’s right for freedom of religion was worrisome. Furthermore, many countries have signed the UNCRC with reservations regarding Article 14, including the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Saudi Arabia has shown reservations about any articles that conflict with Islam.

To summarise, children’s rights in Islam are divided into three stages: the first stage is a child’s rights at the foundation stage; the second stage is the rights of an unborn child; and the third stage is the rights of a child after his or her birth. The comparison of Islamic law and the UNCRC revealed that regardless of the three conflicting issues, Islamic law and the UNCRC share similarities regarding children’s rights. As the current study focuses on Saudi Arabia, where the culture and law are based on

Islam, it is necessary for me to consider the influence that children's rights in Islamic law have on the implementation of the UNCRC in primary schools in this country. The policy of children's rights in Saudi Arabia will be discussed in the next section.

2.4 Children's rights policies in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has a significant interest in human rights. As such, it signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, with the exemption of two articles: Article 16, which gives people the freedom to choose their spouse regardless of any differences of religion, and Article 18, which says that everyone has the right to change his or her religion or beliefs. The government of Saudi Arabia has rejected those two articles because they conflict with Islamic teachings and the legal system of Saudi Arabia (Saudi National Society for Human Rights [NSHR], 2008). The importance given to human rights by the Saudi Arabian government appears in its regime, however. For instance, Article 26 of the Main Ruling Regime of Saudi Arabia states that the government protects human rights in accordance with Islamic law. In addition, Article 8 of the same regime states that laws in Saudi Arabia are based on the concepts of justice, consultation, and equality (Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers [BECM], 1992).

On 11 September 1995, Saudi Arabia adopted the UNCRC with a reservation regarding all articles that were inconsistent with Islam (NSHR, 2008). To ensure the implementation of the UNCRC, the UNCRC was forwarded to every government agency that offered services for children, instructing them to make their plans pursuant to the UNCRC. The Saudi Arabian government thus gave the Saudi National Commission for Childhood, established in 1979 as a part of the MoE, the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the UNCRC and preparing the reports that must be periodically sent to the United Nations (NCC, 2000).

In spite of the progress in governance, Alkaabi (2012) mentioned that there are many disadvantages to the reservations the Saudi Arabian government has regarding the UNCRC. It did not determine their reservations exactly, which may affect the implementation of the UNCRC. Alkaabi states that there is nothing to prevent the Saudi Arabian government from declaring their reservations and these reservations may be due to the absence of a civil status law and the lack of specific laws regarding child custody and other matters that relate to and affect a child's life. According to Alkaabi (2012), child abuse and child marriage are the two most common issues that have been

addressed among the international criticisms of children's rights in Saudi Arabia. She suggests that these problems could be solved by creating a law that declares a minimum age for marriage, by regulating the civil status law, and by assigning child custody to someone other than one or both parents if there is evidence of abuse within the family. Many improvements are still needed in internal regulations concerning children's welfare in Saudi Arabia.

To ensure and protect children's rights, the Saudi Arabian government has established specific government organisations, such as the Human Rights Commission (HRC), established in 2004 (NSHR, n.d.). Also, the National Family Safety Program (NFSP), established in 2005, aims to protect victims of domestic violence, including children (NFSP, 2015).

Furthermore, there is legislation to protect children and their rights in the law in Saudi Arabia. Article 30 of the Main Ruling Regime of Saudi Arabia emphasises the importance of education, for instance, stating that it is the government's responsibility to provide free education for all people living in the country. Article 31 of the same regime confirms the government's responsibility to provide healthcare for all in Saudi Arabia (BECM, 1992). In addition, Almohaimeed (2009) confirmed that there are 131 laws in Saudi Arabian legislation that protect children and their rights. Six of these laws in the main ruling regime of Saudi Arabia ensure the main rights for each child, such as the rights of life, health, and education; 17 of the laws in Saudi Arabian regulation of human rights secure legal rights, such as protection from abuse, 16 of the laws involve the education system, 22 of the laws involve the health sector, and 23 of the laws involve civil services. Almohaimeed (2009) stated that, despite this comprehensive legislation, there is a failure to apply these policies for children's rights. Almohaimeed said that this may be because there is no specific central department for children's rights in Saudi Arabia, which indicates that there are both opportunities and barriers for institutions in Saudi Arabia. He added that these laws are clear and explicit to the children of stable families, but not to the children of unstable families, who suffer from custody issues. There is also conflict about determining the legal age of commission for the war, as the age of puberty is a condition for the application of legal sentences such as capital punishment. According to the Saudi Arabian system of work, people are allowed to work at 15 years old, while the civil and military service systems require people to be 18 years old to work. Almohaimeed's research thus suggests that, as indicated above, there are both opportunities and barriers for institutions in Saudi Arabia.

Alfaryan (2014) also studied the policies and legislation in Saudi Arabia that aim to protect children from abuse. He went on to study the implementation of protective policies and found that there are many policies in place, but his interviews with 30 child protection workers in two departments in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia revealed failure in the implementation of these protective policies. There is no specific authority that takes responsibility and makes decisions about child protection laws, as there are many ministries and departments responsible for producing and applying these laws, such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Social Affairs. He also found that unclear guidance and workers' lack of knowledge all negatively affect the implementation of child protection laws. As in many other countries, an effective child protection system relies on good governance as well as effective strategic implementation across a variety of providers and organisations.

In 2014, the Child Protection Law was introduced by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The aim of this system is to protect children against any kind of maltreatment, to ensure the implementation of children's rights, to increase awareness regarding children's rights, and to help children know their rights. The strategies to achieve these goals focus on assessing the suitability of the environment around the child at home, school, or any other places that provide services to children; adopting appropriate processes to ensure the protection of children from inequality, abuse, and injury; enabling children to practice their rights via the organisations that deal directly with children; increasing awareness about children and their rights through the media and the educational system; working to include some concepts of children's rights in school curricula, as well as ways to report any breaches of children's rights; identifying workers who provide services to children and enrolling these workers in training programmes to learn about the best ways to treat children; and identifying childhood issues that aid the success of the Child Protection Law (BECM, 2014).

In the same year, the NFSP launched the Child Helping Hotline, which is a free-to-call phone number. It is 116111, and it was established in 2011 as a trial. The basic operational stage began in 2014. It aims to support children under the age of 18 by listening to children's, parents', and caregivers' problems and by helping to solve their problems or by redirecting them to the appropriate authorities that can help them (NFSP, 2017).

Albaker (2013c) believed that the protection of children is not achieved by producing programs and systems, but by the understanding of these systems and the implementation of these within the cultural structure of a society, which would moti-

vate people and administrative bodies to action. Albaker (2013a), (2013b) expressed doubts about the implementation of the Child Protection Law in Saudi Arabia, because the application of this law will interfere with the social and cultural structure of this society, which purports the belief that a child is the property of his or her parents. Albaker (2013b) added that the diversity of people in Saudi society affects the societal understanding of child abuse. She argued that both culture and people's values impact any reporting about child abuse because people view this as a kind of violation of a family's privacy. This raises the question of how authorities can be informed and interfere in family affairs. There will also be many other social and tribal obligations that executors will have to carefully consider when handling each case. The implementation of any child protection legislation, including the UNCRC, may face difficulties that could lead to failure. The scope of this current research aims to find out more about the reality of the implementation of the UNCRC, with a specific focus on the challenges facing its implementation in primary education in Saudi Arabia.

The third and fourth reports regarding the application of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia addressed problems in implementation. In these reports, the NCC admitted that the achievements in Saudi Arabia regarding children and their rights still fall short of their hopes and expectations and that there is a lack of proper care and attention (NCC, 2012). The annual report of the Saudi Human Rights Commission [HRC] (2017) also showed evidence of issues in the implementation of the UNCRC. According to the HRC report, after 245 visits to some social institutions such as social welfare centres, institutions for disabled children, hospitals, and schools in order to monitor the implementation of the human rights and the UNCRC, they discovered 333 human rights issues, 45 of which were related to violence and 35 of which were related to education. There are violations of rights within the education system in Saudi Arabia, which could also be a violation of the UNCRC. This study will investigate the implementation of child protection policies related to the UNCRC within the education system, which will be represented by a primary education in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in an effort to learn more about the types of violations occurring. The following section will discuss the literature surrounding the implementation of the UNCRC in the world, including Saudi Arabia.

2.5 Implementation of the UNCRC

This section will review the literature related to the implementation of the UNCRC. It is divided into four parts. Part 2.4.1 discusses the literature related to the implementation of the UNCRC in general, 2.4.2 discusses the literature related to the awareness of the UNCRC, 2.4.3 discusses the literature related to the implementation of the right to education, 2.4.4 discusses the literature related to the implementation of the participation rights, while 2.4.5 discusses the literature related to the child's protection rights.

2.5.1 The implementation of the UNCRC.

Although numerous countries have signed the UNCRC, many have failed to successfully implement the treaty (Faiz & Kamer, 2017; Mhaka-Mutepfa et al., 2014; Vasabhai et al., 2014). Faiz and Kamer (2017) found that Turkey, for instance, has experienced issues with this implementation. The researchers questioned future teachers about children's rights in Turkey and collected data through pre-structured interviews with 30 university students from the Departments of Preschool Education, Primary School Education and Social Studies Education in one unspecified Turkish university. The study found that children's rights were generally not respected in schools, as inequality between children still exists in this environment. Additionally, children do not have freedom of speech. Also, children's rights are generally not respected by families, as families do not pay attention to these rights, and they do not allow their children to practice their rights, for example by not respecting children's views and opinions.

Mhaka-Mutepfa's et al. study (2014) found the same result, although there were variances in the study samples' categories between Faiz and Kamer (2017), which was comprised of Turkish university students, and Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014) study, which included Zimbabwean children aged 12 to 19 years. Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014) found that children's rights were not being respected in Zimbabwe in their quantitative study.

In India, Vasabhai's et al. mixed methods study (2014) found that children's rights were being systemically violated. Their sample included 200 children aged 10–18, as well as their parents/guardians. The study found that a substantial portion of these children do not attend school, live in unsanitary environments, and were being abused by parents and teachers at the same time. The most serious breach was child labour,

which leads to other children's rights violations, such as infringements on child protection and developmental rights.

The previous three studies are from different contextual environments, namely Turkey, Zimbabwe, and India respectively, and had a variety of samples, but ultimately found the same result. The results showed breaches in the implementation of the UNCRC in all of these countries.

Some countries have tried to implement the UNCRC by passing legislation that enshrines the UNCRC as a national policy; however, these policies have been insufficient (Mangamu, 2013; Mohammed, 2013; Smith, 2009). In New Zealand, for example, Smith (2009) investigated how the government's actions have been influenced by the UNCRC. She found that the influence of the UNCRC can be seen in the ban on corporal punishment for children, for example, as well as in the creation of the Agenda for Children, which aims to make New Zealand a better society for children, since this policy focuses on improving children's well-being (Smith, 2009). By analysing reports from NGOs regarding the UNCRC, as well as reports sent to the UN by New Zealand's Ministry of Affairs, the researcher found that, though progress has been made on the legislative level, the UNCRC has not been fully implemented, especially in the areas of child poverty and violence against children.

In Iraq, Mohammed (2013) found that even though children's rights legislation has been passed, it has not been implemented. In his study, he compared the implementation of the UNCRC in Kurdistan (Iraq) and the United Kingdom. He found that, though the Iraqi government had approved the UNCRC, its policies have been poorly implemented. He suggested that the implementation of the UNCRC in Kurdistan should be focused on improving the children's standard of living and enshrining their rights in law, as was done for children in the U.K. He also suggested that the policies should be changed to spread awareness about children's rights throughout Iraq.

In Zambia, the government has established many programmes and passed many policies to implement the UNCRC. These efforts were not successful, however, because they were not supported financially (Mangamu, 2013). Mangamu recommended that actions should be taken to broadcast information about children's rights throughout Zambia and to encourage efforts to implement these rights.

Similarly, in Saudi Arabia Said (2007) confirmed that there are some failures in the provision of children's rights in regards to the children of poor families. Said (2007) found that those children suffer uncleanness in their environment, which may affect their health, and they also suffer from deprivation, as their families are not providing

them with essential requirements such as food, which might affect their mental and physical development. She mentioned that the legislations and organisations that protect children do not resolve the issues of children in need, such as children living in poverty. She found that official authorities do not check the status and needs of those children. She therefore recommended that there should be an official department, which provides services to children in need. Said (2007) also found that the government provides good health care services and education which are free for all children in Saudi Arabia. There is a need for more effort in providing the children of poorer families with their rights, as well as a need to research the situation of other children and their enjoyment of their rights in Saudi Arabia. Said's study focuses on providing children's rights to the children of poor families in all aspects of life. The current study, meanwhile, focuses on investigating the provision of children's rights in primary education for all children, regardless of their families' economic situation.

It is apparent that many countries have failed to adhere to the policies of the UNCRC. Progress has been made on the governmental level, but these policies have not been followed. Awareness is one of the most critical factors which affect whether the legislation is actually implemented. If people are unaware of the UNCRC, then the legislation will not be implemented (Smith, 2009). The discussion of the literature about the awareness about the UNCRC is further developed in the following section.

2.5.2 Awareness about the UNCRC.

The protection of children's rights cannot be achieved unless knowledge is spread across communities (Almannai, 2014). In his mixed methods study, Almannai found that Qatari children do not have awareness of their rights. He used a questionnaire and an interview to collect data from 1080 children who were enrolled in elementary, secondary and high school in Doha, Qatar. His findings confirmed that female children are more motivated to learn about their rights than males. This might be because the study found that females are more likely to be victims of child abuse at home or at school. As they are not aware of their rights, they are more likely to accept violence against them as a right of others, especially in traditional societies which value boys more than girls. Qatar has similar cultural norms to those of Saudi Arabia, so Almannai's study findings (2014) may imply that Saudi children have similar limitations regarding their awareness about the UNCRC, which will be examined more closely by the current study.

That general ignorance about the UNCRC has also inhibited its implementa-

tion. It is, therefore, important to educate people about children's rights (Boushel, 2014; Campbell & Covell, 2001; Kepenekci, 2006; Mohammed & Ibrahim, 2011). In fact, raising awareness about the rights of children is part of Article 42 of the UNCRC.

Boushel's mixed methods study (2014), which was carried out in the UK, found that in general childcare professionals were ignorant about the UNCRC. He found that childcare professionals understood children's rights differently from one another, which affected how they followed the UNCRC's guidelines. He suggested that these professionals should go through mandatory training courses which could serve as a way to standardise how these professionals understand human rights, the UNCRC and the relationship between their work and children's rights. Similarly, Wyse (2001) found that from all the principals, teachers, and children he surveyed in his study, only one principal of one primary school knew about the UNCRC. Wyse's findings (2001) thus implied that in both primary and secondary schools in the UK, there is limited awareness regarding the UNCRC among principals, teachers, and children.

This appeared to also be the case in Egypt's Qalyubia Governorate. Mohammed and Ibrahim (2011) found that teachers were, for the most part, ignorant about the UNCRC and about children's rights generally. They also found that teachers were unable to speak about the barriers that could have been preventing the implementation of the UNCRC. The researchers used a questionnaire to collect data. The study's sample consisted of 616 participants and these included both kindergarten teachers and school principals. The researchers suggested that a culture of children's rights should be promoted and that this should be done by educating the people who provide services for and who deal directly with children. Isaac's study (2010) also showed a lack of knowledge regarding the UNCRC among kindergarten teachers in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Saudi Arabia. The study utilised a questionnaire and had a sample of 113 kindergarten teachers. Based on the study's findings, the researcher recommended that teachers' awareness regarding children's rights should be improved; this could be done by providing teachers with training classes, along with any other ways which might help increase their knowledge about the UNCRC and about its implementation. Homed (2009) also confirmed that there is a lack of societal awareness regarding children's rights and the UNCRC in the Arabian Peninsula States, which include Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.

In her mixed methods study, Ali (2013) found that kindergarten teachers in Al Madinah Al-Munawarah, Saudi Arabia had some awareness about children's rights. According to her findings, however, they do not usually practice these rights. This study

implies that there is a gap between the teachers' awareness of children's rights and the implementation of these rights, which requires further research in order to investigate the implementation of children's rights in education, which is one of the aims of the current study. Both Ali's (2013) and Isaac's (2010) studies explored the teachers' awareness when it comes to children's rights, the topic of study, in two different regions of Saudi Arabia. The difference between these two studies is the methods that were used to collect data within them. Isaac (2010) used a questionnaire to collect the data for her study, while Ali (2013) used a questionnaire, an interview, and observational methods as methods for her study, which lead to the differences in their result. Since these two studies were aimed at kindergarten teachers and their awareness, the current study aims to explore primary education teachers' awareness about the UNCRC. Ali's study (2013), furthermore, was more in-depth and got a larger variety of results than Isaac (2010). This affected the design of the current study, which aims to investigate educators' awareness regarding the UNCRC in another region of Saudi Arabia; Riyadh, and influenced the adoption of the use of mixed methods in collecting data in order to be able to collect in-depth data.

Studying rights could help improve the situation of rights in societies, as confirmed by Kepenekci (2006). Kepenekci's quantitative study (2006) found that the—unspecified—university in Turkey had no course that specifically focused on children's rights, though it had a course that focused on human rights. She also found that university students have a positive attitude regard the children's rights and that there are three groups of students who were more likely to be aware of children's rights and view them positively. The first group is women and, according to her interpretation, this is because females were found to be more sensitive to children and their issues than males. The second group is the students from the Department of Educational Science, as their area of study is focused on humans and children. The third group is those students who have studied human rights before, as they have experience with the principles of human rights. The researcher's study sample consisted of 283 university students from the Department of Educational Science and of 67 university students from the Department of Agriculture. The differentiation in the sample size between students from the Department of Educational Science and students from the Department of Agriculture might affect the credibility of the result, which must be taken into account.

Unlike Turkey, Canadian universities offer many courses on children's rights (Campbell & Covell, 2001). Campbell and Covell (2001) explored how educating adults regarding children's rights affected the adults' opinions about these rights. Their

sample consisted of 71 undergraduate students who were enrolled in a third year university course which focused on children's rights and 67 undergraduate students enrolled in third- and fourth-year English classes. They distributed two surveys, one at the beginning of the course and one at the end. They found that children's rights education improved the students' awareness of children's rights, increased their support for these rights and changed their attitudes about children, especially regarding the view of children as their parents' property. Courses about UNCRC provided for university students thus help improve awareness about it, as well as build on the social beliefs regarding childhood and children. Therefore, if the teachers studied the UNCRC at university, this could affect their awareness and the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education. This is one of the main areas that the current study aims to investigate.

Kepenekci (2010) and Merey (2012, 2014) studied how Article 42 of the UNCRC was implemented in Turkey. They did this by looking at how children's rights were included in the Ministry of National Education's school curricula for the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grades. They considered that Article 42 was properly implemented provided that the children were able to learn about it in their textbooks. All of these studies used content analyses of the social studies curricula to gather data. Kepenekci (2010) examined social studies textbooks to see if they included content on children's social rights. Her study focused on three social rights: the right to health, social security and education. She found that the social studies textbooks adequately covered children's social rights; however, the rights to health and education rights were covered in more detail than the right to social security. According to Kepenekci, this might be because the health and education rights are the most essential rights for children and these are the ones that can lead to a better life for children within their society, while the social security rights were mentioned in relation to children with the highest need for protection and social services, such as poor children. Consequently, she suggested that more attention should be devoted to educating children regarding their right to social security.

Merey (2014) studied how the rights of children were addressed by Turkish social studies textbooks, but she focused on the right to participation. She found that social studies textbooks frequently covered the right to participation, and a child's right to participate in his or her school was the most commonly covered right. The textbooks were considerably less concerned with political participation, participation in the protection and sustainable development of the environment, and the ability to

participate in a healthy environment. Participation in a judicial environment was completely neglected by the textbooks.

These findings were aligned with Merey's study (2012), which found that the right to participate was the right most commonly mentioned in Turkish social studies curricula. Merey (2012) conducted a comparative study of Turkey and the United States to see if children's rights were included in social studies curricula for the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grades. She found that Turkey's social studies curricula covered the rights of children in more detail than the United States' social studies curricula, which is a striking finding. She also explained, however, that the United States has not signed the UNCRC, so it would be unlikely to include the concepts of the UNCRC in its curricula. The most commonly discussed rights in Turkish curricula are the rights to participation, life, and physical and mental development. The child's right to protection was not mentioned in either country's social studies curricula.

In Saudi Arabia, Alkhlan (2016) studied the inclusion of children's rights in Sharia Sciences Textbooks in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd grades of primary education. He found that religious rights, such as the knowledge of Allah (God), and the names and attributes of Allah, the knowledge of prophet Muhammad—peace be upon him—and learning about the Islamic teaching were included in these textbooks more than social and educational rights. In contrast, economic and participation rights, which are one of the Islamic principles, were not included in these textbooks at all. He justified this by pointing out that the children in the first three grades of primary education are still young and need to learn about the Islamic religion, which is the aim of these text-books, more than addressing other issues. This implies that there is a chasm between Islamic education and wider social issues when the Sharia Science text books are followed. This is because Sharia Science text books focus only on worship and religious rights.

In 2014, UNICEF published the Child Rights Education [CRE] Toolkit, which aims to assist in the implementation of the UNCRC by boosting its principles through a rights-based approach to education (UNICEF, 2014). It provides governments with a plan and resources to implement CRE in their schools. According to UNICEF (2014), CRE means:

Teaching and learning about the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 'child rights approach' in order to empower both adults and children to take action to advocate for and apply these at the family, school, community, national and global levels. (UNICEF, 2014, p. 20)

CRE's core element is educating people about the UNCRC by including the

treaty's principles in school curricula. The right-based education leads to a better society. This is what the Rights, Respect, and Responsibility initiative, a program of children's rights education implemented in the county of Hampshire in England. This program aims to improve schools by including the UNCRC in the curriculum and any other aspect of schoolwork. Affirmed four years after the program began, the evaluation of the 18 primary schools that implemented this initiative revealed that the program had good effects on the students, teachers, environment, and society. It has improved children's behaviour and they have become more respectful of others, more responsible, and their attitude improved regarding respecting the rights of others and the environment. It confirmed that teaching children about their rights and raising them in an environment that protects their rights makes them more socially responsible (Covell, 2009). Dunhill (2018) emphasised that applying rights education program has a positive consequence on the primary education children. Dunhill implemented a research project with 17 children, age between five to 11, in the United Kingdom and found that the implementation of right-based education program produced children who practice their rights and respect the rights of others.

In 2015, the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University, Belfast, researched how CRE is implemented in the countries that are part of the UN National Committee (Jerome et al., 2015). They distributed an online survey that reached 88 experts across 26 countries and implemented a case study in eight countries. They found that the curricula of 11 countries taught children about their rights, while CRE was implemented only in parts of seven countries. The curricula of many other countries, however, did not include material that taught children about their rights.

It could thus be argued that education on children's rights is absent in many countries. Some countries included children's rights in their curriculum, but this inclusion of the rights was selective, particularly in countries such as Turkey. This might be because of societal and cultural influence on the attitudes regarding the children's rights. To make more of a contribution to the children's knowledge and their education about the UNCRC at school, the current study aims to investigate the children's awareness about their rights in Saudi Arabia and it aims to find if the education system participates in this regard.

Particular societal characteristics significantly affect people's attitudes about the rights of children (Ejeh & Akinola, 2009). In Nigeria, for example, Ejeh and Akinola (2009) looked at whether children who were enrolled in primary schools were aware of their rights and, if they were, what their perspectives were. They collected data

through semi-structured interviews with 144 children from four primary schools and found that Nigerian children were generally unaware of their rights and believed that implementing their rights was unnecessary. This attitude was caused by Nigeria's traditional society and culture, in which it is believed that children are not capable of having rights and participating in making decisions in matters that affect them.

Similarly, Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014) argued that society affects people's general awareness regarding the rights of children. They added that age and place of residence affect how aware people are of the rights of children. The study utilised an unstructured questionnaire, which was answered by 147 students aged between 12 to 19 years of age. They found that the children's awareness of their rights differs according to gender, age and place of residence. Older children and children who lived in urban areas were more likely to be aware of their rights when compared to younger children and children who lived in poorer neighbourhoods. Female children who lived in low-density areas were also more aware of their rights and less satisfied about the implementation of these rights and the reason cited for this was because of males having a higher station in patriarchal societies than females. They also found that children learned about their rights in school and, as such, as they became more educated, they were more knowledgeable about their rights. The researchers recommended improving efforts to raise awareness about the UNCRC throughout Zimbabwe and Africa.

Khoury-Kassabri and Ben-Arieh (2009) also found that society and culture play a key role in whether or not children know about their rights. Like Boushel (2014), Campbell and Covell (2001), Kepenekci (2006), and Mohammed and Ibrahim (2011), the researchers argued that it is important to educate the people who work directly with children about children's rights. Khoury-Kassabri and Ben-Arieh's quantitative study (2009) explored the effects of a school's climate on the children's knowledge of their rights and how cultural differences produce differences in knowledge. The study's sample consisted of 1,427 children, whose average age was 13 years old. Of these children, 810 were Jewish and 582 were Arabs. Of the Arab children, 372 were Muslims and 210 were Christian. The study found that the children's views of their rights were influenced by their backgrounds. Children from traditional societies, such as Arab societies, are less likely to understand their rights and find support for these rights. In addition, the student-teacher relationship does not significantly influence the children's understanding of their rights because the teachers are prepared only to develop their students' academic skills, not to address issues regarding the rights of children. The substantial difference in the sample sizes between Jewish and Arab participants in the

study may, however, affect the reliability of the results. Moreover, the Arab's sample consisted of Muslims and Christians; there are many cultural and religious differences between the two groups. We are thus not able to generalise from either the Muslims' or the Christians' results.

Peens and Louw (2000) showed that, in addition to society, culture and age, many other factors also affect people's awareness of children's rights. They reviewed numerous studies to see how children experience their rights and needs across different ages and stages of cognitive development. In addition, they explored how adults perceive children's rights. They found that age, gender, socioeconomic status, educational level, environment and religious beliefs also affect the children's awareness of their rights. Similarly, the adults' perspectives were affected by their age, religious beliefs, and educational level. Peens and Louw mentioned that the more traditional and more religious societies have strong beliefs about parenthood and their rights towards bringing up their children in their own particular way. They found that the older and more educated a person is, the more aware they are about children's rights. The adults had more positive attitudes when it came to providing children with the rights to nurturance and protection than the right to freedom of choice, as they do not believe on the children's ability in making the right decisions in the matters affect them. Like Mangamu (2013), Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014), and Peens and Louw (2000), found that differences in age affected the children's knowledge of their rights. Mangamu (2013) carried out a case study in eight schools in Zambia and found that the children's knowledge and opinions towards the advantages of knowing their rights differed according to their ages. Children from the upper grades of the basic school knew more about their rights and the importance of implementing these rights than children from the lower grades. The children were most commonly aware of their rights to health, education, nutrition and refuge. Moreover, the study found that schools played a significant role in educating children about their rights; children were more likely to learn about their rights from their teachers than from their mothers. It is clear that if adults do not fully understand the articles of the UNCRC, then these articles will not be transmitted to children, as argued by Lundy (2007).

The previous review shows that there is an absence of both adults' and children's awareness of children's rights and that, even though they are aware about these rights, as confirmed by Ali's study (2013), they do not implement these rights, which shows a gap between the knowledge and the practice. This might be because this awareness is affected by many factors, such as culture, society, age, level of education

and religion. Studying rights helps improve the awareness of children's rights and change the societal attitude regarding children and their rights, which makes education on children's rights necessary for all.

Education is not, however, just a means to satisfy the obligations of Article 42. Education is also the right of every child, as stated in Article 28 of the UNCRC. The review of the literature regarding the implementation of children's rights to education is discussed next.

2.5.3 Educational rights.

Schools around the world still engage in practices that prevent children from taking advantage of their right to education (Faiz & Kamer, 2017; Lansdown, Jimer-son, & Shahroozi, 2014). There are many rights that are related to the right of educa-tion, however. These include rights within educational settings and infringing on any of these rights compromises the right to education (McCowan, 2012). Discrimination, violence against children, and the inability of children to participate at school all in-fringe the right to education.

The right to protection against discrimination is codified in Article 2 of the UNCRC. Wyse (2001) found that children in primary and secondary schools in the United Kingdom do not feel that teachers treat them fairly, because some of the teachers shout at the same children every time. Similarly, Cairns et al. (2018) found that schools in Scotland and England discriminated against children from less affluent backgrounds. In Saudi Arabia, teachers do not respect the children's right to fair and equal treatment (Alhelaly, 2008).

Schools in several Europe [EU] states discriminate between children (Lundy, 2012). For example, Lundy mentioned that, though education is compulsory and free in the EU, dropout rates are surprisingly high in 18 EU states, including France, Spain, and Romania. Discrimination against minority groups has also prevented the full implementation of education rights. Other issues include disparities in the ability to access schools (in the Czech Republic), racism (in France, Sweden, and Italy), and segregation (in Bulgaria) (Lundy, 2012). All of these issues breach a child's right to education. Lundy (2012) found that, though the UNCRC has influenced the domestic laws of many EU states, it does not appear that it has been fully integrated into the educational policies in some of these EU states. There is a gap between domestic laws regarding children's rights and the integration of these laws in educational policies. This result implies the need for more investigation regarding the integration of chil-

dren's rights laws in the educational system in other parts of the world, such as Saudi Arabia.

Alrubiyea (2010) studied the situation regarding the rights of children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. This included their right to education. He found that schools in Saudi Arabia frequently discriminate against children with special needs. In some cities, there are few educational facilities available for them. In contrast, in larger cities, such as Riyadh and Hail, children have equal opportunities for education, regardless of their physical needs. Alrubiyea (2010) confirmed that the children's right to education is being violated as disabled children who live in rural areas do not have equal access to educational opportunities. As argued by Alquraini (2011), there is a shortage of education services for disabled children in Saudi Arabia. Alquraini confirmed that there is a discrimination against disabled children in Saudi Arabia as they are ignored and prevented by society from practicing some of their rights, such as the right to education, as equally as other children. In this regard, Hodge (2014) emphasised the importance of recognition and protection of the rights of disabled pupils.

In Yemen, as in many other countries, though basic education is compulsory, this law is not complied with (Abdulwahab, 2002). Abdulwahab (2002) found that educational opportunities are available for children from high-status families because they are able to attend private schools. These schools provide them with a good education. Public schools, in contrast, suffer from deteriorating buildings and equipment. Children from economically impoverished backgrounds tend to go to these schools. In addition, schools' financial requirements prevent poorer families from enrolling their children in school. Exacerbating the issue is the fact that schools are not evenly distributed across the country. The distribution is biased toward urban areas and boys' schools (Abdulwahab, 2002). According to Abdulwahab (2002), in Yemen, boys' education is prioritised; there are fewer girls' schools than boys' schools. In some areas, there are no girls' schools at all. In addition, the dropout rate among girls is very high due to the fact that the social destiny of Yemeni women is to be married, not educated. Ultimately, gender affects whether children get to attend school (Abdulwahab, 2002). Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, girls are discriminated against, because Saudi culture seems to hold that boys are the builders of the country's future (Humanium, 2011). It is of note that in Saudi Arabia, attendance rates at school do not exceed 85% (Humanium, 2011).

These relatively low attendance rates exist despite the fact that, in 2010, the

Saudi government made education compulsory for children aged 6–15 years old (Abu elsameh, 2013). Many Saudi children are deprived of the opportunity to attend school in rural cities (Alfawaz, 2011). According to the Saudi Organisation for Human rights (as cited in Alfawaz, 2011), this occurs in rural areas because that population is comprised of travelling Bedouins who do not stay in one area. Also, Bedouins need their children to help them with grazing work rather than being enrolled in education. According to the Saudi Organisation for Human rights, this deprivation affects girls more than boys because, in some parts of Saudi Arabia, society believes that girls' sole responsibility is to become housewives and mothers. Alsaban, a consultant of Psychiatry at Umm Al Qura University, in her interview with *Alwatan* newspaper said that this phenomenon is rare and is limited to only a few areas, so it cannot be generalized, and she added that educational deprivation is a kind of violence against children (Alfawaz, 2011).

Poverty is another factor that prevents children from attending school. O'Leary et al. (2018), along with Chhetri (2011), found (in Afghanistan and Bhutan, respectively) that a significant number of children drop out or do not attend school because they must work to survive. Dropping out of or failing to enrol in school is a problem in the Western world as well. Poverty and the hidden costs of school prevent children from going to school in many EU states, such as Belgium, Ireland, and Latvia (Lundy, 2012). Children's social and economic backgrounds affect their opportunities to take advantage of their right to education.

In summary, the previous studies confirmed (as mentioned in Section 2.4.1) that children's rights legislation exists, but that these laws are not implemented consistently in several countries. This implies that there is a distinction between the passage of laws and the actualisation of those laws in some countries, which could be a result of disrespect for these laws, as they are not given sufficient importance, or it could be a result of the society's culture and beliefs about the children's rights and this needs to be investigated. For example, many countries have laws for compulsory education, but many children do not attend school anyway. Poverty, social beliefs, and/or the limited availability of schools in their area prevent them from accessing educational opportunities.

The next section discusses the children's right to participation. According to Cairns et al. (2018), children have the right to participate at school and the implementation of this right affects the implementation of the right to education.

2.5.4 Children's right to participation.

Article 12 of the UNCRC defines the right of participation as the ability of children to express their views on matters that affect them. Article 13 states that 'the child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds..' (UNICEF, 1989, p. 5). This right is beneficial for both children and the society they inhabit (Smith, 2007). According to Smith (2007), it guarantees that children are respected, which improves their confidence and well-being. It also improves society by creating active agents who can positively affect the general quality of life and education. Mulheron (2008) confirmed that children's rights are interrelated, intertwined, and interwoven. Mulheron thus said that the child's right to participation cannot exist without protection rights and provision rights.

Avci and Yol (2016), along with Faiz and Kamer (2017), while examining the Turkish context, found that Turkish families do not listen to their children's opinions and as such do not respect their right to participation. In addition, Avci and Yol (2016) found that mothers do not account for their children's views and do not allow their children to freely choose what they want. Avci and Yol found that the children are forced to do activities they do not choose as a result of the mothers' desire to protect their children. Avci and Yol (2016) said that the mothers' behaviour, which is intended to protect their children, is a result of their attitude towards children. They believe them to be vulnerable and helpless. This leads to a lack of respect towards children as individuals. Avci and Yol (2016), along with Faiz and Kamer (2017), confirmed violations of children's rights regarding participations within the families, which is a result of their beliefs regarding the child's vulnerability. This is not done, however, on the same level as the schools, which could also be affected by families' practices. Tobin (2015) said that the child's vulnerability requires that the adults to work to improve the children's capacity for self-protection from any kind of harm rather than simply providing the protection of adults themselves. This is what the UNCRC aims to promote.

In a comparative study between the USA and Italy, Woodhouse (2014) found that the Italians have exceeded the USA in the implementation of the child's participation rights. Woodhouse said that the process of the recognition of this right was slow in the USA and still needs more improvement, while Italy has made a significant improvement in this regard and this could be approved by the Italy ranking in regard to children's well-being and the strong relationship between children and their families

and peers. Woodhouse (2014) said that Italy has succeeded in the implementation of child rights to participate because of that the cultural base of the Italian society enhances the children's participation in the family and society, which is a part of their religious tradition. Also, it has been influenced by a powerful committee of the Council of Europe in regard to child's participation rights. According to this commitment, this right has been integrated into all aspects of Italian life and into the laws of the country. While in the USA, there are many political and cultural issues that affect the child's rights to participate such as racism issues.

In the UK, Wyse (2001) said that that child's participation rights are not fully implemented. Wyse found that many children are not able to express their opinions in primary and secondary schools, which suggests that the right to participation has not been implemented. In addition, Wyse (2001) argued that, though these schools have school councils that allow children to participate (to a marginal extent) in the decision-making processes, these councils are insufficient because they are limited by poor communication and the inability to take meaningful action. The children in Wyse's study (2001) confirmed that the opinions and views they discussed in the student council are not being listened to by the teachers. Participation may thus be tokenistic rather than authentic.

Cassidy (2012), who also looked at school councils, wrote that though these councils allow children to be elected by their peers and to discuss issues that affect the school, these councils are ineffective. In general, those children are powerless, and the subjects that they are allowed to discuss are usually determined by their teachers. In addition, Cassidy (2012) argued that children have ideas, opinions, and views that deserve to be listened to by adults. Cassidy noted, however, that many children in the UK are excluded from participating in making decisions at schools and that this substantially affects their lives. Lundy (2012) also found that the right to participation has not been implemented in the UK, along with 16 other EU states, including Estonia, Poland, and Slovakia.

Listening to children is not sufficient if their views are not taken into account (Cassidy, 2012; Lansdown et al., 2014; Lundy, 2007). Lundy (2007) argued that the specific concepts used to describe Article 12, e.g. 'child's voice' and 'child's participation', affect how the article is implemented, because this right is not fully explained. In response, Lundy (2007) recommended a model for understanding and implementing the right to participation, one which contains certain elements. These elements include *space*, where children can express their views; *voice*, which means that

children feel comfortable to express their views; *audience*, which means that these views are respected; and *influence*, which occurs when these views affect how adults act. Lundy (2007) wrote that the UK has, however, failed to adhere to the dictates of Article 12. There is a gap between the government's obligations regarding the right to participation and actual practices in the field of education.

In Scotland and North England, Cairns et al. (2018) found that children's views are not respected by teachers and school administrators. The school system did not encourage children to express their opinion and participate in making decision processes. The children also felt that they were controlled by the adults. They said that they felt unable to express themselves as individuals due to the school's strict policies, especially due to the uniform policy (Cairns et al., 2018). This type of education system might lead to producing blindly obedient citizens who are ineffective in the society, which could lead to the fact that implementing the right to participation is necessary for the production of an effective citizen.

In Saudi Arabia, Alhelaly (2008) found that religious studies teachers do not allow children to freely express themselves. Alhelaly's study (2008) focused on religious studies teachers, but there is a need to investigate the implementation of this right by other teachers at school, regardless of their area. In contrast, children's right to freedom of expression was implemented well in New Zealand's educational system in all levels (Powell & Smith, 2009).

The previous studies show that in most countries, children have not been able to enjoy their right to participation, even though there are differences between these countries in culture, policies, systems, and development. The failure to fully and consistently implement this right implies that there are issues with translating the UNCRC from an international law to national level laws.

The next section reviews the literature regarding the implementation of protection rights.

2.5.5 Children's protection rights.

Protection rights include the protection of children from violence, neglect and exploitation, as stated in the UNCRC (UNICEF, 1989). Violence against children is common throughout the world (Freeman & Saunders, 2014). Freeman and Saunders (2014) suggested that because many cultures use violence to discipline children, it will continue to exist until laws are passed that prohibit all forms of violence against

children. By 2017, this practice had been prohibited in 52 countries in all settings, including within the home (Schreiber, 2017).

Freeman and Saunders's (2014) argument about the importance of legislation of preventing child abuse is supported by Smith (2009). Smith wrote that New Zealand was the first English-speaking country to ban the use of physical punishment against children—the law was passed in 2007—and this single action nearly eliminated the incidence of violence against children. Physical punishment is, however, still being practised in many societies that have passed legislative bans (Imoh, 2016). Svevo-Cianci, Hart, Rubinson (2010) argued that the protection of children requires three main elements. From their research about the implementation article 19 of the UNCRC in 42 countries, they found that the countries whose passed legislation, provided social services, and increase people's awareness about child protection have top-ranked in their implementation of this article. These countries include the United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, Germany, and Canada. Regulatory legislation does not alter the beliefs that people have grown up with and that have been continuously reinforced throughout their lives. Imoh (2016) emphasised that it is necessary to change the culture before people will obey these laws. Even in the EU, which has banned corporal punishment within schools, this is still practised in many states, such as Poland and France (Lundy, 2012).

According to Imoh (2016), physical punishment against children is the most common type of child abuse worldwide. Rathore, Raj, Mandal, Meher and Girhotra (2006), while researching child abuse in India, found that every child in their study had experienced abuse of some kind. Agbenyega (2006) and Imoh (2013) also found that physical punishment is still commonly practised in Ghana. Maboe (2013) found that, although the corporal punishment is forbidden at school, it is still practised at school in South Africa on the hand of teachers. Maboe found also the verbal abuse, sexual relationships with female students, failure to attend classes by teachers and discrimination between children as other breaches for children's rights at school.

Corporal punishment was also the most common violent practice against South Korean and Afghani children, as found by Ju and Lee (2010) and O'Leary et al. (2018) respectively. Almahroos (2007) found that children living in the Arabian Peninsula experience every form of abuse and neglect and Alanazi (2008) confirmed that physical punishment is especially common in Saudi Arabia. Alghamdi, Horaib and Aldossari (2018) found that emotional abuse often accompanies physical abuse and is, overall,

the most common form of violence against children in Saudi Arabia. These divergent results likely emerged because Alanazi's study (2008) focused on corporal punishment and physical abuse, while Alghamdi, Horaib and Aldossari's study (2018) looked at child abuse in general.

Aleissa et al. (2015) found that emotional abuse was the most common type of child abuse in Saudi Arabia, followed by physical abuse, exposure to violence, neglect and sexual abuse. The differences between the findings of these studies may be due to the different locations of their study; Alanazi (2008) and Alghamdi et al. (2018) conducted their research in Riyadh, while Aleissa et al. (2015) conducted their research in Kharj. The previous studies confirmed that corporal punishment is still practiced worldwide against children and is inflicted by adults both at home and school.

Gender differences appear in two studies. Lee and Kim (2011), in their study on child abuse in South Korea, found that boys typically reported experiencing physical abuse, while girls typically reported experiencing sexual and emotional abuse. In Canada, Trocme, Tourigny, MacLaurin and Fallon (2003) found that neglect was the most common form of child abuse, followed by physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse. Boys were more likely to be victims of neglect and physical abuse, while girls were more likely to be victims of sexual abuse. Despite substantial differences between the Canadian and South Korean contexts, these findings were similar, which could be the result of the similar ways that the genders are treated in different societies.

Most of the research found that parents were the group most likely to abuse children in Ghana (Imoh, 2013), Afghanistan (O'Leary et al., 2018), Saudi Arabia (Alanazi, 2008) and the Arabian Peninsula as a whole (Almahroos, 2007). Ju and Lee (2010) found that, in Korea, however, most child abusers were parents who were poor or who had problems with alcohol. In India (Rathore et al., 2006) and Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Kiribati (Smith & Haslett, 2017) teachers were the most likely group of people to abuse children. The differences between studies in determining the most likely groups of people to abuse children might be a result of the study aims. For instance, in the case of Smith and Haslett's study (2017), along with the study of Rathore et al., (2006) the focus was on child abuse at school. Agbenyega (2006) studied the use of corporal punishment at Ghanaian schools and found that it is not legally prohibited and is still practised by educators. The review of the literature regarding child abuse at the hands of educators is important for the purpose of my study, as I aim to focus on exploring how children's rights are implemented in Saudi primary education.

Children's peers were also found to be abusive to others. In this regard, Lee and Kim's study (2011) in Korea found that, in most cases, many abusers are not family members. Some abusers could be the children's own peers. The differences between Ju and Lee's (2010) and Lee and Kim's (2011) studies may be due to the differences between the samples. Ju and Lee's (2010) research dealt with children between nine and 12 years old who lived in protective care; most of these children lived in these homes because they had been physically abused by their families. In contrast, Lee and Kim's (2011) sample consisted of people between 19 and 24 years old who were willing to talk about being mistreated during childhood. Smith and Haslett (2017) also found that many children were bullied and physically abused by their peers.

The findings of Alghamdi et al.'s study (2018) in Saudi Arabia conflicts with Alanazi's (2008) findings. Alanazi found that parents were most likely to be the abusers, while Alghamdi et al. (2018) found that parents were the least likely to be the abusers (following strangers, drivers and home servants). This disparity could be the result of the time lapse between the studies. Many things, including the easy availability of home servants and drivers, changed during that decade.

A society's culture and beliefs might support the use of violence against children. Alghamdi et al. (2018) found that child abuse in Saudi Arabia was influenced by religion and explained that the physical punishment of children is supported by Islamic teachings. Almuneef et al. (2012) argued, however, that the physical punishment of children is not the result of Islamic teachings, but the result of misinterpretations of Islamic teachings by Saudi society.

The perception of abuse as a way to discipline children has caused this practice to be accepted. Han (2011) found that seeking to discipline children leads to the use of corporal punishment with them. According to Han (2011), children of minorities and children with disabilities are often seen as aggressive children, whose need to be controlled. Therefore, Han mentioned that in the United States, the use of corporal punishment was often found in the schools which have a large number of those two groups of children.

O'Leary et al. (2018) found that parents in Afghanistan do not believe that violent punishment is abusive. They view it as a means to discipline children instead, even though many of their practices are cruel and include things such as slapping a child's face. Even though many parents believe that violence as a disciplinary measure is not more effective than non-violent strategies, violent punishment continues to be practised. This contradiction may be due to cultural beliefs, such as the belief that

children are their parents' property. In addition, O'Leary et al. found that parents' education levels influence whether or not they physically punish their children, as educated parents physically punish their children less than less-educated parents.

Cappa and Khan (2011) studied 34 low- and middle-income countries. They found that parents and caregivers believed that physical punishment is necessary to discipline children in just two countries (Syria and Sierra Leone). They also reported that parents' education levels influenced whether they believe physical punishment is acceptable. In every country, however, there were contradictions between attitudes and practices; even if the parents did not believe that violent punishment was an effective disciplinary measure, they would have still used it. According to Cappa and Khan, this could be because the parents/caregivers are following social norms, unconsciously believing that violent punishment is necessary for discipline, or because they do not know of any other ways to discipline their children.

In Saudi Arabia, Alanazi (2008) found that the parents' education levels do not affect their attitudes about the use of violence as a disciplinary measure. There is, however, a direct relation between the parents' experiences with violence during their childhoods and their use of violent punishment later in life (Alanazi, 2008). Alanazi also found that many parents do not want to legally prohibit this practice because they believe that a law would unjustifiably interfere with their parental responsibilities. Almahroos (2007) confirmed that violent punishment is accepted throughout the Arabian Peninsula, including Saudi Arabia, under the guise of discipline and, though there are laws that prohibit child abuse in these countries, parents are often not investigated even if they seriously injure their children. This immunity is due to the fact that a parent's rights are prioritised over a child's rights.

In Ghana, Agbenyega (2006) and Imoh (2013) found that violent punishment was the result of cultural beliefs, particularly regarding the importance of this practice for socialising children. Agbenyega (2006) added that this behaviour is a misuse of a parent's power. Since violent punishment is a consequence of the culture, and because children are products of their culture, the children themselves also frequently believe that violent punishment is an appropriate means for discipline and education, however (Imoh, 2013).

Children appear to accept this kind of abuse, not only in Ghana, but also in Korea (Ju & Lee, 2010). Ju and Lee found that abused children often feel guilty because they believe that their punishment is a normal reaction to their misbehaviour. Children often also believe that the abuse is the result of their family's misfortunes, and

that they should accept it because they believe it to be a result of their family facing difficult circumstances. Smith and Haslett (2017) addressed how adults' psychological stresses affect how they treat their children. They found, additionally, that children and educators in Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Kiribati supported the use of physical punishment by teachers and saw it as a part of the education and disciplinary processes. Choi (2017) found that the use of the corporal punishments in the name of discipline in Korea does not control the children's behaviour. Choi said that the use of this practice leads to more misbehaviour by children, which in turn leads to more use of corporal punishments by educators against children. It leads to the cycle of violence in schools.

In addition to physical injury to the abused child—which might be much more severe than expected, as physical abuse has caused brain death (Almahroos, 2007). Almuneef et al. (2012) found that abuse also has short and long term consequences, including depression, low self-esteem, personality disorder diagnosis in adulthood, and educational difficulties. Long-term consequences include the reproduction of violence, as abused children may become abusers in the future. However, statistics in the UK do not support the cycle of abuse across the board and actually they supported that abused children are more likely to be re-victimised than become perpetrators, particularly with sexual abuse (Office for National Statistics, 2016). Glasser et al. (2001) argued that the idea that the abused child is more likely to be violent or perpetrate abuse in future is not true particularly for female victims. They found that males are more likely to become perpetrators than females, especially if their abuser was female. Therefore, the biggest risk is re-victimisation and psychological health issues.

Lee and Kim (2011) found that children who accept the legitimacy of physical punishment by their parents or teachers are more likely to suffer psychological harm. The punishments are frequently greater than the child's ability to psychologically process them, especially if the child is unable to prevent the abuse. One of the most harmful consequences of child abuse is depression. Alghamdi et al. (2018) argued that child abuse often leads to the development of psychiatric illnesses and other issues which might affect a child's educational performance. This is supported by Smith and Haslett (2017), who wrote that, in addition to physical harm, child abuse leads to increased rates of school dropout.

When children are being abused, their situation should be reported to the authorities. Aleissa et al. (2015) found that issues were more likely to be reported if the victim suffered severe injuries that required medical intervention; however, many less

48

severe issues remained hidden. Underreporting child's maltreatment is akin to punishing the victim rather than the abuser (Almahroos, 2007). Albuhairan, Inam, Aleissa, Noor and Almuneef (2011) found that most Saudi teachers do not report suspected child abuse and neglect to the authorities because they want to protect their relationship with the child's family, even if a family member is the abuser. This finding suggests that maintaining relationships takes priority over a child's safety. Albuhairan et al. (2011) also found that, in Saudi Arabia, there are no clear guidelines available to schools that dictate how they should report cases of abuse and protect children from maltreatment. The child's gender and the kind of abuse affect whether or not educators report mistreatment. This is because Saudi society believes that sexual abuse should be kept secret, especially if the abused child is a girl.

NFSP (2011) found that, due to this tendency, the number of reported cases of child maltreatment in Saudi Arabia is less than the actual number of cases. Alsaif et al. (2017) argued that Saudi Arabia's cultural norms affect teachers' attitudes when it comes to reporting sexual abuse. They often choose not to report cases of sexual abuse because they believe that they will embarrass the victim, and because they feel especially guilty for girls, since the stigma of sexual abuse would stay with them throughout their lives. Islam forbids premarital sexual relationships, and sexual abuse victims often feel guilty. Cases of abuse may also be unreported because people are generally unaware that there are organisations that can help deal with these cases (Alghamdi, Horaib & Aldossari, 2018; NFSP, 2011).

The review of the literature showed that the child's protection rights are being violated in many countries around the world despite the fact that there are differences between countries, both in their culture and values, and that physical punishment is still being practised even where it is legally prohibited. The survival of these practices is due to the strength of the social belief that physical punishment is necessary in order to discipline and socialise children. Many studies have found that children face physical punishment in schools, which is beyond the scope of this study. This study aims to go into detail about the implementation of the protection rights of children in Saudi primary education and whether the situation of Saudi Arabia is similar to other countries mentioned in the previous literature review. The next section discusses the barriers to the Implementation of the UNCRC.

2.6 The Barriers of Implementing the UNCRC

The lack of awareness of child protection laws and the UNCRC among the children and adults in a particular society is one of the biggest barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC worldwide. NFSP (2011) found that in Saudi Arabia, court employees in the judicial system have a low level of awareness of children's rights—a claim confirmed by their lack of awareness regarding child abuse and neglect. As the judicial system is the highest system of law in the country, this lack of awareness of the UNCRC has an influence on its implementation. Arif (2011) likewise confirmed that the lack of awareness regarding the UNCRC amongst parents and people who work with children is one of the most significant barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Isaac (2010) said that implementation of the UNCRC is affected by people's awareness of it. Alfaryan (2014) also found that, as there is a lack of general awareness of child protection laws, including the UNCRC, these laws will not be implemented in Saudi Arabia.

Lundy (2012) emphasised that the UNCRC provides an opportunity for progressive transformation in societies hindered by the lack of the society's awareness of the UNCRC and its implementation. The aims of the UNCRC will not be achieved if there is a lack of awareness about it among the society's members. Ju and Lee (2010) found that, in Korea, the lack of general awareness of the UNCRC in society has led to a vicious cycle of child maltreatment. Lundy (2007) mentioned that the reason for the failure of the implementation of some of the UNCRC's articles is the absence of awareness regarding these articles. This absence of awareness could be a result of the lack of attention from society towards children and towards their rights. NCC (2012) confirmed that there is a lack of care and attention for children's rights in Saudi Arabia, which makes the implementation of these rights below the decision-makers' expectation level in Saudi Arabia. Arif (2011) found that the lack of attention and interest from journalists regarding children and their rights affects the media's role in spreading awareness of these issues and has led to a lack of resources regarding children's rights. Khoury-Kassabri and Ben-Arieh (2009) confirmed that traditional societies are less supportive of children's rights, and their recognition of these rights is slower than other societies' recognition. This might be because of their beliefs and traditions, which are essential within them.

Cultural challenges are another barrier for the implementation of the UNCRC around the world. Albaker (2013) emphasised that the implementation of child protec-

tion laws, such as the UNCRC, interferes with the social and cultural structure of society. Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014) said that social culture—including customs, beliefs, and traditional practices—is a significant reason for the breach of the UNCRC in Zimbabwe. Clarke (2008) said that the UNCRC is a product of Western culture, and anything from the West is treated with suspicion by Eastern societies. In addition, according to Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014), children must be subject to adults and obey them, which is a part of African cultural norms, so it is expected that children learn and do their duties instead of having rights at home and at school. This also affects the implementation of the UNCRC.

One of the cultural norms that interferes with the implementation of the UNCRC is the value given to adult rights—especially parents’ rights—in some societies. Alshail et al. (2011), along with Clarke (2008), pointed out that the UNCRC challenges parents’ rights, as it is a form of intervention in parents’ methods of raising their children. Ju and Lee (2010) said that parents’ rights are given priority over children’s rights in Korea. Alanazi (2008), Albaker (2013b), Alshail et al. (2011), and Imoh (2014) mentioned that traditional societies reject any laws that intervene in their methods of treating children, as they consider those laws a breach of their privacy. Freeman (2006), however, emphasised the importance of parents’ rights, and he mentioned that these rights are respected by the UNCRC, as parents’ responsibilities toward their children is stressed within them. Freeman pointed out that rejection of the UNCRC happens not because it gives children rights over their parents, but because of powerful adults who find it easier to control children who are deprived of rights.

The implementation of the UNCRC is also hindered by cultural beliefs regarding parental ownership of children. Albaker (2013a) said that it is not easy to protect children in societies that strongly believe in the concept of children being the property of their parents, thus parents feel like they can do whatever they want to their children. Campbell and Covell (2001) confirmed that treating children as parental property is one of the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in Canada. One of the consequences of societies’ view of children as property of their parents is the acceptance of child maltreatment, provided that this maltreatment is caused by the parents (Albaker, 2013b). For instance, the use of physical punishment is accepted in different cultures as a way to discipline children, either at the hands of their parents or even other adults (Albuhairan et al., 2011; Alghamdi et al., 2018; Almahroos, 2007; Alshail et al., 2011; Freeman & Saunders, 2014; Imoh, 2016; Lee & Kim, 2011; O’Leary et al., 2018; Imoh, 2013). How can the UNCRC, which prohibits all acts of

51

violence against children, be implemented in societies where it is the norm to use violence against children in the name of discipline? Lundy (2007) said that the children's enjoyment of rights depends on how adults cooperate with children. So, if adults are not committed to, or interested in children's rights, these rights will not be implemented.

Religious beliefs are a part of cultural beliefs. According to Alghamdi et al. (2018), the use of violence towards children (an act that is antithetical to children's rights) is accepted by Islam, which makes it acceptable in Islamic societies, such as Saudi Arabia. Alsaif et al. (2017) mentioned that religious values influence child protection laws in Saudi Arabia. In contrast, Alshail et al. (2011) said that the religion of Islam forbids violence against children, as it prohibits the mistreatment of human beings and also animals, which is evident in the Quran (as discussed in Section 4.3). The Indian teachers in Tiwari's study (2018) thought that the practice of the corporal punishments in schools is a result of the social culture, which includes the people's religious beliefs. Tiwari's qualitative study found that the pan of the use of corporal punishment at school in India is not effective because it is in conflict with the Indian culture. The participants in Agbenyega's study (2006) said that the use of physical punishment is accepted by the Christian religion. They used the Holy Bible to justify their use of violence against children in Ghana. The participants in Agbenyega's study quoted some phrases from the Holy Bible as support of their beliefs, such as 'the rod and rebuke give wisdom but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother' (Agbenyega, 2006, p. 119). In contrast, Woodhouse (2014) found that in Italy Christian religion enhance the implementation of children's rights as these rights are part of this religion. Almuneef et al. (2012) emphasised, however, that the problem is with a misunderstanding of the religion and not with the religion itself, which is the case in Saudi Arabia.

The discrimination gap between girls and boys is another cultural custom that has led to the violation of the UNCRC. One example is the issue of girls' education in Yemen, as girls' right to education is limited. Yemeni society gives boys' education priority over girls' education, as Yemeni society does not believe in the importance of girls in their overall society (Abdulwahab, 2002). In Saudi Arabia, the discrimination gap between girls and boys leads to more discrimination against girls regarding their education, as Saudi Arabian society believes that boys are more important for the future of the country (Humanium, 2011). Said (2007) found that boys have more chance to access school than girls in poor neighborhoods in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia because of

the reduction of the availability of the girls' schools in these areas, and because of the families beliefs that the education is more important for boys than it is for girls.

The vulnerability of children is another barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC. Roose and Bie (2007), Sund and Vackermo (2015), and Tobin (2015) pointed out that children are viewed as both lacking the capacity to make decisions and as being entirely dependent on adults, which is used as a justification for the violation of the UNCRC by adults. Children, furthermore, have lower status than adults within their families and within society (Cassidy, 2012). Kepenekci (2006) mentioned that a child is seen as a human with no rights in some societies, such as in Turkey, which can also impede the implementation of the UNCRC. Adults decide everything on behalf of children and ignore children's views and opinions (Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2017). Lyle (2014) found that the adult's attitude and views towards children are the most significant barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in Wales. According to Lyle (2014), teachers who believe that children are vulnerable were not able to implement or even embrace the UNCRC. Children's vulnerability, however, is not a reason for denying the UNCRC; instead, it is a justification for providing children with special rights to protect them under it (Tobin, 2015). Roose and Bie (2007) said that, although children lack capacity and are dependent on adults, we cannot overlook that they are part of society and that they are citizens like any other, whose rights should be respected regardless of their age.

Treating children as the adults of the future influences their enjoyment of their rights. In this view, children are considered as a means for the future, which leads to the use of coercion in order to make them fit for the future a society aims for (Cassidy, 2012; Freeman & Saunders, 2014). Hejazi (2014) found that, in Saudi Arabia, the view of children as 'becoming human' affected the implementation of children's rights in kindergarten. Quennerstedt and Quennerstedt (2014) said that viewing children as 'becoming human' should be avoided, as children are already full human beings who have rights, like any other person.

Economic factors are another barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC around the world. Clarke (2008) mentioned that poverty is the most essential barrier to the enjoyment of the UNCRC by children in Trinidad. Clarke emphasised the lack of assistance from wealthy countries to poorer countries, particularly when it comes to helping them overcome the financial challenges that hinder the implementation of the UNCRC, along with other human rights. In some states of Europe, Lundy (2012) found that poverty affects children's enjoyment of some of their rights, such as the right to

education, since it is harder for children from poorer families to access education because of its hidden costs. This was also confirmed in Yemen by Abdulwahab (2002), as some children are restricted from the right of education due to family poverty. O’Leary et al. (2018) and Wakatama (2009) also confirmed, for Afghanistan and India respectively, that poorer children cannot access school because they have a responsibility to provide additional income for their families. Homed (2009) found that there are some financial issues hindering the implementation of the UNCRC in Arab Peninsula countries and in Yemen. Homed said that, despite the fact that those countries, except Yemen, are considered to be wealthy countries and do not have financial issues, there is a shortage of financial support for the local authorities responsible for protecting children and for ensuring their rights, and this affects their ability to do their work. Arif (2011) similarly found that financial challenges affected the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia. Findings from different studies have showed that financial status was not an issue for some countries; however, the studies indicated that the implementation of the policy was insufficient. It appears that there are other factors that underlie the lack of financial support for such policies, which might also include cultural understanding of childhood and children’s rights. One of the aims of this study is to uncover the hidden factors that have affected the implementation of these policies.

The qualifications of employees who work with children are another barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC worldwide. Homed (2009) mentioned that the lack of employee qualifications hinders the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia and in other Arab peninsula countries; workers at school or the local authorities who provide services for children are not qualified to implement the UNCRC—they are, for example, not aware of these rights. The NFSP (2011) confirmed the lack of employee qualifications in dealing with children, as they found that 77% of their study samples who worked with children did not know how to deal with child maltreatment cases in Saudi Arabia. Arif (2011) found that workers employed in institutions for children with disabilities had low qualifications. Arif (2011) also added that, even if the workers are qualified to implement the UNCRC, the heavy workload, and the number of children they work with could hinder their capacity to implement the UNCRC, especially at schools. The qualifications of the workers who deal with children and their heavy workload thus hinder the implementation of the UNCRC. Arif (2011) studied the social and cultural barriers of the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia, which is one of the aims of my study, and teachers were a part of Arif’s study sample. Arif’s

study (2011) was, however, a quantitative study, while mine employs mixed methods and my sample includes school principals and children as a part of the study sample. Arif (2011) also focused on the social and cultural barriers in Saudi society, while my study aims to shed light on all barriers that hinder the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia.

The absence of a specific law regulating the protection of children and the provision of their rights is another barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC. Ju and Lee (2010) confirmed that there is no clear legal system in place to protect children and their rights in Korea. Albuhairan et al. (2011) also found that there is no clear guidance and system to protect children at school in Saudi Arabia. Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014) said that legislation exists in Zimbabwe, but people do not obey it. Similarly, Almahroos (2007) found that, although legislation exists to protect children in the Arab Peninsula countries, this legislation is not implemented in order to protect children from their parents due to the cultural norms of these countries.

Clarke (2008) criticised the UNCRC for its ambiguous language, which makes it hard to implement it in some countries. Clarke (2008) agrees with White (2002) that the UNCRC has a general assumption that all children around the world have the same types of childhood and experiences, which is incorrect. Clarke (2008) and White (2002) argued that the UNCRC is based on Western culture, which might not be relevant to cultures in other parts of the world, such as Bangladesh and Trinidad. White (2002) emphasised the need to provide children with an international rights convention that considers the similarities and differences between children worldwide if this convention is to be implemented. Clarke (2008) also stated that an international convention such as the UNCRC should be balanced worldwide instead of being based on Western culture and perceptions. Clarke (2008) posited that the UNCRC is not suitable to some extent to non-Western societies where children have some obligations to their parents, that it does not determine the minimum age of marriage, as there are some societies that tolerate underage marriage. Moreover, it does not mention the rights of orphaned children or street children who do not have a family. Clarke (2008) argued that the UNCRC needs to be revised to be more suitable for all children worldwide. Lundy (2007) said that the UNCRC language is general, however, and it does not need to be interpreted literally; rather, there must be a teleological interpretation of it. Even if the UNCRC has not mentioned some groups of children, such as street children, they are still taken into consideration and must be provided the same protections. They must enjoy health rights, education rights, and protection rights, even if they are not mention-

55

ed directly in the language of these articles, as is the UNCRC is general for all children. Pearson (2015) supported that in order to implement the international policies there should be an establishment of a society-based framework in each country that contains localized ideas, systems and methods that can really protect children's rights and needs, within the opportunities and confines of their own unique contexts.

In summary, the previous discussion covered the studies that discussed the barriers of the implementation of the UNCRC. Those studies are significant to my study, as they showed that there are different barriers to how the UNCRC is implemented in different social communities. These barriers include the understanding of the UNCRC, and the costs of implementing children's rights, especially in poorer countries. The establishment of local national legislation in each country is, furthermore, important in implementing the UNCRC, but without respect for the legislation, it will not be sufficient. The discussion of the literature helps in determining the theoretical framework of the current study, which is discussed next.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

My research used sociocultural as a primary theoretical framework for my study. Ecological theory has been also used in my research to support my interpretations of some findings alongside contemporary interpretations of sociocultural theory. Those theories were used due to their relation to human knowledge and development, and to the role and significance of culture. They consider the roles of society and culture in shaping people's interpretations of knowledge, through being members of a society that is highly attached to cultural norms. This contributed to the decision to use sociocultural and ecological theories. In particular, first-hand knowledge that culture can influence people's perspectives and the ways they perceive knowledge has influenced the use of these theories. Accordingly, my research has explored the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia from the perspectives of children, teachers, and school principals. Combining aspects of sociocultural theories with ecological theories supported the interpretation of the participants' views and opinions in the interconnected contexts of home, school, wider society and national policies in KSA.

Sociocultural and ecological theories are related to the implementation of children's rights when we look at the meaning of 'rights'. Smith (2007) explained that children's rights are entitlements that are differently interpreted and corroborated by

children and by people whose connection with children gives them power over the children themselves. The UNCRC has determined a set of rights for every child, but in order to implement these rights, it is important to consider how they are viewed culturally and politically. In this regard, sociocultural and ecological theories emphasise the importance of analysing the social, cultural, and historical context in order to understand their influence on an individual's development. Sociocultural theory emphasises the role of guided participation between children and adults who are significant in the children's learning and development. In the UNCRC, guided participation primarily concerns children's relationships with adults in regard to power and status (Mulheron, 2008). Mulheron (2008) argued that the rationale for using sociocultural and ecological theories to interpret the perceptions of children's rights is that these theories emphasise the role of social interaction in the learning and development process. Individuals' worldviews also differ under the influence of dominant social and cultural discourses in a specific place at a specific time.

Smith (2002) argued that sociocultural and ecological theories are the most appropriate theories to apply to children's rights discourse. Part of his argument is that, in order to practice children's rights, there must be appropriate support for these rights, along with guidance within a social context, which should be communicated to adults and others surrounding a child. This is the heart of sociocultural theory, which emphasises that the development of a child requires a guided relationship with adults or more developed peers in accordance with the social context that directs these relationships. Furthermore, regarding the developmental process of individuals, ecological theory argues that it is important to focus on the environment in which the developmental process occurs, along with the role of relationships an individual engages in by participating in different activities.

According to Smith (2002), sociocultural and ecological theories are not just theories for childhood development and learning, they are also supportive of children's rights. For instance, a child's right to participation is at the core of these two theories, as they argue that the development of a child cannot be achieved in isolation but is produced through a child's participation with others, and with their cultural and material environments. Psychologist Lev Vygotskiĭ (1896-1934) focused his research on the concept of the zone of proximal development] [ZPD]. The ZPD requires a child's engagement in activities with adults or peers in order to move to higher levels of development, through which the child is assisted by cultural tools and values (Vygotskiĭ, 1987). This concept relates to the child's right to development; the child

must be able to develop his or her personality, skills and abilities, to their fullest potential. Participation in activities leads also to good relationships with adults. According to Smith (2002), children can develop trust and reciprocal relationships with adults who are communicative and responsive to the children's views. Mulheron (2008) mentioned that the quality of these relationships provides the conditions necessary to ensure the implementation of children's rights, such as protection rights and good childhood services rights.

Both the sociocultural and the ecological theories are the most appropriate theories for my study, as they relate to children's rights and also relate to an individual's development due to their environment. These two theories emphasise that an individual's development is influenced by the social, cultural, and political situation surrounding him or her. A person's perspective and understanding of knowledge, including knowledge of the UNCRC, is therefore affected by the environment, which influences the actual practice of this knowledge. As the aim of my study is to explore the implementation of the UNCRC in primary schools in Saudi Arabia, it is necessary to recognise the influence of environmental aspects on the participants' perspectives and on the overall implementation of the UNCRC. The most appropriate method to investigate the participants' perspectives and explore the influence that the environment has on these perspectives, along with the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia, is to listen to the participants closely, which can be done through the use of interviews and focus groups.

2.7.1 Sociocultural theory.

Vygotskiĭ claimed that 'an adult is not only connected with the environment by thousands of the most intimate bonds, he himself is its product; his essence is found in the essence of the environmental conditions' (Vygotskiĭ & Luria, 1993, p. 144). Therefore, Saudi people are a reflection of Saudi Arabia's socio-cultural, historical, political and economic reality. Thus, this multi-faceted environment can be understood through the people who live in it, and vice versa.

According to Vygotskiĭ individuals are products of their social and cultural environment, which influences their perceptions, skills, and intellectual capabilities (Vygotskiĭ & Luria, 1993). He stated that culture precedes the existence of a child, however, so the child should accept the culture that he or she is immersed in when they are born (Van der Veer, 1991). Once a child joins his or her specific environment, they

are subject to a rapid change in order to adapt to this environment, through means of adaptation that were generated long ago by adults within the same environment (Vygotskiĭ & Luria, 1993). Vygotskiĭ therefore indicated that individuals are cultural beings, as they live in culturally structured environments, and various personal relationships, religion, art, and other aspects are determined by their particular culture (Van der Veer, 1991). An individual's culturally structured environment demonstrates the appropriate common culture to help him or her adapt to life in this environment. Culture produces special forms of behaviour and creates new forms of behaviour in the developmental process (Daniels, 1996). Therefore, people's behaviour toward children in Saudi Arabia is determined by the Saudi culture. If children's rights are not part of this culture, or if they conflict with this culture, this will affect how those rights are understood and implemented.

Culture itself is a product of social life and humans' social activities, which means that everything that is cultural is also social (Daniels, 1996). Human beings are, therefore, products of the social environments they are linked to. Vygotskiĭ relates the development of higher mental functions, such as thinking and speaking, to social qualities, as they are a part of the sociocultural system and the higher mental functions are a means of social behaviour, which are used and internalised by individuals in the society (Daniels, 1996). Vygotskiĭ argued that an individual's thoughts are created by the culture and activity exchange with the external world (Vygotskiĭ & Luria, 1993). Both the culture and its social elements thus determine ways of thinking amongst the people who live in it. The function of thinking embodies people's understanding, interpretations, and analyses of ideas and concepts that come from different cultures and societies, such as the UNCRC. People differ in their ways of thinking according to the culture they belong to (Van der Veer, 1991). Thus, Saudi people's understanding of children's rights differs from others who live in a different culture, as indicated in the literature review of supranational, regional and national frameworks for children's rights. Furthermore, as some of the Islamic texts from Quran and Sunnah need to be interpreted by people, usually by Islamic Sheikh, they will be subjects of the peoples' thoughts and beliefs which are culturally constructed. Therefore, they will interpret those texts according to their values and choose the interpretation that matches their needs and beliefs in ways that will not only affect their understanding of the UNCRC but also the understanding of children's rights in Islam and the implementation of them.

Vygotskiĭ's interpretation of human behaviour is that human behaviour is a collection of experiences transmitted from previous generations and used by new

generations. These experiences are reinforced by physical and social inheritance processes (Vygotskiĭ, 1997) that occur at social and individual levels. Everyone has a bank of previous experiences, which a person uses in his or her memory processing by associating each new experience with something he or she already knows and remembers. This process is a mechanism of association, as the new knowledge takes its place among the well-remembered and previously stored components (Vygotskiĭ & Luria, 1993). This process relates to the implementation of any type of object or system such as children's rights. Therefore, people in Saudi Arabia use the same behaviours they learned from previous generations to deal with children, even if those behaviours conflict with children's rights, such as viewing a child as the property of his or her parents.

However, Vygotskiĭ (1997) stated that, to make any object interesting it should be related to something that is entirely old. In addition, it should contain several new concepts and activities in order to make it worthy of attention. In the case of implementing the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia, the UNCRC is a Western concept, which is culturally different from countries in other regions of the world. The UNCRC is an international law that should be embodied in the national law of Saudi Arabia. In accordance with Vygotskiĭ's theory, Saudi Arabian culture is driven by Islamic law, which involves children's rights and has many similarities with the UNCRC. Thus, we can draw Saudi Arabian people's interest to the UNCRC by associating it with the experiences and knowledge of children's rights they have been acquired from Islam. This process may help to improve the widespread understanding of the UNCRC and will encourage its implementation in primary education in Saudi Arabia. This is an example of how contemporary societies evolve over time and from within, taking into account existing structures and norms, but looking towards other social systems and laws to inform development.

According to Vygotskiĭ (1978), mental processes are mediated by special psychological tools, such as language, signs, and symbols, which are acquired by participation with adults or more experienced peers in different activities. After these psychological tools are internalised by children, psychological tools begin to mediate each child's mental processes (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev & Miller, 2003). These psychological tools, such as speech, are used by other people to influence the behaviour of children. Children then begin to use the same tools to control their own behaviour and others' behaviour (Daniels, 1996). According to sociocultural theory, 'man uses in his everyday experience reactions which evolved in, and become part of, someone else's

experience' (Vygotskiĭ, 1997, p. 32). For example, if a child is treated with non-violence, non-discrimination, and freedom of expression, or vice versa, he or she will become an adult who uses those same tools with children as reinforcers of the shared cultural experience, which might affect the implementation of the UNCRC.

The implementation of the UNCRC, an international law, in primary education in Saudi Arabia, requires the concepts to be embedded in the culture and social practices of Saudi Arabia. The process would involve governance as well as cultural and social changes within institutions and families. Vygotskiĭ believed that culture is not constant; rather it goes through many changes over time. In this regard, Vygotskiĭ said, 'The industrial and cultural environment gradually changes "people" and every human being we know today is a stone repeatedly cut and altered under the influence of the industrial and cultural environment' (Vygotskiĭ & Luria, 1993, p. 170). These changes in human beings occur as a response to new elements that need to be adopted. According to Vygotskiĭ (1997), education is the only way to implement cultural change and to create a new society. Vygotskiĭ emphasised teachers' roles in providing children with new forms of behaviour derived from students' experiences, which they can then use in their everyday lives to help with the adoption process of a new social life (Vygotskiĭ, 1997). This process could happen through the learning and development process, which includes interactions with adults, including teachers, and peers.

Interactions between children and adults or more experienced peers are at the core of Vygotskiĭ's concept of the ZPD. Vygotskiĭ's definition of the ZPD is 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adults guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotskiĭ, 1978, p. 86). For Vygotskiĭ, a child's interactions with adults and peers construct and mediate the child's development (Kozulin et al., 2003). The ZPD implies that a child could improve his or her capacity for learning by collaborating with others. Vygotskiĭ explained that in guided collaboration activities with adults and peers a child can imitate a set of actions, which might otherwise exceed his or her capabilities when he or she works alone (Daniels, 1996). Vygotskiĭ, however, did not illustrate to what extent a child can be improved by assistance, with different types of problems and by considering the diversity present between children. The concept did not determine the type of guidance or the amount of assistance that a child should be provided with, not the type of assistance needed, to accelerate movement in the ZPD.

According to the ZPD, a child will imitate the actions of others, which will then

be internalized as a part of the child's behaviour and psychological actions. Furthermore, 'the cultural and social values are also inherent in the activities of interaction' (Smith, 2002, p. 79). Vygotskiĭ (1978) said that human behaviour and psychological functions appear twice in the development process: first during actual interaction with others, and second as actions become internalised as an individual's own behaviour and functions. The psychological functions arise in the external world and then are internally embedded in individuals' behaviours and psychological functions.

The rule of the ZPD could be generalised in all aspects of a child's social life, in which a child will imitate and make note of many different actions and responses to use in similar situations in the future. By understanding the ZPD, we find that it promotes several rights of children, as it constructs the best ways for a child to learn and develop, which is a right of every child, as stated in Article 28 of the UNCRC. In addition, the ZPD refers to helping each child achieve the fullest potential development, as stated in Article 29 of the UNCRC. The ZPD also focuses on children's participation and dialogue with adults (Vygotskiĭ, 1987). This participation and dialogue refer to children's right of participation, which is emphasised by the UNCRC.

Guided participation in Vygotskiĭ's ZPD is the system and process that coordinates people's efforts in their participation with each other (Smith, 2002). This system guides the relationship between children and adults or peers. This system can be found in the UNCRC as a series of responsibilities and rights regarding how a child should be treated. Children are active agents in these processes in terms of their motivation to learn, along with their desire and right to participate fully in their different social situations for learning and development—home, family and educational experiences, as well as in the wider culture.

Vygotskiĭ also argued against discrimination and society's negative attitude toward individuals with disabilities. He pushed for this attitude to be changed (Kozulin et al., 2003). He said that negative attitudes towards people with disabilities affects their adoption of social life and stops them from accessing sociocultural knowledge and experiences. It deprives them of participating with others, which is required for their development (Kozulin et al., 2003). This is related to the rights of children with disabilities, which is stated by the UNCRC.

In summary, Vygotskian sociocultural theories and their subsequent iterations present an interpretation of individual developments, the construction of behaviour and psychological functions, and the role of interaction and socialisation. According to sociocultural theory, the implementation of children's rights in Saudi Arabia is affected

by Saudi culture and values, and even though Islam is the basis of Saudi culture, people interpret the Holy texts ways that support their needs and their beliefs. This affects their understanding of children's rights, in general, and children's rights in Islam. Furthermore, sociocultural theory emphasises that people's behaviour towards children is a product of their culture and their society. Thus, in the case presented in this study, it is important to analyse and understand the Saudi culture in order to interpret and understand the participants' perspectives of children's rights and their wider perspectives of Saudi people's behaviour towards children.

The sociocultural theory indicates that an individual's development requires participation in activities with others, with consideration of the cultural context during a particular historical period (Smith, 2002). According to the above theory, a person is a product of their society, and he or she develops through relationships and networks within their social context (Mulheron, 2008). By using Vygotskii's theory, it becomes easier to understand that the Saudi people are products of their society; they have developed in different social contexts through their interaction with others, along with the influence of others and different factors on the individual, and vice-versa. These theories support diversity among groups and societies, which could then be reflected through their interpretation and implementation of the UNCRC in different regions and nations. It is important to understand sociocultural theory not just as a one-way flow of influences onto new generations within societies. Whilst the roles of adults are central to this theoretical framework, each generation experiences the processes of change, adaptation and creation of new social conditions and situations for learning and development. How children understand their social worlds, and their rights as participating members of society, is therefore central to this research.

As discussed before, sociocultural theory focuses on learning and development processes, supporting the implementation of the UNCRC. A limitation of Vygotskii's theory is that he focused on the developmental process without taking into account an individual's characteristics, which are diverse, and their roles in the development process. Christensen (2016) said that, according to Vygotskii's view all factors, which influence an individual, have significance in the individual's learning process, which causes the individual's development. Nowadays culture is completely different from when Vygotskii posited his theories, because societies were much more isolated and social changes were slower to take effect. Today, interactions between societies are much quicker and widely available, which means that each society affects one another.

er, and that social changes happen more rapidly at global and local levels. Bronfenbrenner's (1917-2005) ecological theory, which is discussed next, recognised the influence that interactions between different cultures and subcultures have on an individual's development.

2.7.2 Ecological theory.

The ecological environment has an impact on people's attitudes about the notions of children's rights and about the implementation of these rights (Mulheron, 2008). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the ecological environment is 'conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the next' (p. 3). The child's development, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979), relates to the context of family, society, culture, and relationships with others. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner (1979) supported research regarding the effect of environmental settings that a child participates in. Alanazi (2008) mentioned that ecological theory supports the analysis of the environment and its multiple levels, along with circumstances of people. Ecological theory thus aids in the understanding of the social, environmental and socio-political conditions which influence the implementation of children's rights in primary schools in Saudi Arabia.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development provides a full understanding of the factors that have a role in an individual's growth and development (Christensen, 2016). Bronfenbrenner (1979) believed that an individual's world consists of four main systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. He later added the chronosystem as the fifth system, one which influences an individual's development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). These systems begin with the innermost system, which contains the individual (the microsystem), then move gradually to include the outer systems that affect that individual, even though individuals themselves are not included in this system (the macrosystem) (Mulheron, 2008). Figure 2.1 shows the ecological environment structure for an individual's development.

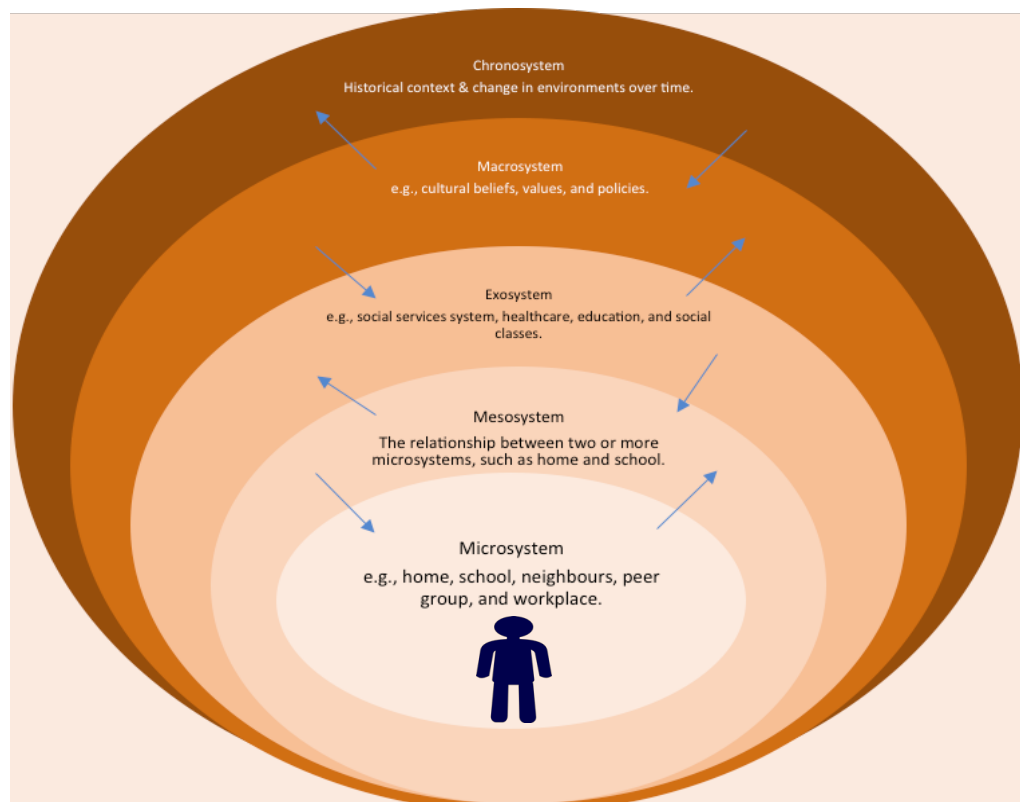


Figure 2.1. The ecological environment structures.

As shown in Figure 2.1, the systems that construct the ecological environment affect the individual and they are also influenced by the individual's behaviour. These systems influence each other. Each system additionally provides the individual with different sources and opportunities for growth, and the influence of these systems is determined by the contextual nature of the individual's life (Swick & Williams, 2006).

The ecological theory assumes that learning and development are facilitated by the following:

The participation of the developing person in progressively more complex patterns of reciprocal activity with someone with whom that person has developed a strong and enduring emotional attachment and when the balance of power gradually shifts in favour of the developing person. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 60)

Bronfenbrenner urges researchers to consider the types of relationships and roles that emerge from participation in reciprocal activities (Smith, 2002). These relationships regenerate certain behaviours from one generation to another (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Bronfenbrenner (2005) assumed that the differences between people in their cognitive performances are a result of experiences that they acquired from growing up in a particular culture during a specific period of time. He argued that the culture surrounding a developing person should be considered when assessing his or her cognitive performance. This study will assess the influence of the Saudi Arabian cul-

ture on the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia. This aims to contribute to the understanding of children's perspectives and interpretations of their social situations and contexts for both learning and development.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological system is an incomplete system, however, because there are some important dimensions that are not included in this system. According to Christensen (2016), Bronfenbrenner's ecological system did not include the international level, which is an important level in a globalised world. Part of studying the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia analysing the impact of the international level on the development of individuals. Another dimension that is not included in Bronfenbrenner's system is resilience (Christensen, 2016). Resilience provides us with an understanding of people's capacity to withstand stress and overcome difficulties. The idea is that the individual has the ability to succeed in a negative environment and to change this environment, as well as to show this ability through positive thinking, goal-orientation, educational ambitions, a motivation for achievement, perseverance, and optimism (Christensen, 2016). Regarding the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia, I can say that whatever the barriers of implementation of the UNCRC, these could be overcome if Saudi people are able to understand and support the implementation of this convention, even if it requires some changes in their cultural norms. Although this is absent in Bronfenbrenner's theory, it is still a valuable theory that gives us a clear understanding of the individual's learning and development process and the factors that influence this process.

2.8 Summary of the Chapter

Six key themes have emerged from the literature review, which are as follows: the history of the UNCRC, children's rights in Islam, children's rights policies in Saudi Arabia, the implementation of the UNCRC, the barriers preventing implementation of the UNCRC, and the theoretical frameworks for this study.

From the literature review, it appears that the UNCRC is a Western concept, which has spread to other parts of the world. Its implementation in other countries may, as such, face some complexities because of the differences in cultures, beliefs, and resources and this is visible in traditional, religious, and conservative societies such as Saudi Arabia. But the review of the children's rights policies in Islam showed many similarities between the UNCRC and Islamic teachings. Societal attitudes toward

UNCRC, the lack of financial resources, the low qualifications of the employees, and the UNCRC itself are other difficulties which might be addressed in order to implement the UNCRC worldwide.

By reviewing studies of children's rights in Saudi Arabia, it appears that there are limited studies regarding the situation of children's rights and the implementation of the UNCRC there. Most studies focus on children's rights in Islam, child protection systems, and child abuse. Some of them mention the problem of implementation due to government efforts and the law. Others talk about kindergarten teachers and their knowledge about children's rights. My study thus focuses on the UNCRC and its implementation in education as an important system aimed towards children, the schools as an important place that have the responsibility of bringing children up and sharing that responsibility with the family, primary education as a first stage of compulsory education in Saudi Arabia, and the principals', teachers' and children's awareness regarding the UNCRC, along with the implementation of it in schools in Saudi Arabia.

From the review of the literature, it is also clear that the main focus of these studies is to explore the awareness of the UNCRC, the implementation of education rights, participation rights, and protection rights. My study will focus primarily on the implementation of these specific rights in primary education in Saudi Arabia, as they are the rights most related to education.

From the review of the literature, I was able to discern and incorporate many aspects, such as the research aims and questions, the design of the research, and the choosing of suitable data collection methods. As there are a variety of methods that are used in the literatures reviewed, the mixed methods approach appeared to be the most suitable method to carry out my study, as it helps gain more in-depth data in order to answer the study questions. In some studies such as Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014) the children were part of the study sample, which helped researchers grasp the children's view about their own rights, and that made the result of these studies more valuable. This study thus included children as a part of the study sample, in order to listen to their opinions about their rights and the implementation of these rights at school. The design of the study and its methods are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the research philosophy and methodological approach taken to conduct this research. It is divided into nine sections as follows. **Section 3.2** discusses my positionality and its importance within my research. Then, the reasoning behind my adoption of the mixed-methods approach is discussed in **Section 3.3**, while **Section 3.4** presents the study location. The process of selecting research participants is presented in **Section 3.5**; **Section 3.6** explains the research methods; and Section 3.7 discusses ethical considerations. **Section 3.8** outlines how the study's trustworthiness was ensured. The data analysis is presented in **Section 3.9**. Finally, **Section 3.10** summarises the chapter.

3.2 My Positionality and its Impact on the Research

According to Clough and Nutbrown (2012), 'The positionality of the researcher affects the research design and research processes as well as the ethical practices which are inevitably present throughout any study involving human beings' (p. 10). Furthermore, Wellington, Bathmaker, Hunt, McCulloch and Sikes (2005) mentioned that 'the methodology and methods selected will be influenced by a variety of factors, including the personal predilections, interests and disciplinary background of the researcher' (p. 99). It is therefore important for the research to discuss the researcher's positionality and its impact on the work.

My career position and my personal experience have affected my interest in this current research scope. Regarding my career position, I should first mention that I have a master's degree in Foundations of Education, which qualified me to work as a lecturer in the Department of Foundations of Education in the School of Education at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University in Riyadh. This department provides classes to the teachers of the future, who are the students in the College of Education.

One of the subjects I taught was Introduction to Primary Education, which was provided to future primary education teachers, and another was Child Education, which was provided for the childhood studies department. Both subjects included a section about children's rights. These rights were studied from the Islamic perspective; as a le-

cturer, I was required to follow certain guidelines for each subject without changing them. At the same time, I was reading about the UNCRC from the Twitter account of Maha Almuneef, who was the executive director of the NFSP. That encouraged me to research and read about the UNCRC and the Saudi agreement with this convention. My reading on this confused me, however. If Saudi Arabia has signed an agreement with this convention, but the future teachers in my university do not study it (i.e., they only study children's rights from the Islamic perspective), how could this convention possibly be implemented in education? Furthermore, as I know that teaching the fundamental concepts of education, such as children's rights, is the responsibility of my department, do future teachers gain knowledge of the UNCRC from other sources? Also, even if teachers do not study the UNCRC, are they implementing the knowledge that they have about children's rights in Islam while they work in primary education? All these questions were in my mind before I chose this topic as my PhD research topic and designed my study around it.

My experiences as a child also impacted my research. I faced many fears during my childhood—fears from which I hoped to be protected. These included abuse issues, especially at school. I was a good, polite student who usually received full marks in all subjects, but that did not prevent my teachers from hitting me because I turned my face to my classmate, for example. It did not prevent the principal from embarrassing me, in front of all the teachers and students at a school event, over a situation that was the fault of a classmate. It did not stop the school barring me from receiving the certificate for good students, while my friend, who had the same mark as me, received this celebratory certificate at the end of the school year. These situations—and more that I prefer not to mention—have marked my memory and affected me.

In addition to my own experience, we hear stories, from time to time, of a child being harmed at a teacher's hands, losing his/her life after being forgotten in a closed school bus, or being struck by a bus steered by a reckless driver. Since I am a mother of four children, I want them to be protected and have a peaceful childhood. I do not want any other child to face the childhood I had. Though it has some beautiful memories, the bad moments prevent me from enjoying the beautiful ones. I do not want any practices that harm children to be continued anywhere. I hope to support effective legislation that protects children from any harm and helps improve their personalities and personal growth. This could be found in the UNCRC.

I travel a good deal, and I hear from others that people should be aware of practices that are acceptable in Saudi Arabian society but are considered crimes in other countries—such as it being a crime to hit children in European countries and the USA. I am hoping that these legislations will be respected in my country to protect children from adults misusing their power against them. The adults in my society do respect the child protection legislations of other countries, but what about the implementation of these legislations in Saudi Arabia? The adults in Saudi society could obey the children's rights laws, but there might be some barriers stopping them from fully following the obligations of these laws—an eventuality that needs to be explored.

Reading the literature about the UNCRC also gave me a wide knowledge regarding children's rights and its importance for protecting children and society. I have learned that the UNCRC is violated differently in different contexts. As I believe that Saudi Arabia has a unique culture, which also has some similarities to other Arabic and Islamic societies, I have become interested in finding out about the implementation of the UNCRC in this culture. According to the unique culture of this society gained from Islamic teachings, which value children's rights, are these rights implemented in Saudi Arabian social institutions? This question must be explored.

To build a safe environment for children that respects their rights, we should begin by exploring the current situation, evaluating it, and building suggestions and solutions that can help overcome problematic issues. After reviewing the literature, I found that limited studies have investigated the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia, or even in Arab countries in general. That, combined with my belief that my position as a lecturer in the School of Education requires me to contribute to improving the quality of education, encouraged me to conduct this research to investigate the children's rights situation in one of the social institutions related to my area of study: education.

The previous discussion shows the ways my positionality triggered my interest in researching children's rights and impacted the research itself. The influence of a researcher's positionality also affects the researcher's views, understanding and interpretation of knowledge, however, relating it to both ontology and epistemology.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), ontology is concerned with 'the nature of reality', and epistemology denotes 'what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified' (p. 19). Ormston, Spencer, Barnard and Snape (2014)

define ontology as ‘whether or not there is a social reality that exists independently from human conceptions and interpretations and, closely related to this, whether there is a shared social reality or only multiple, context-specific ones’ (p. 4). Ontology is therefore related to the researcher’s beliefs regarding the nature of reality and what exists in the social world. Epistemology, according to Ormston et al. (2014), is ‘concerned with ways of knowing and learning about the world and focuses on issues as how we can learn about reality and what forms the basis of our knowledge’ (p. 6). Therefore, epistemology is related to the researcher’s choice of data collection methods.

My ontological position towards the nature of reality recognises that there are multiple realities and forms of knowledge existing in multiple social worlds, the ramifications of which must be considered. I believe children's rights is real, that knowledge about rights exists in the social world and that there is no one reality about children's rights. Though children's rights do exist in the social world, those rights do not exist *independently*, however. In fact, rights exist as the consequence of relationships and the dynamic process of interactions between individuals of each society in which the knowledge of children's rights is constructed. I believe there are multiple realities of this concept—all of which are socially constructed and differ according to people’s perceptions built upon their beliefs, values and experiences; they share these social constructions through interactions with each other. Exploring and understanding social phenomena such as children's rights thus involves considering the individuals living in the social world that has constructed its own specific variation of children's rights and their interpretations of this phenomenon. Consequently, my epistemology is that knowledge of children's rights will be reached through exploring individuals’ perceptions.

These ontological and epistemological views have led me to adopt, for this research, the constructionist and interpretivist views of the world and knowledge. Constructionism is an ontological position, which asserts that ‘the social phenomena making up our social world are only real in the sense that they are constructed ideas which are continually being reviewed and reworked by those involved in them through social interaction and reflection’ (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 25). Interpretivism is defined as ‘an epistemological position that prioritises people’s subjective interpretations and understandings of social phenomena and their own actions’ (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 28). According to these definitions, the constructionist and interpretiv-

ist paradigms view people's interpretations of knowledge as socially constructed. Moreover, knowledge of social phenomena is produced through exploring the social world of the individuals studied—focusing specifically on their understanding of these phenomena. As my study aims to explore the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabian primary education from principals', teachers' and children's perspectives, these paradigms therefore provide the most suitable approach. From the data I will gather from my field of study, I will, while objectively distancing myself from the findings, inductively generate theories that will help interpret the participants' perceptions.

The constructionist and interpretivist paradigms emphasise the use of qualitative methods as most suitable for exploring knowledge (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, although constructionism and interpretivism are my paradigms of choice, I have also used a mixed-methods approach by including a questionnaire, as is advocated by Matthews and Ross (2010), to improve the research. The questionnaire allowed me to reach a larger sample of participants and overcome some social difficulties of using qualitative methods. It also helped me to include males as part of my study sample to determine if there are any differences between males' and females' perceptions of children's rights.

In summary, the previous discussion revealed that my career positions and personal experiences have impacted my research design. My positionality has also affected my ontological and epistemological positions in relation to reality and knowledge, which, in turn, led to my adoption of constructionism and interpretivism as the paradigms for my study. The mixed-methods approach, which was included to further augment my research, will be further discussed in the next section.

3.3 Mixed-Methods Approach

Creswell (2014) mentioned that research approaches are divided into three types: qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods. As mentioned above in the discussion on the literature review, a mixed-methods approach enriches findings.

Mixed-methods research uses both quantitative and qualitative methods (Gray, 2014). It is defined as:

An approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct desig-

ns that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone. (Creswell, 2014, p. 4)

According to this definition, the mixed-methods approach provides a deeper and more complete explanation of a research problem. Matthews and Ross (2010) stated that using two or more different methods allows researchers to better check the validity of data. They also assert that this process is called triangulation, which they define as ‘a measure of research quality, meaning that if different types of data are collected to address the same research question, each set of data can be used to check the findings from the others’ (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 145). Triangulation techniques enable researchers to obtain a more comprehensive perception of phenomena than can be obtained from using a single method. This makes the picture of the phenomena clearer and more fully understood, produces more nuanced, accurate, reliable data and develops the incorporation of the data to allow the researcher to accurately interpret the findings (Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2011). In this research, I used both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection.

The use of qualitative methods helps researchers gather data that explain social phenomena and explore the participants’ understandings, beliefs and experiences (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Quantitative methods help to evaluate how well policies work and reveal factors that contribute to shaping policy implementation, both of which are aims of my study (Ritchie & Ormston, 2014). Qualitative methods involve a small sample, however, and data gathered through these methods cannot be generalised. On the other hand, quantitative methods usually work with constructed data that can be represented numerically and, in this case, could involve a larger amount of the participant sample, making it possible to generalise the findings (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Therefore, since I desired in-depth information about the phenomenon I was researching and to balance the strengths and weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative methods, I adopted a mixed-methods combination - using interviews, a questionnaire and focus groups. These methods enabled me to obtain a deep exploration and understanding of the UNCRC implementation in Saudi Arabian primary education.

After I decided to use the mixed-methods approach in my study, I designed my research methods. I used interviews, a questionnaire and focus groups to gather

the data needed to answer my research questions. I chose these methods because I aimed to explore the chosen participants' perceptions of the UNCRC and its implementation, and these methods are the most appropriate for this purpose. Furthermore, the research design is consistent with a sociocultural theoretical orientation because adults and children are situated within the Saudi culture, and their experiences reflect that culture. Therefore, these methods enabled me to explore the participants' perceptions, to understand how the culture influences their perceptions and to gain insights into their views and experiences of the culture.

As a data collection method, interviews help researchers gather information while giving people an opportunity to explore their views and perspectives (Berg, 2001; Wellington, 2015). Furthermore, interviews allow a researcher to explore some areas that other methods cannot reach, and they prompt responses, such as the interviewees' feelings, thoughts, perspectives and values (Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Wellington, 2015). I used this method with school principals because it helps protect their privacy and makes them feel comfortable talking about their school and child's rights situation in these schools. Principals are responsible for everything at their school, so any issue that arises might be understood as a failure of their ability to do their work, which might affect the reliability of their answers if they discuss these issues in front of others (such as in a focus group). Therefore, I used the interviews to gather data from the principals and obtained in-depth answers to the research questions.

The questionnaire was chosen to gather data from the teachers because this method is not conducted in a face-to-face setting, so it is useful for reaching a large number of people and collecting a large amount of data (Wellington, 2000). Because teachers interact the most with children and are responsible for their learning and development, I aimed to obtain information from a high number of participants (regardless of their gender), and the questionnaire helped me achieve this goal.

The focus group method was used to gather data from the teachers and the children. Because children have the right to make their voices heard and their views respected, they were part of the sample, and the focus group was used to enable their participation and to gather data from them. The focus group was chosen because of its advantages: it tends to provide a comfortable environment for participants because they feel safer and more secure when they are with others, especially when a focus group involves children, teenagers or teachers (Wellington, 2015). Furthermore, focus groups are suitable for children because they feel as though they are being challenged, and that encourages them to give their best (Cohen et al., 2011). It also helps the researcher

understand the children's language and interact with them in responsive ways. In general, focus groups help people of any age be more relaxed with one another and push them to express their opinions (Wellington, 2015). Focus groups have the potential to make participants more confident in stating their viewpoints, thinking out loud and openly discussing their opinions. For these reasons, I used the focus group with the children and the teachers.

I developed the questions for the interview, questionnaire and focus groups after reviewing extensive literature related to my study's area of interest. The interviews were conducted with principals to answer the questions regarding principals' awareness about the UNCRC, principals' perceptions of UNCRC implementation, and barriers to UNCRC implementation in Saudi Arabian primary education. The questionnaire was aimed at teachers. It included a high number of teachers in the study sample and reached male teachers, whom I could not reach through any other methods because of cultural barriers. The questionnaire aimed to answer the same study questions as the interviews with the principals and was followed by a focus group with five teachers to clarify the important issues that emerged from the data collected via the other methods. Other focus groups were also conducted with children to explore their awareness of their rights and their perceptions of the implementation of those rights in their schools. Figure 3.1 shows the research design and Figure 3.2 identifies the process of conducting the mixed-methods study.

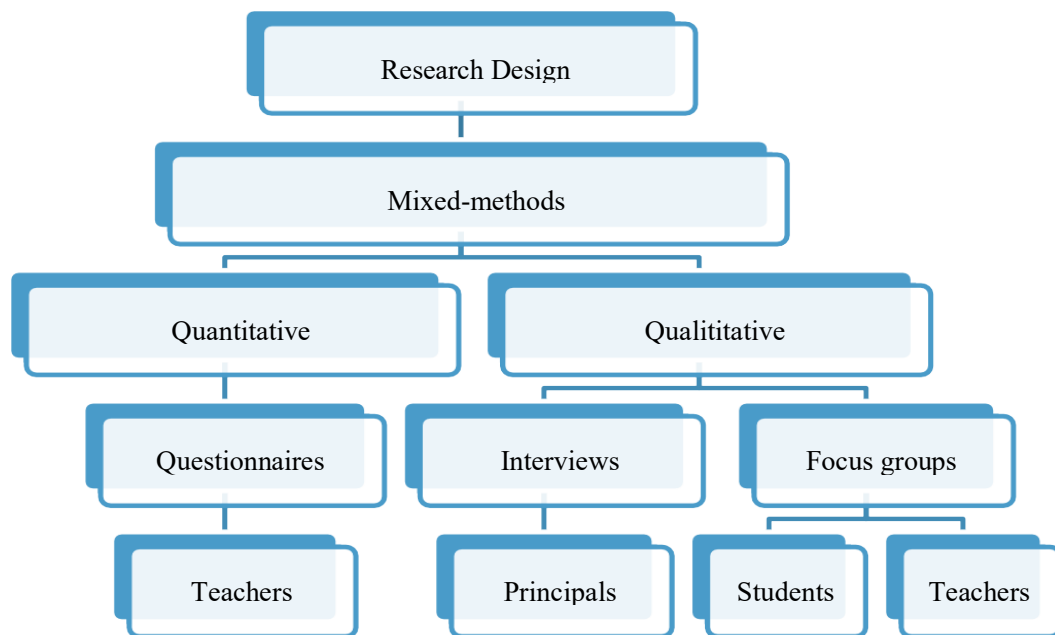


Figure 3.1 Research Design

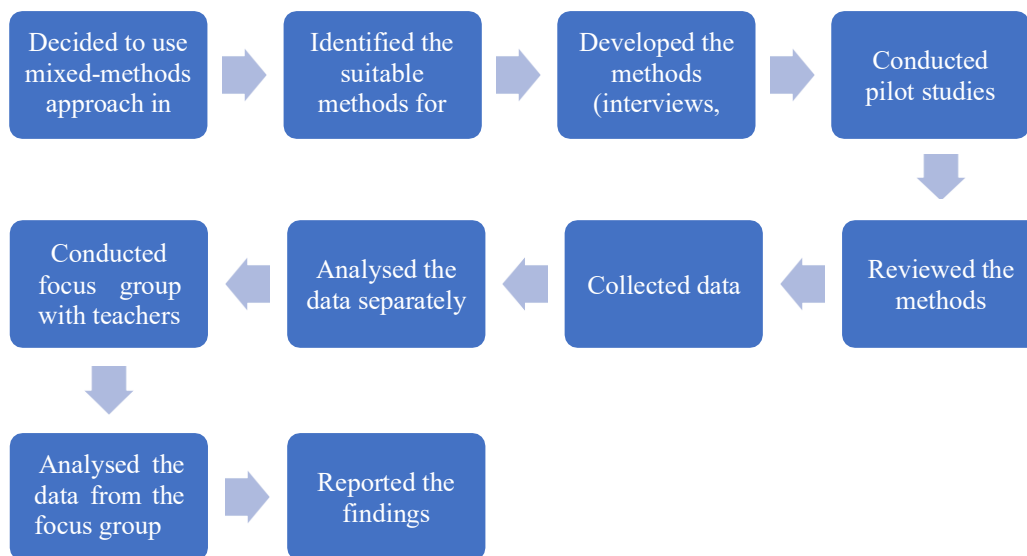


Figure 3.2 Process of conducting the mixed-methods study.

The explanation of the data collection process and the analysis of the data is provided in Sections 3.6 and 3.10. The following section discusses the location of my study.

3.4 Study Location

My study was conducted in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia, because Riyadh includes a high diversity of cultures. It contains the country's important governmental departments, more than five universities, and a high number of companies and private institutions, which provide multiple career opportunities that increase the number and diversity of its population. Riyadh is also where I live, which helped decrease the financial obligations that might have emerged during the data collection process (accommodation, etc.) and also gave me easy access to the schools. I am very familiar with the city and its culture, which aided me in interpreting the findings.

3.5 Selection of Participants

The 'participants of the study' means the 'sample of the study', which refers to 'the smaller number of cases, units or sites selected from a much larger population. Some samples are assumed to be representative of the entire, i.e., generalisable from, but this can never be done with certainty' (Wellington, 2015, p. 345). A sample can

be selected in accordance with the research aims and questions, research methodology, population size, and the requirements of confidence and accuracy (Cohen et al., 2011). However, the best research sample is the sample that represents the population considered by the study (Cohen et al., 2011).

As my study aimed to explore the implementation of children's rights in Saudi Arabian primary education, its population included principals, teachers and primary education children aged nine to 11 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. I chose this population because these people know the most about the current situation regarding children's rights within education. I chose three different samples from three different levels in education. The principals are the leaders who know about applicable legislations and laws and are responsible for monitoring the implementation of these legislations and protecting children within their schools. The teachers interact the most with children and are responsible for student development. The children are the intended beneficiaries of the UNCRC, so as UNCRC implementation at their schools affects them, their voices and perceptions should be heard.

Due to our cultural demands, contact between women and men who are not known to each other is difficult and unacceptable. Saudi Arabian policy prohibits women from accessing male schools, and vice versa. I thus preferred to focus on females in the interviews and focus groups. For the interviews with principals and the focus groups with children, I chose five primary schools representative of the local area. Because the Education Department in Riyadh consists of five educational areas—divided into East, West, North, South and Central, with each area containing an education office—the sample included a school from each educational area. The intention was to explore the children's rights situation in those schools from the principals' points of view, simultaneously considering their attitudes regarding the UNCRC and factors that affect UNCRC implementation in Saudi Arabian primary education. To that end, semi-structured interviews were used as a method for gathering information from each of the five schools' principals.

In addition, to examine the children's awareness of their rights and their perceptions of the implementation of these rights, I planned to conduct focus groups with 30 students. Each group would contain three students of the same age. One principal did not agree with this plan, however and there was no time to include another school, I worked with children from the other four schools and increased the number of children to 36—three children from the fourth, fifth and sixth years in each school.

A non-probability sample style was used, which means ‘targeting a particular group in the full knowledge that it does not represent the wider population’ (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 155). There are many types of non-probability samples; I used the convenience sample in my research. Its benefit is in the ease of reaching the sample categories (Berg, 2001). To collect data from the schools, I was first required to obtain a permit from the Education Department before contacting the schools. According to the Education Department in Riyadh, I do not have the right to choose the schools that could be part of my study's sample, which might affect the representativeness of these schools to the local area. Thus, schools were chosen by the Education Department, and then they provided me with details about the schools. The Education Department provided me with the names and contact details (principals’ phone numbers and emails) from the five primary education schools, each school representing one of the five education areas in Riyadh. Subsequently, I contacted the principals, inviting them to participate in my study. I also sent them the permission I had obtained from the Educational Department, the information sheet and the consent form by email and via WhatsApp to ensure they received it. When they agreed to participate in the study, they returned their signed consent forms to me. The process of choosing the sample of principals is shown in Figure 3.3.

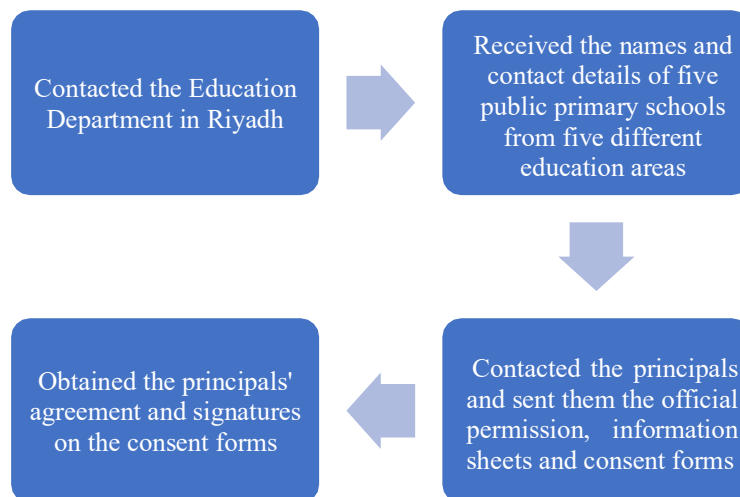


Figure 3.3 The process of choosing the sample of principals

After selecting the principals’ sample, I selected the children’s sample from each school via random sample probability, meaning that each member of the population (which included students who were nine, ten, and 11 years old in each school) had the same chance of being selected and included in the study sample (Berg, 2001; Cohen

et al., 2011). I accomplished this by making a list of all the children's numbers in each class. Then I put each number in a small paper bag and randomly picked three children from each class. I chose three children each from the fourth, fifth and sixth years at the four schools in the Central, East, North and West of Riyadh. The process of choosing the children's sample is described in Figure 3.4.

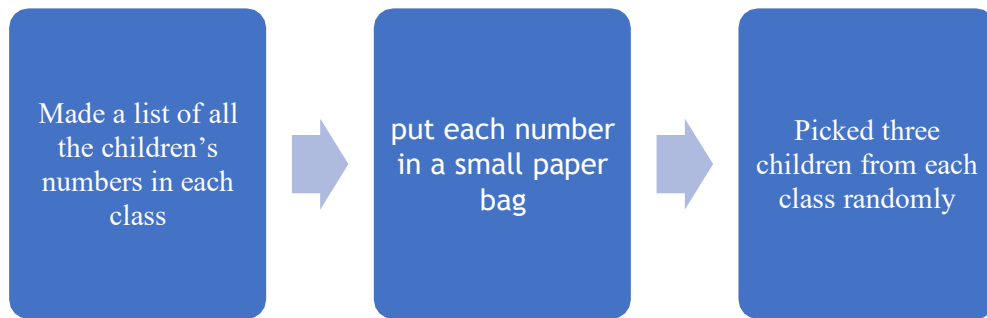


Figure 3.4 Process of choosing the children's sample

For quantitative data, and especially for the questionnaire, Cohen (2011) suggests that the researcher should opt for a large sample because that will increase the research reliability. Moreover, Berg (2001) clarifies that probability sampling is usually used to select samples for quantitative research. However, to ensure that a large number of teachers would answer the questionnaire, the electronic network was used to distribute and collect the questionnaires. This was done through the Survs.com website. The teachers' sample was also gathered via probability sampling, targeting all the public primary school teachers (both male and female) in Riyadh—25,359 teachers (Ministry of Education, 2016). The link to the online questionnaire's page on Survs.com was broadcasted (via social media applications, such as Twitter and WhatsApp) to as many teachers as possible to procure a large number of fully-answered questionnaires. It was also sent to the principals' sample so that they could dispatch it to the teachers in their schools. Consequently, the online page of the questionnaire was visited by 1079 people but there were only 635 submitted questionnaires. The questionnaire was answered by 635 teachers—421 females and 214 males which means that from the distributed questionnaire 59% of them were fully answered.

The teacher focus group was conducted at the end of data collection with the participation of five primary education teachers (all females). So, to ensure the possibility of reaching as many teachers as possible and choosing from a high population number, I used the Twitter application to research participants. I published a tweet

asking for five participants who were female primary education teachers in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This gave me the chance to reach some of the primary education teachers in Riyadh, ask them to participate in my research, and obtain their contact details. Table 3.1 reveals the participants in my research.

Table 3.1

Participants in my research

Participation Categories	Number of Participants	Methods
Principals	5	Interviews
Children	36	Focus groups
Teachers	635 (421 females and 214 males)	Questionnaire
	5	Focus group

Before choosing the participants, ethical approval was obtained from the University of Sheffield Ethics System for implementing the interviews with principals, focus groups with children, and questionnaires with teachers (see Appendix 2). Then, another ethical approval was obtained for implementing the teacher's focus group (see Appendix 3). The explanation of the study methods is discussed in the following sections.

3.6 Research methods

To achieve the aims of my research, qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The qualitative methods included interviews and focus groups, while the quantitative method was represented by the questionnaire. Section 3.6 is divided into three sub-sections identifying each method. Section 3.6.1 explains the interviews; section 3.6.2 explains the questionnaire; and Section 3.6.3 explains the focus groups.

3.6.1 Interviews.

The interviews were a qualitative method used in my research to collect data from primary education principals. Yin (2015) suggested that the interview is the most important method for gathering evidence in qualitative data. It can be defined as ‘a conversation with a purpose’ (Berg, 2001, p. 66; Wellington, 2015, p. 71). One of the functions of an interview is to collect information for the researcher while giving people the opportunity to explore their views and perspectives (Berg, 2001; Wellington, 2015). Wellington (2015) continued this line of thinking by asserting that the interview is even more than a conversation with a purpose; it helps interviewees make their voices heard. Hammond and Wellington (2013) defined the interview as ‘a conversation between the researcher and those being researched, variously termed participants, subjects or simply ‘interviewees’ (p. 91). The most important feature of using interviews as a research method is that they allow the researcher to explore and prompt some areas that other methods cannot reach, such as the interviewees’ feelings, thoughts, perspectives and values, which other methods could not investigate (Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Wellington, 2015). Therefore, these interviews helped me obtain in-depth answers to the research questions from the principals.

There are many rules control research interviews, such as predetermining with the subject what will be discussed and the time of discussion, protecting the participants, getting permission from the participants to involve them in the research or to record the interviews and other ethical rules (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). Some of these rules related to the construction of the interviews, which will be discussed below.

3.6.1.1 Interview construction.

The interviews were used to achieve the research aims of (1) exploring the perceptions of primary school principals regarding children’s rights as defined in the UNCRC, (2) exploring the implementation of children’s rights in primary education and (3) identifying barriers to UNCRC implementation in Saudi Arabian primary education from the principals’ perspectives. The interviews were conducted in a face-to-face setting.

According to Wellington (2015), there are many interview styles that could be used for gathering data, depending on the research aims. These styles include unstruc-

tured interviews, semi-structured interviews and structured interviews. I used semi-structured interviews to gather data from principals because that style is more manageable than unstructured interviews, yet more flexible than structured interviews. To obtain good qualitative data, I could thus control the interviews using questions that helped uncover the needed information and gave the interviewee the opportunity to discuss and clarify each answer by providing more detail.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the interview questions should be formulated based on the purpose and the question of the research. Thus, the interviews in my research were constructed based on my research purpose, questions and the literature review. It has been done in several stages. First, I re-read the research questions to brainstorm a list of the areas I needed to investigate. Afterwards, I began converting the brainstormed collection of ideas into categories and selecting from them the most suitable ideas and questions. Next, I carefully wrote the questions from the organised categories. I took into account that the questions must be clear, understandable, and connect with the research aims. Wellington (2015) mentioned five types of questions to be avoided: double-barreled questions, two-in-one questions, restrictive questions, leading questions and loaded questions (Wellington, 2015, pp. 146-147). I hence designed the guidance for the interviews according to the literature in the qualitative research area.

The interview questions contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions usually need a specific answer. For example, the answer to 'Have you heard about the UNCRC before?' must be either 'yes' or 'no'. In contrast, open-ended questions require more information, which may lead to more unprepared questions that emerge from the interviewee's answers.

After preparing the interview questions, I sent them to my supervisor to get her advice on them. Based on her suggestions, I improved them and established an original set of questions to take into the interviews (see Appendix 4). Then, because the participants were all Arabic speakers, I translated the questions into the Arabic language.

3.6.1.2 Pilot study

The term 'pilot study' refers to:

A preliminary study aimed at developing, testing, or refining the planned research questions and procedures that will later be used in the formal study; the data from the pilot study should not be reused in the formal study. (Yin, 2014, p. 240)

Generally, a pilot study tests the methods that will be used for the research to add other relevant questions or restructure the original questions if they have any weaknesses (Yin, 2014). Cohen et al. (2011) confirmed that the pilot study is an important strategy for ensuring the success of a study's methods. I therefore applied a pilot study to examine the efficacy of the methods.

The pilot study of the interview helped me examine the suitability of the questions, place of the interview, the recorder, and the time. The pilot study was conducted in the principal's office at her school. After getting permission from the interviewee, two devices were used to record the interview. I noticed that the interview was interrupted many times by school employees, which made the principal uncomfortable, as the recorders were recording those conversations between herself and the employees. She asked me many times to stop the recording, which adversely affected the recording's quality. Furthermore, I felt the principal was not comfortable giving details, as the secretary's office was nearby and we might have been overheard. In the school office setting, the principal was also unable to offer me enough time to complete the interview; after apologising to me, she ended our conversation early.

3.6.1.3 The application of the interviews.

I pre-communicated by phone with the principals to schedule the interviews and choose places and times that were convenient for both the interviewee and I. All interviews were conducted in female-only cafés in Riyadh, except for the pilot study in the school office. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. As with the pilot study, I used two devices to record the interviews after getting permission from the interviewee.

At the beginning of each interview, I introduced myself, thanked the interviewee, and began with a friendly conversation before starting to record the interview. I told the interviewee when I would begin to record the interview and promised that,

to protect her privacy, I would not mention her name or her school while the recorders were running. I then began the interview questions. At the end of each conversation, I thanked the interviewees for their cooperation and for participating in my research. I then obtained their agreement to contact them after the interview by phone or WhatsApp if I needed any more clarification regarding their answers or to send them a copy of the study findings when I finished.

3.6.2 Questionnaire.

The questionnaire I used in my research targeted primary education teachers (both males and females). I decided to include males in this stage of my research because it was comparatively easy to get in touch with male teachers via the questionnaire because it was administered online, which allowed access to anyone, regardless of gender.

The questionnaire was used to explore the primary school teachers' awareness of children's rights as identified through the UNCRC, their perspectives regarding UNCRC implementation and their perspectives toward barriers to implementing the UNCRC. Though similar to an interview, a questionnaire is not conducted in a face-to-face setting, and is therefore useful for reaching a large number of people and collecting a large amount of data (Wellington, 2000). I designed the questionnaire to include both closed-ended and open-ended questions. I chose to include closed-ended questions because they are more direct, more focused, and easier to answer, which helps reduce the number of non-responses and may be less time-consuming for busy teachers. The closed-ended questions were formulated in multiple-choice format with rating scale answers ('agree', 'disagree', 'I have no idea'). Open-ended questions help to 'yield fascinating qualitative data' (Wellington, 2015, p. 195). According to Wellington (2015), a questionnaire should begin with the closed-ended questions, leaving the open-ended questions for the end. This is the design I adopted for my questionnaire.

Electronic resources were used to distribute the questionnaire to teachers. Wellington (2015) clarified the advantages of using electronic networks, as they make distributing and collecting questionnaires easier and quicker. This was done through the Survs.com website. The link to the online questionnaire's page on Survs.com was broadcasted (via social media applications, such as Twitter and WhatsApp) to as many teachers as possible to procure a large number of fully-answered questionnaires. Cons-

requently, the website page of the questionnaire was visited by 1074 people but there were only 635 submitted questionnaires. the questionnaire was answered by 635 teachers—421 females and 214 males. I developed the questions myself after extensively reviewing the related literature.

3.6.2.1 Questionnaire construction.

I constructed the questionnaire based on my study questions and literature review, taking many issues into consideration during the process. Since the questionnaire was to be applied in Saudi Arabia with Arabic-speaking respondents, I designed it using the Arabic language. I also endeavoured to make the questions understandable and specific—meaning that each question did not have more than one probable answer, each point contained only one principle and the questions were not overly long (Wellington, 2015). I grouped the items concerning the same concepts together while considering the ease of answering the questions. I designed the questionnaire while gathering data from the principals. The data gathered from the principal interviews thus benefited my questionnaire plan. According to Matthews and Ross (2010), in the mixed-methods approach, collecting a qualitative data first is beneficial to develop structured questions for any other data collection method such as questionnaires.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section is a sheet including information about me, the purpose of the study, and why the participants had been chosen to take part. In addition, a question about the respondents' genders to determine if there were any significant differences between males and females regarding the research questions.

The second section contained the main questions, which were divided into three dimensions. The first dimension asked about the teachers' awareness of children's rights, and it was divided into two sub-dimensions: (1) the teachers' learning experiences of children's rights and (2) the teachers' awareness of and attitude towards the UNCRC articles. The second dimension discussed the implementation of children's rights in Saudi Arabian primary education, while the third dimension concerned the barriers to such implementation. The third dimension contained an open-ended question for respondents to add any other information they would like to include that had not been covered by the questionnaire.

At the end of the questionnaire, I included an apology for the questionnaire's length along with a 'thank you' message for the participants' patience, for their taking part in my research and for their spending a significant amount of time answering the

questionnaire. I also mentioned that, if they would like to see the research results, they could send me their contact information, so I could forward them the results when the research process was complete.

Wellington (2015) mentioned that a questionnaire's comprehensibility can be examined by testing it with friends. I therefore sent the questionnaire to two of my friends who are educational researchers in Saudi Arabia to see if they considered it understandable, clear and manageable and to obtain any other pieces of advice they might offer before translating the questionnaire and sending it to my supervisor. They mentioned some points, such as repetitious questions, and they asked that I consider shortening the questionnaire—using three choices in the rating scale for closed-ended questions instead of five. They suggested this because the questionnaire already contained a lot of information and offering five choices would not only make it longer, but would also possibly cause confusion for the respondents. Some people, they asserted, may not recognise the difference between, for example, 'agree' and 'strongly agree', and confusion on such a point could reduce the reliability and accuracy of the respondents' answers and increase the number of incompletely answered questionnaires. Following their advice, I altered the questionnaire's closed-ended rating system to include only 'agree', 'disagree', and 'I have no idea'.

My next step in designing the questionnaire was translating it into English, making sure I had an English copy of the questionnaire that almost exactly matched the Arabic version. I then sent the English copy to my supervisor for her advice on its construction. Afterward, I sent the original, Arabic copy to the Education Department in Riyadh to obtain their permission to distribute it to the participants.

3.6.2.2 Pilot study.

Next, via a pilot study, I examined the questionnaire to ensure that it was valid, reliable, and helped answer the research questions. I distributed the questionnaire to a small sample containing 10 teachers (five males and five females). This pilot study helped me ensure the ease of using the online questionnaire and the accessibility of the website. Wellington (2015) stated that 'a pilot questionnaire is, therefore, a key stage in design and construction. You should not underestimate the amount of time and drafting required to produce a good questionnaire....Testing it on colleagues, friends and family at every stage is one good way to ensure comprehensibility' (p. 196). I distributed the questionnaire link through the WhatsApp application to some of my friends, who are teachers in primary education, and to my brother, who shared it with his friends who

also work in primary education. The participants in the pilot study mentioned some printing mistakes and unclear questions, which I fixed before the final questionnaire was administered.

3.6.2.3 The application of the questionnaire.

After constructing the original copy of the questionnaire (Appendix 5), a website was used to distribute it: www.survs.com. The website was intended to ensure a high number of responses from both male and female participants. Ease of access to the questionnaire, and ease of answering it via smartphones, tablets or computers, contributed to my choosing electronic distribution and collection. The respondents could access the website wherever they were and whenever they wanted. To make sure that the participants understood the purpose of their participation, the questionnaire included a section containing information about me (along with my contact details), my supervisor, the research title, aims, methodology, etc. To make the respondents comfortable, there were no questions about their personal information, which helped increase the reliability of their answers and of the questionnaire in general. The invitation and consent letters attached to the questionnaires were also intended to help increase the number of fully completed questionnaires.

The spread of social media use in Saudi Arabia benefited the distribution of the link to my questionnaire, which was sent out through a written invitation, published on WhatsApp and Twitter, for the teachers in Riyadh primary schools. The invitation requested people to help by forwarding the link to others. Figure 3.5 explains the process of questionnaire construction and application.

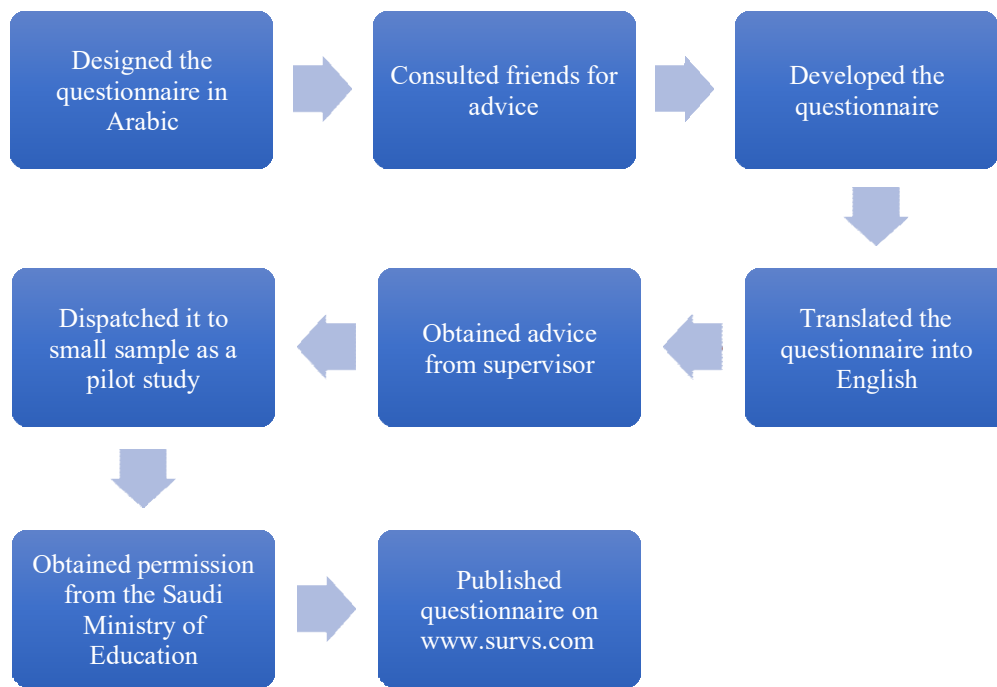


Figure 3.5 Questionnaire construction and application

3.6.3 Focus group

A focus group is an interview with small groups, which may each contain two or more participants, to discuss a topic provided by the researcher (Berg, 2001; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Hammond & Wellington, 2013). Focus groups were used in my study to gather the information I needed from children and teachers.

Focus groups tend to provide a comfortable environment for participants because they feel safer and more secure when they are with others, especially when a focus group involves children, teenagers or teachers (Wellington, 2015). Furthermore, focus groups help researchers gain information about the participants' views and perceptions towards the research topic—allowing access to the cultural diversity in groups by including a wide range of participants, while increasing the validity of the data (Gray, 2014). Gray (2014) and Wellington (2015) mentioned, however, that there are many disadvantages to focus groups, such as difficulties in applying controls and difficulties in monitoring participants' verbal and nonverbal responses. For example, if one group member dominates the discussion, it may prevent others' voices from being heard because they did not have the chance to talk. Taking into account the disadvantages of the focus group, I still decided to use this method to retrieve infor-

mation from children and teachers in my study. Cohen et al. (2011) suggested that focus groups are suitable for children because they feel as though they are being challenged, and that encourages them to give their best. It also helps the researcher to understand the children's language and interact with them. In general, focus groups help people of any age be more relaxed, warm up, and push each other's opinions forward (Wellington, 2015). Focus groups make participants more confident in stating their viewpoints, thinking out loud, and discussing those opinions openly. Therefore, I deemed focus groups to be appropriate for collecting my research data.

3.6.3.1 Focus groups with children.

Due to the advantages of the focus group in gathering data from children, I chose it to achieve the research aims of exploring the information children have about their rights, as well as their perceptions of the implementation of those rights in their schools.

3.6.3.1.1 The construction of the focus groups with children.

The focus groups with children were conducted after interviewing the principals and despatching the questionnaire for teachers. After choosing the focus group as a suitable method for my research, I planned and organised it while considering the related research.

First, I designed the main questions to be answered and added related sub-questions to encourage the children to talk. Also, to plumb the children's thoughts, I used some visual methods—such as stories and videos—to prompt the children's ideas, experiences and opinions. I searched YouTube for a video about children's rights that fit my research questions and was suitable for children to watch. I chose a video, published by the Childhood Department at Princess Nourah bint Abdularahman University; as I am a lecturer there, it was not complicated to obtain permission from the video publisher to use this video in my research. The video, recorded in Arabic and titled 'It is of my right', featured a little child talking about children's rights and providing information about the UNCRC (Appendix 6). I also visited the Human Rights Organisation in Riyadh and asked them, for the purpose of my research, to provide me with some books they had published for children regarding children's rights. They provided me with many books and stories, two of which I chose to use in the children's focus groups. The first book was entitled *Children's Rights* (Appendix 7), and it contained a list of rights along with some pictures to be coloured. The second, entitled

My Rights (Appendix 8), gave information about the UNCRC and listed rights alongside pictures explaining them.

After translating the main questions for the children into English, I sent them to my supervisor, with the link to the video I used, and discuss the plan of the focus group with her in the research supervision meeting. I then contacted the Education Department in Riyadh to obtain permission to work with children in schools.

3.6.3.1.2 Pilot study.

Before attempting the children's focus groups, I conducted a pilot study to ensure the comprehensibility of the questions, the suitability of the visual methods, and my capability to control the group. The group for the pilot study included three children from three different year groups. I found that they had different experiences, needed time to overcome their shyness, and were not comfortable speaking. So, I decided that each focus group should contain children from the same class, so they would feel more comfortable and their experiences would be similar. The pilot study also revealed that the recorded conversation was unclear, as I sometimes could not recognise the speaker's voice. I hence ensured, in the actual focus groups, to mention the name of the speaker many times, especially after the speaker mentioned an important issue.

3.6.3.1.3 The application of the focus groups with children.

The next step after constructing the focus group questions (Appendix 9) was choosing the participants. I visited classes with either the principal's assistant or the student advisor, who introduced me to the children. Then, I explained to the children who I am and what I do, giving the entire class the information sheet formulated for children (Appendix 15). Afterwards, I chose my sample, as described in Section 3.5. I asked them if they wanted to participate and then gave them the information sheet intended for their parents (Appendix 16) and the consent form (Appendix 17). The children were required to give these sheets to their parents and return the consent form within the next two days. I then conducted the focus groups in comfortable rooms that the schools prepared for me. The time of each focus group depended on when teachers were absent, so that I could work with their students during that leisure time, or, if there were no teachers absent, I asked them to allow me to work with the students during class time. Every morning, I worked with the principal's assistant or student advisor to organise the time of each focus group, and usually I worked with one group a day—

each group taking between 45 and 90 minutes. I conducted 12 focus groups in four different schools. There were three groups in each school, each group from a different class year—one from the fourth year, one from the fifth year, and one from the sixth year. All focus groups were audio recorded and two different recording devices were used to record the conversations.

3.6.3.2 Focus group with teachers.

I planned the teachers' focus group after analysing the principal interviews, questionnaires and children's focus groups, from which many issues had emerged. The aim of the teachers' focus group was to discuss these issues at length, explain the questionnaire findings, and obtain in-depth information about important points regarding the research questions. Therefore, the focus group with teachers was the last phase of the data collection process.

3.6.3.2.1 The construction of the focus group with teachers.

First, I wrote down the most important issues and divided them into themes for discussion. I then chose the most important issues requiring clarification and discussed them with my supervisor. This led me to design the focus group scenario, which contained four sections. The first section concerned the school and its facilities, the second concerned issues about the people who work at the school, the third was about some children's rights issues at school, and the fourth discussed the wider society.

The focus group scenario was first written in English. Then, after discussing it with my supervisor and improving it (Appendix 10), I translated it into Arabic. To ensure the clarity of the focus group scenario, I tested it by implementing a discussion of some of its issues with my family members who work in the education system.

3.6.3.2.2 The application of the focus group with teachers.

I used Twitter to reach five primary education teachers (all females) in Riyadh by publishing a tweet asking for participation in my research. The first five teachers who contacted me were the participants I chose. I sent them the information sheet and consent form through Twitter and they contacted me via WhatsApp. After obtaining their permission, I made a group in WhatsApp including each of the five participants and introduced them to one another. We decided a suitable place and time for the focus group, choosing to meet at one of the female-only cafés in Riyadh. The focus group

lasted for approximately two hours, including a friendly conversation at the beginning. The discussion was audio recorded. At the beginning of the focus group, I provided the participants with the focus group scenario and gave them the themes to read carefully. They then began to discuss each topic in the scenario and I intervened to lead the conversation and ask for more clarification if necessary. At the end of the conversation, I thanked them for participating in my research and asked for their permission to contact them again if I needed further clarification.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations involve ‘focusing on establishing safeguards that will protect the rights of participants and include informed consent, protecting participants from harm, and ensuring confidentiality’ (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 161). Generally, ethical issues concern minimising any potential harm participants might face (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). This section discusses the ethical considerations related to my study. It is divided into five sub-sections: informed consent, official permissions, confidentiality and anonymity, ethical dilemmas, and power relations.

3.7.1 Informed consent.

Informed consent is defined as ‘the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions’ (Diener & Crandall, 1978, p. 75, as cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 78). Accordingly, once the participants in my study were identified, they were informed that their participation was voluntary and were provided with two documents. The first was the information sheet giving a general description of me, my university and department and my research aims and objectives. I reiterated that taking part in the study was voluntary and stated that the information provided by the participants would be treated confidentially and all data would be anonymised. The second document was the consent form, which would be signed as an agreement of participation. All information sheets and informed consents were written in Arabic, which was the language of the participants. In addition, as children were part of my research sample, the children’s parents were informed about their children’s possible participation in the research and were asked to give their permission (Berg, 2001).

There were five different information sheets (see Appendices 11, 14, 15 and 17) and four consent forms (see Appendices 12, 16 and 18), depending on the participants and the methods of data collection used. After giving the participants the information sheets and the informed consents, I gave them time to consider their options and, if they decided to participate, sign the consent form. I told them that whatever their decision was, it would be appreciated. All the participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from participation, even after the data collection period ended, and their answers would not be used. Regarding the questionnaire, Berg (2001) stated:

In large-scale survey questionnaire studies, separate signed informed consent slips are eliminated and replaced with implied consent. Implied consent is indicated by the subject taking the time to complete the lengthy questionnaire. In these circumstances, explanations of the study's purpose and potential risks and benefits are explained at the beginning of the survey. (p. 57)

Accordingly, the first page of my questionnaire included information about the research and the potential harms of taking part in it. The first page ended by asking the participants whether or not they wanted to participate (see Appendix 13).

3.7.2 Official permissions.

Sieber (1993) mentioned that, to collect data from a targeted community, gaining official permissions to undertake the research is required as the first step of the data collection process. In my research, the ethical review was done by the Ethics System at the University of Sheffield, and I have obtained its approval to implement this research (see Appendices 2 and 3).

In addition, since my data were collected from schools in Saudi Arabia, and since the schools' principals, teachers and children are the sample of my study, I obtained permission from the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education (MoE), represented by the Education Department in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to conduct my research. The Education Department in Riyadh provided me with a permission letter, which I showed to the principals (Appendix 19).

3.7.3 Confidentiality and anonymity.

Berg (2001) defined confidentiality and anonymity as ‘an active attempt to remove from the research records any elements that might indicate the subjects’ identities. In a literal sense, anonymity means that the subjects remain nameless’ (p. 57). For this reason, I explained to the participants in the information sheets that taking part in the study was voluntary, that the information they provided would be treated confidentially, and that all data would be anonymised. I promised the participants that the data would be used for academic purposes only and would not be shared with unauthorised others.

Regarding anonymity, the survey questionnaire forms contained no questions that would identify the participants. For example, there were no questions about the schools’ names, the participants’ names, contact information or any other personal details. In both the interviews with the principals and the focus groups with the students and teachers, anonymity was guaranteed by giving the participants nicknames or codes to use throughout the interview. Their real names, and the names of their school, would therefore not appear in the records. Furthermore, all the data gathered, including the audio recordings, were stored on a password-protected computer, in a locked cupboard, and, as promised, have not been shared with anyone unauthorised to access them. All data will be destroyed as soon as the research is completed.

3.7.4 Ethical Dilemma.

As my research is about UNCRC implementation in Saudi Arabia, and since children are included in my sample, I was aware of the potential risk and harm that the participants might face. I also understood the necessity of ensuring the confidentiality of the participants’ answers. It was, therefore, my responsibility to protect my participants and identify and cease any violation of their rights if they experienced any.

I faced many ethical dilemmas in collecting the research data. For example, children's rights is a sensitive topic, especially regarding the UNCRC, because many points involved are to some extent inconsistent with Islam—such as Article 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion) and Article 21 (adoption). After despatching the questionnaire, I therefore received some phone calls and emails from people refusing to participate in researching this topic in Saudi Arabia because they were afraid of how it would affect their faith and beliefs. I explained that the Saudi Government had adopted the UNCRC, with the exception of the articles that conflict with Islam—a point

also discussed on the information sheet. I explained that any questions about these articles in the questionnaire were there only to gather clarification about people's attitudes to these rights, which are part of the UNCRC. Nothing in the questionnaire, I assured them, would be detrimental to their beliefs and values. In addition, I clarified in the information sheets that the participants had the right to refuse to answer any question without clarifying the reason or to entirely withdraw from participation at any time.

The other major ethical dilemma I faced is that some children discussed things that could violate their family privacy, but, as mentioned above, I promised not to share any collected data with unauthorised people. Some children discussed issues they faced, however, such as domestic abuse. As I had promised participants to keep their information and answers confidential and use them only for research purposes, I gave the children the information they needed about dialling number 116111, which is the Child Helping Hotline. I encouraged and advised them to not hesitate to contact this number, whatever the issue, since the Child Helping Hotline aims to protect all children. I also encouraged them to discuss the issues they faced at school with the Child Helping Hotline to allow their voices to be heard.

3.7.5 Power relations.

Based on my experience as an educator, I understood that the participants might have some doubts regarding my role and the proposal of my interviews and focus groups. I explained to them that I was not there to judge them or their schools on behalf of any official authorities. The children also thought they would have to do a test and be evaluated. However, I explained to the participants that I was merely collecting data for research purposes and that the data would be kept confidential and anonymous. In addition, I informed them that the data would not be reported to any official authorities in Saudi Arabia and would only be used in my own research to answer my research questions.

3.8 Ensuring Trustworthiness

As I explained in Section 3.3, I used the mixed-methods approach in my study. However, it is important to acknowledge that the criteria of a good study are different between qualitative and quantitative studies. For example, quantitative research uses data validity and reliability to evaluate the study, but qualitative research evaluates the

study through transferability and credibility concepts. Since I applied a mixed-methods approach, I used Guba's (1985) construction, which corresponds to the criteria applied to both qualitative and quantitative studies. Guba's construction includes four concepts: 'credibility (in place of internal validity), transferability (in place of external validity), dependability (in place of reliability), and confirmability (in place of objectivity)' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 219). To ensure the trustworthiness of my study, I have adhered to the following procedures.

In the first procedure, I provided in-depth information about the methodology and the data collection process, including the number of participants, and the application of the methods, which gave a broad impression of the research and its process. According to Shenton (2004), in-depth information about the research process enhances the trustworthiness of the findings as it increases their credibility, dependability and confirmability. Furthermore, Shenton (2004) and Wellington (2015) argued for the use of triangulation as a way to enhance research credibility, confirmability and trustworthiness. The use of different methods helps in overcoming each method's limitations by combining their individual strengths. The triangulation in my study involved both the methods of gathering data and the participants themselves, as the study sample included principals, teachers, and children.

Moreover, the assurance that participating in the study was voluntary and the participant could withdraw at any time also increased the trustworthiness of the data, as it ensured that data collection included only those who genuinely wanted to participate and planned to offer data openly (Shenton, 2004). I explained this to my participants in the information sheets and at the beginning of the interviews and focus groups. If they did not wish to provide honest answers, they could hence refuse to participate.

The various debriefing sittings between researchers and their supervisors is another way to promote a study's trustworthiness, according to Shenton (2004). Thus, the regular meetings with my supervisor enhanced the trustworthiness of my research. I discussed with her each step of my research, the methods I used to collect data, the construction of these methods, the participants, the analysis of the data and the findings. Shenton (2004) also asserted that discussing projects with peers and participating in conferences provides feedback and aids notetaking, which helps improve the findings and their trustworthiness. I presented part of my findings at a conference and received feedback from experts and academic researchers in the education field. I am also in the consistent habit of discussing this topic and my findings with my peers. This feedback, from experts and peers alike, helped me improve my findings.

My background as both an educator and a member of Saudi society helped me understand and interpret the data, and, again according to Shenton (2004), providing an explanation of the researcher's background and experience contributes to a study's trustworthiness. Shenton (2004) also mentioned the importance of clarifying any permissions that the researcher obtained to conduct the research as part of solidifying credibility. In this regard, I have provided the permissions from the Saudi Arabian MoE and the ethical approvals I obtained from the University of Sheffield.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) considered that the participants checking the data is an important provision to support a study's trustworthiness. After transcribing the principals' interviews, I sent the transcripts back to them so they could consider whether their words matched their intended meanings. In the focus groups with children and teachers, I asked for clarification and more information to avoid misinterpreting their answers. I also reconnected with the teachers through WhatsApp to ensure my understanding of some of their points.

Examining existing literature and its similarities with the findings of a new study is another method of promoting trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004). I have reported the findings of previous studies, which supported and are similar to my own findings.

As the study sample was small and did not represent the community entirely, my findings could not be generalised. However, since I provided in-depth information about the context of the study, the participants and the methods, this may help other researchers to adopt these methods and conduct similar studies in other contexts or with different, larger samples.

3.9 Data Analysis

According to Hammond and Wellington (2013), data analysis is 'the process of breaking down the topic or object into its component parts and understanding how those parts fit together' (p. 9). It aims to 'describe, discuss, interpret, evaluate, and explain the data in terms of the research questions or hypothesis of the research project' (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 317). As mentioned above, my research used a mixed-methods approach. To achieve the aims of data analysis, I therefore used two different strategies, depending on the methods used to collect the data.

3.9.1 Analysis of quantitative data.

I used statistical analysis to analyse the data collected by quantitative methods (i.e., the questionnaire). Statistical analysis in social research applies to ‘data that is structured and can be counted or is already expressed in numerical terms. The data is usually collected using a questionnaire or other format’ (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 343).

To analyse the quantitative data, I used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, which was provided to me free of charge under the University of Sheffield license. I used this software because I am familiar with it, as I used it previously to analyse data during my master’s degree studies. SPSS is also one of the most broadly utilised and highly regarded pieces of software for investigating quantitative data (Gray, 2014).

As previously mentioned, I designed an online questionnaire and it was published on www.survs.com website, which, made it easier to distribute it. The link to the online questionnaire's page on Survs.com was broadcasted (via social media applications, such as Twitter and WhatsApp) to as many teachers as possible to procure a large number of completed questionnaires. Consequently, the website page of the questionnaire was visited by 1074 people. However, only 635 teachers—421 females and 214 males—completed and returned the questionnaires. The analysis of the quantitative data began with receiving the data from the www.survs.com website, which were discharged in Excel form. The data in the Excel form were written out in words, which I converted to numbers as the first step of analysis. I then inserted these data into the SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis of the quantitative data. I used frequency distribution as a descriptive statistical method, which means ‘the number of instances in a class....In surveys it is often associated with the use of Likert scales’ (Gray, 2014, p. 566). The frequency distribution focused on summarising the data in combination tables.

3.9.2 Analysis of qualitative data.

I used NVivo software to analyse the qualitative data gathered through the interviews and focus groups. I also used it to analyse the open-ended portion of the questionnaire. According to Matthews and Ross (2010), the use of the NVivo software in analysing qualitative data ‘makes the process more efficient and enables the researcher to work with the data rigorously and creatively’ (p. 416). Before using NVivo, I attended two sessions about the use of NVivo for data analysis provided by

the University of Sheffield: 'First Steps with NVivo' and 'Next Steps with NVivo'. I then downloaded the software free of charge under the University of Sheffield's license.

Analysis of qualitative data should begin by preparing the data for the analysis process, organising the data into themes by coding and then representing the data in figures, tables or discussions (Creswell, 2014). For this reason, thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The thematic approach for analysis is 'a process of working with raw data to identify and interpret key ideas or themes' (Gray, 2014, p. 373).

The analysis of the qualitative data began with a transcription, in Microsoft Word software, of the audio-recordings from the interviews and focus groups. While transcribing them, I made some notes, which together with the transcriptions gave me raw data. I then listened to the recordings again and read the transcriptions to ensure consistency. After that, I entered the transcriptions of the interviews and focus groups into NVivo. After re-reading the transcripts many times, I identified the key themes by highlighting the important items through immersion in the data. I organised the similar information into codes, then classified the codes into themes and sub-themes according to my research questions. I reviewed the themes many times and re-read the transcripts to ensure no important data were ignored. After that, to make the themes and codes clearer, I organised them into tables using Microsoft Word so that I could print the data and work with them. Finally, I reviewed previous studies to relate the themes that emerged from my data with their findings. The same processes were also applied for analysing the participants' answers to the open-ended portion of the questionnaire.

I used the Arabic language to transcribe, interpret and analyse the qualitative data, which helped protect the data from being lost, or its meaning skewed, by translation. Since Arabic is my first language, it also helped me achieve a solid understanding and interpretation of the data. I then translated the findings into English to report and discuss the data.

To ensure that I fully understood the data, the transcripts of the interviews were sent to the principals so that they could read them and determine if there were any misinterpretations and if they wanted to add to or further clarify any points. I also contacted the teachers who participated in the focus group through WhatsApp to ask them to do the same—further clarifying their answers and ensuring that there were no misinterpretations. The children were also asked to clarify any important points they mentioned through the focus group conversation during the focus groups themselves.

3.9.3 Reporting the findings.

Since I used a mixed-methods approach, and the sample was varied and diverse, I obtained a large amount and wide range of data. I therefore decided to report the findings of each method in separate chapters to avoid obscuring any details. Each group of participants also viewed the phenomena from different standpoints, depending on their situation (i.e., the principals' views were different from the children's and teachers' views and vice versa). Dividing the findings into chapters thus gave a whole picture of the phenomena investigated by this research. In these chapters, I determined the most essential findings, and the significant evidence supporting them, and presented the information as either quote from the participants from the qualitative methods or frequency from the quantitative method.

Afterwards, I discussed the findings in a separate chapter, divided into three themes based on the research questions. In that discussion chapter, I attempted to understand the agreements and disagreements in the findings, combining them to interpret the findings based on previous literature, theory and Saudi Arabian cultural perspectives and social context.

3.10 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I discussed my research methodology. First, I presented my career path, my personal experiences and how these have impacted on my research. I asserted that my positionality has also affected my ontological and epistemological views of reality and knowledge, which led me to adopt constructionism and interpretivism as the paradigm of my study. I used a mixed-methods approach, including both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, which were explained in-depth throughout this chapter. The Interview, focus group, and questionnaire were used to collect data from primary school principals, teachers and children. To analyse the data, SPSS and NVivo software were used. The data will be reported in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEW

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained through the data analysis, which was gathered in the interviews with principals of primary schools. After the manual transcription of their recordings, I used NVivo software to analyse the interviews.

The findings of the interviews are divided into four themes to answer the research questions as follows. **Section 4.2** presents the collected data regarding the principals' awareness of children's rights. The implementation of the UNCRC at primary school from the principals' perspectives is explored in **Section 4.3**, followed by **Section 4.4** which investigates the principals' perspectives regarding barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education. Finally, a summary of the chapter is presented in **Section 4.5**.

4.2 Principals' Awareness of Children's Rights

In this section, I discussed the concept of children's rights with the principals from three points of view; the general perception of children's rights, children's rights in Islam, and the UNCRC. From the interviews, there was a basic general awareness of children's rights and better awareness regarding children's rights in Islamic culture. There was very limited knowledge of the UNCRC, however. These three points are discussed in detail as follows.

Firstly, the principals' general awareness of children's rights was investigated during the interview. One of the principals, Mrs. Sara, said in her answer:

Generally, children's rights are the consciousness in general. I think that right is the synonym of awareness Children's rights are about the awareness of the harassment that the child may suffer. Also, the awareness of the child's rights to freedom of views.

Mrs. Abeer agreed with Mrs. Sara that children's rights means that the child has freedom of speech and expression and has the right to be protected against any kind of harassment. She defined children's rights as follows:

Children's rights mean that the child has freedom of expression. If the child faces any troubles, he or she can contact people who can help him or her. Also, child's rights mean protecting the child, which re-

quires that if the child faces any kind of abuse, he or she can talk and complain to people who should help him or her, such as their parents.

These quotes illustrated that the principals thought 'freedom of expression' meant that children could talk about any problems they might face, which is part of child protection. They mentioned some of the child protection process, which includes improving children's awareness about abuse and giving them the freedom to talk about any issues they face.

For more clarification, when I asked principals about what children's rights are, they pointed out some of these rights during the interviews. For instance, principals mentioned the child's right to be educated, protected, and to have a name. In this regard, Mrs. Nora said:

The child has many rights, such as the right of education, to be protected from any kind of abuse, to be treated well, and to have a proper name.

Mrs. Nora pointed out that education is one of the child's rights. Mrs. Huda agreed with Mrs. Nora and she insisted on a good learning environment as an essential right for every child. She said:

One of the most basic rights of the child is that he or she has a suitable environment for learning. This is one of his or her basic rights.

Regarding the child's right to be treated well, Mrs. Sara mentioned that there must be some kind deterrent for people who treat children badly or physically punish them. She said:

Our children are poor. It is unacceptable to beat them, especially in front of others. So, there must be a punishment for intimidation to prevent beatings, because beatings in front of others affects them; it embarrasses them and breaks their hearts.

The previous quotes illustrate that principals have some general knowledge regarding children's rights, but it is only general information with no mention of specific aspects such as the Islamic aspect or the international conventions. It was clear that the principals had some basic information about children's rights, such as the right to education, to be protected, to be cared about, and have freedom of expression, but with no clear source of information. They may have gained this general information because of their natural instinct to protect the children, as evidenced in Mrs. Asma's opinion:

Keeping young girls safe and protecting them from injury caused by anyone inside the school or outside it is one of my major concerns as a human and a school principal.

In regard to the UNCRC, it is obvious that principals have limited knowledge regarding UNCRC, as the interviews with them revealed that they knew almost nothing about the UNCRC. It was only Mrs. Nora who knew about the UNCRC, as she mentioned:

There are many conventions about children's rights, such as the UNCRC.

Then, when I asked her if she had read it, she said, 'yes, of course'. She also added:

I know that Saudi Arabia has signed the UNCRC, and they work hard to implement it in Saudi Arabia.

Mrs. Abeer, on the other hand, mentioned that she had heard about it, but she had not read it. The other three principals did not have any idea about the UNCRC, however. They blamed the MoE in this regard. Mrs. Huda said:

We have not received anything from the MoE concerning the UNCRC before... This is the first time that I knew about the UNCRC.

Mrs. Sara agreed with Mrs. Huda's opinion as to why they did not know anything regarding the UNCRC, as she said:

I did not know that there is a convention for children's rights. I know about human rights but not children's rights.

The previous quotes show that some of the principals had not heard about the UNCRC before the interview, which confirms that principals in Saudi Arabia have little knowledge about the UNCRC. It was not only the UNCRC that they had not heard about, but also the Child Protection Law, which was established in 2015 to ensure the implementation of the UNCRC. In this regard, Mrs. Huda and Mrs. Sara said that they had not heard anything about the Child Protection Law in Saudi Arabia.

The same was true for children's rights organisations such as the National Committee for Childhood. Only one of the five principals, Mrs. Abeer, had heard about one of those organisations, the National Family Safety Program. She knew about it because her cousin was faced with very difficult family circumstances regarding her daughters. The others had not even heard about those organisations, however. They only know about the Saudi Human Rights Organisation, as shown in Mrs. Sara's quote:

I have not heard before about any organisation for children. What I know is the Human Rights Organisation.

Mrs. Asma justified their lack of such knowledge because of these organisations' failure to raise awareness in society, as she mentioned:

Unfortunately, organisations are there but we do not know about them because they did not introduce themselves to the society.

The above quote reveals that the reason the principals thought they lacked knowledge about children's organisations is the organisations themselves. This is because these organisations do not seek to inform people in the society about their role.

The interviews with principals continued to cover children's rights in Islam. As mentioned before, Saudi culture is based on Sharia law; the participants had a wide knowledge about Islamic teachings concerning children's rights in this regard. Mrs. Sara and Mrs. Huda agreed with Mrs. Abeer, who said the following:

Islam is a religion of mercy and kindness. It has ordained that we must love children, no beating, and play with them. Islam focuses on improving the child's personality and makes sure that the child grows up knowing his or her rights... Multiple parts of the Sunnah confirm that Prophet Mohamed—peace be upon him—insisted on teaching children the good values and morals that improve society. For example, when he taught a child about eating etiquette in Islamic culture and said: Oh child, eat with your right hand and eat from your side. Also, when he was praying and his grandson was playing on the Prophet Mohamed's—peace be upon him—back, he did not become angry, but he laid prostrate until his grandson came down from the Prophet Mohamed's—peace be upon him—back.

It was very clear that they had rich knowledge regarding children's rights in Islamic culture. They gave very authentic evidences from the Quran and Sunna, like Mrs. Abeer's mention of eating etiquette:

Umar bin Abu Salamah (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: I was a boy under the care of Prophet Mohamed—peace be upon him—and as my hand used to wander around in the dish, he—peace be upon him—said to me once, 'Mention Allah's Name (i.e., say Bismillah), eat with your right hand, and eat from what is in front of you. (Albukhari, n.d., p. 1205)

Also, regarding kindness towards children:

It was narrated from Abdullah bin Shaddad, this his father said:

Prophet Mohamed—peace be upon him—came out to us for one of the night-time prayers, and he was carrying Hasan or Husain. Prophet

Mohamed—peace be upon him—came forward and put him down, then he said the Takbir and started to pray. He prostrated during his prayer, and made the prostration lengthy. My father said: 'I raised my head and saw the child on the back of the Prophet Mohamed—peace be upon him—while he was prostrating so I went back to my prostration.' When Prophet Mohamed—peace be upon him—finished praying, the people said: 'O Messenger of Allah, you prostrated during the prayer for so long that we thought that something had happened or that you were receiving a revelation.' He said: 'No such thing happened. But my son was riding on my back and I did not like to disturb him until he had enough.' (Alalbani, 1998, p. 371)

Although the principals were highly influenced by Islamic culture, they did not show any signs of refusal to the UNCRC. Those who did not know about the UNCRC nonetheless thought it should be adopted within Saudi society if it did not contradict Islamic teachings. Mrs. Nora, the only principal who knew about the UNCRC, believed that children's rights in Islam are very similar to children's rights in the UNCRC, as she said the following in her interview:

Islam is concerned with children's rights and gives many rights to children and these rights are similarly to those brought by international conventions. The UNCRC has formed rights in ways that suit the present days and to be universal rights that can be applied in any part of the world.

In addition, the participants suggested that Islamic teachings and the UNCRC could be combined together to form legislation that would protect children's rights, which would be suitable for Saudi society. Mrs. Nora and Mrs. Sara's respective opinions on this are below:

We can combine them together, I mean children's rights in Islam and in the international conventions to bring a new legislation that works for Saudi society.

There should be a system for children's rights that works in light of the teachings of Islam and is in line with current thinking.

The above discussion thus confirmed that the principals had some general knowledge about children's rights, but their knowledge was very limited regarding the UNCRC. Principals have a wide knowledge about children's rights in Islamic culture, however. In the next section, I discuss the principal's perspectives about the implementation of the UNCRC.

4.3 Principals' Perspectives on the Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education

The discussion in Section 4.1 demonstrated that the principals had a lack of awareness of the UNCRC. This may thus result in a deficiency in the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education. My findings clearly showed that this implementation needs more attention to make the UNCRC more effective in the primary education. To make the findings more comprehensible, I have divided them into three sub-themes. Section 4.2.1 discuss the official efforts to apply the UNCRC in primary education. 4.2.2 then highlights the principals' efforts to protect children's rights in primary education in Saudi Arabia. The issue of violations of the UNCRC in schools is presented in Section 4.2.3.

4.3.1 Official efforts to apply children's rights in primary education.

In this section, I discuss the formal directives that the MoE has sent to schools regarding children's rights and other efforts that protect children, as mentioned by principals. Although these directives do not mention the UNCRC explicitly, they are aimed at assisting children to access some of their rights. These directives concern the Child Helping Hotline, prohibition of any kind of violence, and Child Protection Law. A student advisor has also been provided in each school to support, listen, and protect children. Efforts have also been made to provide good quality healthcare for children and regarding safeguarding at school. All these efforts will be discussed in this section as follow.

The most important directive was about the Child Helping Hotline¹ (116111) as it was mentioned by four of the principals. The MoE asked schools to improve their children's awareness of this hotline. In this regard, Mrs. Abeer said:

We received a formal directive from the MoE about the Child Helping Hotline, and they asked us to improve children's knowledge about it. We broadcasted it to children through a special program. We informed our children about the dialling number of this hotline, when to use it,

¹ The Child Helpline (CH), which is 116111, is a free phone number that was established in 2011 as a trial stage then the basic operational stage was in 2014. It aims to support children under the age of 18 and to listen to children's, parents', and carers' problems and help to solve their problems or redirect them to the authorities that can help them. For more information visit <https://www.nfsp.org.sa/ar/projects/SCHL/Pages/default.aspx>.

and how to use it. Also, we encourage them to contact this hotline without hesitation if they face any kind of abuse or any issues.

The Child Helping Hotline is a social service that protects children's welfare. It is a way to support children and protect them from abuse. It helps them and their families in resolving issues that they may face. Moreover, improving the children's awareness about this service results in increasing the number of its beneficiaries and making it effective. This service showed a clear implementation of some of the UNCRC recommendations that have been stated in different articles such as Articles 19, 34, and 36 regarding providing support and protecting the child.

The directive about prohibition of violence, including beating children at school, was stated by three of the principals in their interviews as important to protect children's rights. Mrs. Asma said:

Beating children, insulting them, or abusing them are prohibited in schools by a directive from the MoE. They prohibit any bad behaviour and contempt against children.

This was mentioned also by Mrs. Abeer and Mrs. Sara. The prohibition of violence against children is a part of the UNCRC.

Another directive regarding the Child Protection Law was also mentioned during the interviews. One of the five principals mentioned that her school had received a directive regarding the Child Protection Law containing a copy of the relevant law. Mrs. Nora said:

...there is the child protection law that has been distributed to schools.

The other four principals confirmed that they had not received anything regarding this law, however. This illustrates that some of the important directives regarding children and their rights were not dispatched to all schools.

These directives reveal the efforts made by the government with regard to implementing the UNCRC in schools, as these directives were concerned with child protection processes.

The official efforts to protect children and their rights are not limited to the directives; some other efforts and guidance were mentioned by principals, which may assist with implementing the UNCRC. For example, in order to communicate with the children and resolve their personal concerns that may arise at school or out of school, the MoE employs a student advisor in each school. All principals in this study appre-

ciated the student advisor in their interviews and her role in listening to and solving children's issues was evident in Mrs. Asma's quote:

Usually there is a student advisor at school and she deals with children's problems and tries to sort them out.

It is evident from the above discussion that the existence of the student advisor may result in improving children's right to freedom of expression. Every child has the right to talk to the student advisor regarding their needs, opinions, suggestions, complaints, and problems. Furthermore, this is intended to help protect children by giving them the chance to have a trusted person who listens to their fears and concerns confidentially. Mrs. Sara appreciated the student advisor as:

Usually the student advisor is a 'kind heart' for children.

The student advisor helps improve children's rights at school in terms of protecting children and supporting them. Her role in listening to the children's problems does not mean it counts as an implementation of the child's right to freedom of expression, however, as this right constitutes more than simply listening or solving children's problems. It is about giving value to children's opinions and views as well as helping them with their problems.

In terms of the child's right to good healthcare according to the UNCRC, the MoE has made significant efforts in this regard. One of the principals stated that children are immunised with all the required vaccinations through the schools' health service providers, who make routine visits to inspect the children and make sure the immunisation program is in place, as Mrs. Sara said:

All children must have their vaccinations up to date. The schools' health service providers come to the school to give vaccines to the children according to a specific schedule.

Furthermore, each school has a health advisor who can help the children when they have any health issues, as mentioned by Mrs. Sara:

There is a health advisor at school. This is a new position that has only been in place for the last two or three years.

The previous discussion reveals that efforts and plans have been made by the MoE to provide good healthcare for children as a part of the UNCRC implementation. Another key point of the UNCRC concerns providing a safe environment for children.

Mrs. Abeer confirmed that the school is a safe place for children. She menti-

oned the safeguarding of children, where the teachers take turns to ensure the safety of the children outside the classroom. She said:

Concerning safety, the school is a very safe place for children. The children are not allowed to stay alone at school. There must be an adult with them. For example, if no one comes to pick a child up at home time, the teacher on shift will contact her family to arrange an alternative and make sure the child goes home safely. There is a duty shift schedule for workers, and every day two or more of them should come early before anyone else and stay till they have ensured there are no children left at school.

As evident from Mrs. Abeer's quote, there is clear guidance in place to create a safe environment in the school and the safety of the child comes first. Another example showing the importance of children's safety is that each school has to appoint a teacher to supervise children who use the school bus, as Mrs. Nora mentioned:

There is a teacher responsible for children who use the school bus to ensure that all children sit in their seats safely.

The above discussion demonstrated that there are official efforts and guidance to make the children enjoy their rights at school as recommended by UNCRC. While there are some official efforts to implement the UNCRC in schools, the personal efforts of the principals to protect children's rights at their schools must be acknowledged also. In the next subtheme, I discuss the efforts made by the primary school principals to help children practice their rights.

4.3.2 Principals' efforts to protect children's rights in primary education in Saudi Arabia.

Principals must make best efforts to implement and follow the MoE's guidelines and recommendations. One of the most important recommendations is to make schools safe environments for the children and create an atmosphere that helps them learn, develop their personality, practice freedom of choice and speech, etc. In this regard, one of the principals Mrs. Abeer said:

At our school, we seek to improve children's characters and give them the space to talk about their points of view and express their opinions. In the case of freedom of choice, we always ask them for their suggestions about the activities that they like to do. We usually seek to do some creative activities that they enjoy.

In her opinion, children did practice the right of freedom of expression by choosing the activities that they like and presenting their own views freely. The principals thought that freedom of expression meant listening to the children's complaints and trying their best to resolve them, as mentioned by Mrs. Abeer when I asked her opinion about the views that the children could express with freedom:

Children can complain about anything that they may experience in or out of school.

It was obvious that the principals had some kind of misconception about freedom of expression, as they considered that listening to children's complaints and solving their issues fulfilled the child's right to freedom of expression.

Regarding the means that principals used to deal with children's issues and concerns, they mentioned that they might contact the family, a human rights agency, or the Child Helping Hotline, as illustrated in Mrs. Nora's quote:

There are many cases where we contact the family first before any other action. In some other cases we contact a human rights organisation or the Child Helping Hotline.

Two of the principals mentioned that if they could not solve the issue by themselves, they sought help from the Education Office of Supervision and Guidance. Mrs. Asma said:

If the problem is not resolved by communicating with the parents, we contact the Education Office of Supervision and Guidance and they tell us what steps we need to follow and whom we must contact.

Furthermore, principals told some stories about children who had faced violations of their rights outside of school and how the school had assisted them. For instance, Mrs. Abeer said:

Two years ago, there were two children, who were sisters, were going somewhere with the family's driver alone and the driver harassed one of them. She told me about it. I called the mother, alerted her, and told her that it is the right of your daughter to be protected from strangers and the driver is considered a stranger. I told her that there must be someone with the driver on their way to or from school.

Another story was also reported by Mrs. Huda. She said:

There was a case that happened before in my school and the parents were very helpful. A child was abused by the bus driver (of a private bus, not the school bus) and we contacted the parents. They cooperated with us in reporting the case to the police.

It was clear from these stories that principals took children's complaints very seriously and took immediate action to deal with those highly concerning complaints, as some of them were reported to the police under child protection.

Furthermore, principals did not just try and solve their pupils' issues; they also tried to implement clear policies and guidance to prevent children from being abused. For example, they organised specific programs to improve children's awareness about abuse, banned children travelling alone with a private driver, took action when children came late to school, and posted videos to improve children's awareness about abuse on the school's account on YouTube. The following excerpts from their interviews demonstrated principals' efforts to protect children from abuse. Mrs. Huda said:

My school's strategy is that if any child comes late, we communicate with the parents to inform them about their daughter's lateness. This is our responsibility to protect the children.

Mrs. Abeer said:

We organise an annual program to educate children and raise their awareness about child abuse, how to reduce it and how to protect themselves.

She also added:

I have prevented any child from travelling to school with a driver if there is no accompanying adult from their family. This has been applied under the supervision of the school security guard, who makes sure that no children travel alone with a driver if there is no adult family member there.

Mrs. Abeer explained her action by saying:

I do not wait for the solution from the parents. I intervene according to my authority in the protection of my pupils who are in fact like my daughters. I will not wait for someone to tell me what to do, I must act by myself.

Mrs. Nora also said:

We have posted some videos on our school's account on YouTube to increase children's awareness regarding abuse.

Moreover, the principals had made some other efforts to reduce violence from teachers towards the children. They tried to enrich the teachers' knowledge of how to treat children in class by organising frequent meetings, providing internal memos, and doing some training sessions. Most of the principals confirmed that they held meet-

ings with teachers and kept reminding them to treat children well, as evident from what Mrs. Nora said:

At the beginning of every year I organise a meeting with teachers to remind them that they must treat children kindly and professionally. So, if they notice any strange behaviour in any child, they must report it. Also, I usually tell teachers be careful with the language that they use in class.

Mrs. Asma added that she uses memos as a way to improve the teachers' knowledge about how to treat the students, as she said:

As school principal, I issued internal memos for the teachers about how to prevent beating or hurting children in any way. In addition, I meet with teachers in several meetings and remind them about these things. Also, I organised a training session to improve how teachers deal with the children.

From the previous discussion, it was obvious that the principals make significant efforts to protect their children and improve the quality of the relationships between children and their teachers.

The principals' efforts were not only focused on the teachers and children, but they also recognised the importance of the family as a part of the education system that fundamentally affects children. Two principals mentioned their efforts with families, as shown:

Mrs. Abeer said:

...in our meetings with the mothers, we make them aware that if the child suffers from harm, even she does not tell us about it, we will report it to the Child Helping Hotline.

It is apparent from the previous quote that principals play a significant role in improving parents' awareness regarding children's safety. This was carried out through formal and informal meetings with the parents.

In summary, from the interviews with principals I found that there is an official interest in applying children's rights in schools. The official efforts appear in many forms, such as memos, establishing guidance to implement children's rights and creating specific jobs related to child protection in schools. These efforts were focused on the rights concerning protecting children and improving their awareness. Moreover, some principals worked hard to help children realise their rights, but this was only limited to protection from abuse. This indicates that principals have some positive ide-

as regarding children's rights. The efforts need to be more effective and cover all other children's rights, however, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.3.3 Violations of the UNCRC in schools.

In this section I discuss some of the issues that were raised by the principals regarding the implementation of children's rights in schools. The previous sections showed that many efforts and good intentions have been directed towards applying children's rights in schools. These efforts have mostly been focused on the child's right to protection and a safe environment. These rights were achieved through the establishment of some rules and guidance, as mentioned in Section 4.3.2. The implementation of these rules may be incorrectly applied on the ground, however, as Mrs. Sara said:

The positions and programs exist, but there is confusion in the implementation.

This comment confirms that there are flaws in the application of the MoE's rules and guidance.

To begin with, there are no directives about the UNCRC and copies of the UNCRC are not distributed to schools, which would be important in spreading knowledge and for the application of its articles. Mrs. Abeer said:

The MoE has not sent any copy of the UNCRC to schools .

Dispatching a copy of the convention is a part of the implementation of Article 42 of the UNCRC, which states that the government should ensure that the convention is well known by children and adults. Having a copy of the UNCRC available for teachers and children would therefore increase knowledge about it.

Furthermore, four out of five principals confirmed that they did not receive any other important directives, such as those about the child protection law as mentioned by Mrs. Asma:

I have not received anything about the child protection law. Maybe it will arrive shortly or some schools have received it and some not yet.

Mrs. Nora confirmed, however, that she had received a circular regarding this law and a copy of this law was attached, which confirmed Mrs. Asma's opinion that some schools had received it and some of them not. The previous quotes showed that there

is a clear issue in the dispatching of laws and directives to schools, as some of the schools do not receive the necessary information.

Another issue is that, many principals confirmed that the directive concerning the prohibition of child abuse is not applied. They indicated that children suffer from cruel treatment by some teachers. They mentioned that some teachers hit children, shout at them, or use inappropriate words. Mrs. Sara said:

In my school the children suffer from teachers' cruelty. There are many complaints that the teachers shout or hit the children on the head with books, and I have called the teachers in and warned them.

Similarly, Mrs. Asma said:

There were some teachers who abused and were violent to children in my school. They were reported to the Education Office of Supervision and Guidance, and some investigations were carried out.

These statements confirm that although violence towards children at school is prohibited and some directives clearly prohibit violence, but still some teachers are violent towards the children.

Furthermore, principals mentioned that there were no training sessions for the educators about the rules and guidance stated in the directives. For example, Mrs. Huda said:

There are no courses to introduce systems, rules, or some of the directives to the teaching staff. As a principal, I do not understand some simple things about some issues in the MoE directives. They are supposed to train the principals and other educators before the implementation of any new system such as the UNCRC.

Also Mrs. Sara said that in many cases the training sessions came very late. As she mentioned:

There is a system regarding improving children's awareness of being citizens, which was introduced a year ago, but we only understood it a month ago when they gave us some training sessions, which were very late, and unfortunately that delays the education process.

The same was true of the implementation of the UNCRC; as there are no training sessions the implementation will not be done as well as it could be.

Moreover, there is no follow-up to ensure the implementation of programs in the schools or evaluate them, as mentioned by Mrs. Huda:

Programs and directives are issued and dispatched without planning or preparation, and the implementation is not followed up to see whether it is successful or not.

Follow-up is very important to ensure that the benefits of the programme and directives have been achieved and to obtain feedback that will help to improve it.

Another point regarding violations of the UNCRC that was explored is the absence of qualified employees. For example, the principals mentioned that the student and health advisors are in post, but they are not qualified for such responsibilities. These advisors are actually teachers who have changed their positions from teaching to be a student or health advisor, regardless of their specialty. Mrs. Sara said:

The student advisor is a teacher who may specialise in Arabic language, Mathematics, or any specialty. She submits her papers to the MoE, or to the Education Office of Supervision and Guidance, if she wants to be a student advisor, usually because she does not want to teach pupils anymore. She is not a psychologist or a person qualified to deal with children's problems. She also has not received any trainings. The student advisor is supposed to be a psychologist or a social care specialist.

She continued to talk about the health advisors:

The health advisor is originally a teacher, regardless of her specialty, nominated for the post to escape from teaching. She is not a first aider or a nurse. She just gives children pain relief or contacts their family if they are ill.

It is obvious from Mrs. Sara's quotes that there is no clear awareness regarding the importance of such positions, which results in appointing unqualified people.

Another dereliction of official efforts is that there is no clear strategy to deal with children's problems. The gathered data in the interviews with principals proved that the first step that principals take to deal with children's problems is contacting their parents. Some parents are cooperative and help to resolve the problem, for example with the story that Mrs. Huda told in Section 4.3.2 about the child who was abused by the private bus driver.

On the contrary, some parents may not be supportive, so contacting them may not be helpful. For example, Mrs. Asma said:

There was a child in the year one who was beaten and after the investigation, she said that her father hit her. We set a meeting with the mother but she denied it completely and then unfortunately moved their daughter to another school. We reported the case to the Office of Supervision and Guidance.

From the above excerpt it is obvious that contacting the parents was not the best option for this case. This was due to the lack of clear guidance to be followed in such cases.

Some principals mentioned that they contacted human rights organisations when they cannot solve the child's issue with the parents. Mrs. Nora said:

There was a child who stopped attending school. We called her parents first, but we found that the father had some problems with immigration services, and he was illegally staying in the country, so he prevented his daughter from attending school. He told us that he did not want his daughter to study anymore. We reported the case to the human rights organisation.

Also, Mrs. Asma mentioned that she contacts the Child Helping Hotline whenever she needs more help to solve the problem. She said:

A child in my school had some marks on her body which were a sign that someone hit her hard. We contacted the Child Helping Hotline to report it, and there was a group that came from the MoE to investigate the case and help the child.

The previous reported cases by principals showed that the principals take random actions when dealing with children's problems. This was due to the absence of clear guidance from the Office of Supervision and Guidance that principals should follow in resolving their pupils' issues. In this regard, Mrs. Huda said:

We have not been directed on how to communicate with children's rights channels and when to contact them. All these efforts are personal.

It appears that there is also a lack of cooperation between children's rights organisations and schools. It is necessary for the organisations to introduce themselves and their responsibilities, and to know about the current situation regarding children's rights at schools and help to improve it. Furthermore, it is important to collect the data that they need to write periodic reports on the children's rights situation in the country, which they should send to the Children's Rights Committee. This was evident from the interviewees, as one of the principals confirmed in her interview that there is no cooperation between those organisations and schools. Mrs. Asma said:

Never, there is no cooperation between us and any external organisations.

In addition, Mrs. Abeer said:

No one has visited us to ensure the implementation of the UNCRC at school, and no one followed us on what we do to implement the children's rights.

This confirmed the absence of follow-up, in addition to the absence of cooperation between children's rights organisations and schools, which negatively affects the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education.

In summary, the key violations of the UNCRC in schools from the principals' perspective include the dereliction of official authority—which appears in the insufficient implementation of the circulars—lack of qualified employees, absence of guidance on dealing with children's problems, and absence of cooperation between rights organisations and schools. In the following section, I discuss the principals' perspectives about the factors that affect the implementation of children's rights in primary education in Saudi Arabia.

4.4 Barriers to the Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education

The previous sections confirmed that there is a deficiency in the implementation of the UNCRC in primary schools in Saudi Arabia according to the principals. Furthermore, there are inconsistencies between the official efforts to apply the UNCRC and the reality of children's rights in primary schools in Saudi Arabia. In this section, I discuss in depth the main barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia from principals' perspectives.

The interviews with principals revealed that there are some barriers preventing the UNCRC from being applied effectively in the primary education in Saudi Arabia. These barriers are divided into five sections as follows; Section 4.4.1 discusses society as a barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC, Section 4.4.2 discusses the official authorities' efforts, Section 4.4.3 discusses the lack of qualified employees, which include discussion about lack of teacher awareness. The lack of children's awareness is discussed in Section 4.4.4 and Section 4.4.5 discusses schools' buildings and equipment.

4.4.1 Society.

The currently available evidence shows a lack of societal awareness regarding the UNCRC. This can be shown clearly by Saudi Arabian society's beliefs regarding children and childhood, which are part of their customs and traditions. These customs emphasise treating children as the property of the family. This was mentioned by Mrs. Sara:

Our problem is that we consider the child as the property of his or her parents.

This belief in society gives parents full authority over how they raise their children, regardless of any laws or guidance that exist in the country. Some people do not consider physical punishment for children as an abuse. They look on it as an acceptable way of bringing up their children. In this regard, Mrs. Sara told a story about someone who was beating his child in front of others and when people intervened he stopped them and said:

No one has the right to intervene in our ways of raising our children. These are our ways of raising our children.

This is a sample of the culture in Saudi society. It is a culture of ownership of children, which is clear from the above anecdote. This is clear evidence of the lack of social awareness regarding the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia.

According to this culture, the principals tend to deal with children in very conservative ways to keep good relationships with children's parents, as Mrs. Sara added:

Sometimes we do not want to lose our relationship with children's parents by intervening in the ways they raise their children. So, we do not report their abuses toward their children.

Moreover, three of the interviewed principals confirmed that some families refuse any intervention into their children's problems by the school and that families show their disapproval in many ways, such as by moving their child to another school, especially if the parent is the abuser. In this regard, Mrs. Asma mentioned:

Dealing with families is difficult, especially if they are the abusers of the child. For example, when we contacted the father of a child who has had signs of being hurt by someone out of school, we were surprised that they moved their daughter from our school...Families refuse our intervention in raising their children and solving their problems. They consider it a kind of interference in their privacy.

This confirms the social principle that the child belongs to his or her parents, raising children is a private matter and strangers should stay away from their child's life, regardless of the difficulties that the child might face at home. Mrs. Nora agreed with that and said:

Some families refuse the intervention of the school to resolve the troubles that the child faces. Other families do not report child abuse to the school or even to the official authorities.

The previous quote shows that families prefer not to report child abuse to the official authorities, even if they know the abuser, which shows evidence of a lack of awareness among families and society regarding childhood and the rights of children. This is because parents fear for their children's reputation in society. In this regard, Mrs. Nora said:

Society is afraid of gossip if others know that their child has faced abuse, especially sexual abuse. So, people prefer to keep it private, which means criminals are free to commit more abuse.

These perceptions have a negative impact on the children who are victims of abuse. They will feel that they are guilty and that society will not accept them if anyone knows that they have been abused, so the abuse must be kept a secret. Girls have more pressure because from society's viewpoint, past abuse will affect their future, regardless of the fact that it is not their fault. Saudi society has a culture of fearing of scandals, as Mrs. Sara said:

Sometimes we keep sexual abuse cases a secret because in the society's culture it is a scandal. The girl who faced sexual abuse while she was young, no man will want to marry her in future.

Mrs. Sara also agreed with Mrs. Nora that not reporting abuse cases will increase their number. These customs and traditions about scandal and child reputation may increase sexual abuse in society.

According to Mrs. Asma, the absence of people's awareness regarding UNCRC is the most difficult issue facing the implementation of children's rights in Saudi Arabia. She said:

The lack of awareness and understanding among parents about their children's rights is one of the most important hindrances facing the implementation of the UNCRC.

Mrs. Sara agreed with Mrs. Asma and added that the lack of awareness is at all levels in the society, even parents.

Since parents are not aware enough about children's rights, they will not help and support their children to practice or enjoy their rights. What Mrs. Abeer said provides evidence of this:

I think that we do not educate our children to be able to express their opinion or help them to be strong in stating their views. Most of our children are suppressed. An example is when we buy things for our children or even go to a restaurant, all of these things are chosen by the parents. We, as parents, choose everything for our children without asking their opinion.

The previous quote shows that parents do not give their children the opportunity to practice their right to make decisions about matters that affect them or freedom of expression. This means in the light of the UNCRC, children in Saudi Arabia are still viewed as the property of their parents; they have no freedom of choice. The absence of parents' awareness regarding their child's rights hinders the implementation of those rights.

Furthermore, Saudi culture may reject Western conventions even though people do not have enough information about them. Mrs. Asma said:

Unfortunately, some people are closed-minded in their beliefs, so they refuse anything from the Western world. They reject any new idea without searching and knowing about it because it is strange for them.

Mrs. Asma's observation may be correct because children's rights as a concept are new and come from an international orientation via the UNCRC.

Mrs. Nora mentioned that although we are living in an era of rapid changes, closed-minded people are still there. She said:

These days, society seeks to change, and there are dramatic changes for the better. But there are still groups of people who do not like these changes, and they are still trying to control society.

Even though changes are happening rapidly within society, some people are trying to stop these changes and reject them, although they do not understand the changes or seek more information. Mrs. Asma said that:

...it will not take us out of our religion if we try to investigate ideas before making decisions.

This quote confirmed that the refusal is not based on Islamic teachings, it is cultural norms, which do not accept any change coming from outside the culture.

Certainly, from the principals' perspectives, society and its customs, traditions, and awareness are the most important factors that hinder the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia.

4.4.2 The official authorities.

The second barrier that hinders the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education is that the efforts of officials are not sufficient in this regard. Principals confirmed that there is no support for schools from the official authorities regarding the implementation of the UNCRC. One of the main shortages is financial support, as mentioned by Mrs. Asma and Mrs. Huda in their following quotes:

There is no assistance or cooperation from the official bodies, such as the MoE and rights organisations, for us as primary schools. We need more financial support.

Mrs. Huda said that:

...the budget is small, and you could not manage to spend it even on cleaning or other things.

The previous quotes illustrated that schools suffer from budget shortages, which affect the implementation of the UNCRC.

Furthermore, the shortage of support could be appearing as a lack of clear guidance to schools on how to deal with children's issues, how to report these issues to the official authorities, and seek help in resolving them as mentioned by Mrs. Huda and Mrs. Asma. Mrs. Huda said:

...frankly it is a difficult situation when you see a child severely suffer from abuse, but if we speak to the mother or father the problem becomes worse, which makes us confused about how to act in this situation. There are no clear directions about dealing with these cases and who we could contact if we wanted to, except for the parents.

From the quote above, it is obvious that there is no clear guidance from the official authorities such as the NCC on who is responsible for protecting the children if their rights have been affected within this society. Additionally, the principals wanted a clear guidance regarding how to make the UNCRC workable, as Mrs. Abeer said:

Even if we want to apply the UNCRC, we do not know how. We need guidance about how to apply it.

This confirms the absence of a plan to apply the UNCRC, which requires clear guidance on how to implement it in schools. Mrs. Huda added that there is an absence of planning and follow-up by the official authorities in any programme that is implemented in schools, as she said:

There is an absence of planning and follow-up. For example, an activity programme is sent to us usually without any planning or preparation, and the implementation is not followed up to see if it was successful or not.

It is clear, therefore, that there is no support from the official authorities such as the MoE, and rights organisations regarding the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education. This support includes financial support and a clear plan for the implementation of the UNCRC in schools, which would include providing schools with guidance regarding children's rights and dealing with children's issues, as well as following up the progress of the implementation of the UNCRC and the directives and programmes related to children's rights.

A part of the absence of planning is the shortage of qualified employees in schools, which is one of the factors that hinders the implementation of the UNCRC, as I discuss in the next section.

4.4.3 Lack of qualified employees.

This section discusses the lack of qualified employees in schools as one of the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education, as appeared in Mrs. Asma's account:

There is a shortage of qualified employees. For example, even though the implementation of the children's rights is necessary, there is a lack of qualified employees, so its implementation will be messy.

In a similar manner, Mrs. Sara added:

The educators and teachers are not qualified to apply UNCRC because they do not have awareness about them.

This awareness is the essential requirement for the qualification and according to the previous quotes, the awareness is absent, which hinders the implementation of the UNCRC. In this regard Mrs. Nora said:

The teachers' awareness about children's rights is below the required level.

Furthermore, the teachers' lack of awareness about children's rights affects how they treat their students. Mrs. Sara said:

Sometimes they harm children by screaming at them or hitting them. This happens because they do not know that it is not their right to do these things with children at all. They are not aware about the rights of the child.

It is obvious from the previous quote that the teachers' violations of the UNCRC in schools may be a result of their lack of awareness about it. Moreover, teachers do not understand that these actions are considered child abuse because these behaviours are part of their culture. They grew up with these ways of dealing with children and believe that these are appropriate. Mrs. Asma said:

Some teachers beat their students mildly, which they think is not really violence. It is the same violence that the teachers faced while they were students. It is what the previous generation faced and what we considered at some point to be normal, such as the teacher hitting you with chalk or hitting your head with a book. We have grown up with these things, and we have been exposed to it as being normal.

These behaviours are therefore old cultural norms that teachers grew up with and apply them with their pupils without much thought.

Teachers also refuse the implementation of any new programme, curriculum, or system at school, as Mrs. Asma stated:

Teachers do not accept the introduction or application of anything new because they consider it as increasing their burdens. So, if we force them to attend a training class about the rights of the child, they will consider it as pressure, and they will be resentful and cause problems.

This may be because of the teachers' heavy workload, which makes it hard to produce any improvements in school because they do not have time to learn how to deal with new things. Mrs. Huda explained:

The schools' buildings are very big, the number of children is large, and the number of teachers is low. So, teachers cannot cover the requirements.

Due to workload and the high number of students at school, teachers thus do not have the capacity to improve themselves in order to implement the UNCRC.

Mrs. Abeer stated that principals also have a heavy workload at school. Usually their work extends to cover their entire day, not just their hours at school. This may also lead to child abuse, as the teacher and principals deal with a high number of students with a lot of work required on top of teaching. If the educators do not have the time or awareness to make the UNCRC practicable, the pupils will be unable to acquire the knowledge about their rights, as discussed in the next section.

4.4.4 Lack of children's awareness about the UNCRC.

The previous discussion confirmed that society and educators do not help to educate children regarding their rights, as they have a lack of awareness about these rights. This is what the principals confirmed, as they mentioned that students do not have the awareness regarding their rights and because of this, they do not report any violations of their rights that they might face. Mrs. Sara said:

The children, when they face any kind of violation, keep silent because they do not know about their rights.

It is not just a lack of knowledge about their rights; the children also do not know the procedure for reporting violations of their rights. Mrs. Asma said:

Some children are beat violently by one of their parents, teachers, uncles, or any other person that they are afraid of, but they do not talk or complain about it because they do not know their rights, which parties can protect them, and how they can protect children. They do not know how to claim their rights.

This represents a lack of education for children about their rights and the issues they might face regarding their rights. Children will therefore accept violence and keep quiet if they do not know how to claim their rights and ask to be protected. If children do not know about their rights they cannot enjoy them.

4.4.5 School buildings and equipment.

Another barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education from the principals' perspectives is the schools themselves. The implementation of the UNCRC in schools requires special equipment and funding to meet children's needs and provide them with their requirements. Unfortunately, the available evidence seems to suggest that these requirements are absent in public primary education in Saudi Arabia. Mrs. Huda supported this view, stating:

I am distressed by children's situation in education. Most of our private schools have a good environment but a lack of qualified teachers, while the public schools lack the appropriate environment but have a large number of qualified teachers who have amazing capacity and creativity. We do not ask the teachers to provide the appropriate environment for education by themselves, although some of them can do. The availability of a projector or Smart Board does not mean that the environment is appropriate. There are many other things that are supposed to be available in educational buildings and schools to help in the learning process. This is a simple comment from my heart.

This comment made me ask whether she meant that schools are not suitable for applying the UNCRC. She responded:

Not at all. I do not think that schools in their current state are a suitable place to implement children's rights.

Mrs. Sara agreed with Mrs. Huda about the suitability of schools for applying children's rights in general and the UNCRC. She said:

Schools are ineligible to apply children's rights, either on the premises or in terms of financial support.

Previous quotes illustrated that the schools are not prepared to meet the UNCRC criteria in terms of their buildings and equipment.

On the contrary, Mrs. Nora said:

The school is the most suitable place to apply children's rights.

Two of the participants did not mention this point, however. It appears, therefore, that schools are not suitable for applying the UNCRC because they lack funding and equipment.

The previous discussion shows that from the principals' perspective, many factors hinder the implementation of UNCRC. In summary, the most important factors that the principals mentioned as being barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in schools are society, the lack of support from the official authorities, the shortage of qualified workers, lack of teachers' and children's awareness about children's rights, and the school buildings and equipment. The next section summarises the findings of this chapter.

4.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reveals the analysis and the findings of the interviews with principals. The findings of the interviews with principals show that although principals have some awareness about children's rights in general and more awareness about children's rights in Islam, they have a lack of awareness about the UNCRC. The findings illustrate that there have been some official efforts to implement the UNCRC in primary education and these efforts appear in many forms, such as by producing directives and establishing guidance to implement children's rights and create specific jobs related to child protection in schools. Principals also work hard to protect children and their rights at their schools through their individual efforts, which cannot be overlooked.

Principals confirmed that there are breaches of the UNCRC in schools. For example, in terms of lack of effort to improve awareness about the UNCRC, some schools did not receive some important directives regarding child protection, violence against children in school, lack of qualified employees, and the absence of monitoring the status of children's rights in schools by the official authorities.

From the principals' perspectives, breaches of the UNCRC at school are a result of many factors that hinder the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia. These factors include lack of awareness about the UNCRC, the society and its culture, the lack of support from official authorities, as well as lack of planning and follow-up, lack of qualified employees, and the school buildings and equipment. The next chapter discusses the analysis and findings of the questionnaire.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results that were obtained via the analysis of the questionnaire, which was dispatched to teachers in primary schools. Due to the fact that the use of a questionnaire does not require a face-to-face meeting, which would have been culturally unacceptable, this method enabled me to include male teachers in my sample. The questionnaire had responses from 635 teachers, 421 females and 214 males.

This chapter is divided into three sections: **Section 5.2** discusses the teachers' awareness of children's rights, **Section 5.3** discusses the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia, and **Section 5.4** discusses the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia.

5.2 Teachers' Awareness of Children's Rights

This section analyses the respondents' answers about teachers' awareness of children's rights and the UNCRC. This will be divided into two sections. Section 5.2.1 discusses the teachers' previous experience of children's rights and Section 5.2.2 discusses the teachers' awareness of the UNCRC articles.

5.2.1 Teachers' previous experience of children's rights.

This section reports the teachers' answers to the question: 'Have you learned or heard about children's rights before?' Table 5.1 presents the participants' answers to this question, which is followed by a comparison of participants' answers.

Table 5.1

Have teachers learned or heard about children's rights before?

NO.	Items		Yes	Have no Idea	No
1	I have attended some training classes about the UNCRC before.	F	38	47	550
		%	6	7.4	86.6
2	I have read the UNCRC before.	F	128	56	451
		%	20.2	8.8	71
3	I have attended some training classes about children's rights in Islam while working as a teacher.	F	164	27	444
		%	25.8	4.3	69.9
4	I studied children's rights in the international conventions at university.	F	112	93	430
		%	17.6	14.6	67.7
5	I studied children's rights in Islam at university.	F	392	48	195
		%	61.7	7.6	30.7
6	I have heard about the UNCRC before.	F	238	38	359
		%	37.5	6	56.5

As shown in the results of the survey in Table 1, the highest values were recorded for the answer 'No' in the questionnaire items except the item, 'I studied about children's rights in Islam at university' which was answered 'yes' by most of the teachers.

The peak negative answer was recorded for the item about attending training courses about the UNCRC. There were 86.6% of the sample members who answered 'No' on this item. This proves that most of the teachers had not attended courses about the UNCRC before. Furthermore, 69.9% of the teachers in the study sample answered 'No' to the item relating to attending training courses about children's rights in Islam during their working years. This confirms that the most teachers who participated in this study had not attended any training courses about children's rights in any aspect, neither in Islam nor in the UNCRC. This relates to the principals' perspectives that were previously discussed regarding the absence of providing training courses about the UNCRC for teachers to improve their awareness about it.

Furthermore, there were two items about the teachers' study experiences regarding children's rights. The first item was about studying the international conventions of children's rights at university. Of the teachers, 67.7% answered 'No' on this point. In contrast, 61.7% of the teachers in the sample confirmed that they studied children's rights in Islam when they were students at a university. This agrees with what Mrs. Huda (one of the principals) confirmed when she stated that she studied the Islamic aspect of children's rights while she was at university. Based on this, we can conclude that children's rights is mentioned in the curricula of some universities, but only in the Islamic context.

Regarding the item 'I have read the UNCRC before', 71% of the teachers answered 'No', which proves that they had not read the UNCRC before. In addition, 56.5% of the sample had not heard about the UNCRC before in any way.

Finally, the above discussion revealed that the teachers have not heard about the UNCRC or read anything related to the UNCRC before, they have not attended any courses regarding children's rights in any aspect, and they had not studied the UNCRC during their academic studies at university. This means that there is a lack of teachers' awareness about the UNCRC, which was also stated by principals—three principals out of five emphasised that teachers are not qualified to implement the UNCRC because they do not have awareness of it. On the other hand, teachers confirmed that they have some awareness of children's rights in regard to Islam because they had studied it at their university. This was also mentioned by one of the principals.

To explore the teachers' knowledge of and agreement with the UNCRC articles, the next part will discuss the second dimension of the questionnaire, which is about the teachers' awareness of the UNCRC's articles.

5.2.2 The teachers' awareness of the UNCRC's articles.

Teachers' answers to the second dimension of the first question in the questionnaire are discussed in this section. This dimension examines teachers' agreement with the UNCRC's articles. I have merged the articles that are about the same rights or related rights together at the same point to make this dimension as short as possible. Table 5.2 offers the respondents' answers to this dimension, and this is followed by the details of comparison of their answers.

Table 5.2

Teachers' awareness about the UNCRC's articles.

NO.	Items		Agree	Have no Idea	Do not agree
1	A disabled child has the right to the additional care and support that he or she needs.	F	628	2	5
		%	98.9	0.3	0.8
2	The government should encourage mass media to provide understandable and useful information for children.	F	627	3	5
		%	98.7	0.5	0.8
3	Children have the right to good-quality health care.	F	627	7	1
		%	98.7	1.1	0.2
4	All children have the right to primary education, which should be free.	F	627	6	2
		%	98.7	0.9	0.3

5	Children's education should encourage children to respect others' rights and cultures.	F	627	3	5
		%	98.7	5	8
6	Both parents share the responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child.	F	626	5	4
		%	98.6	0.8	0.6
7	Children's education should develop their personality, talents, and abilities to the fullest.	F	626	3	6
		%	98.6	0.5	0.9
8	A child whose parents do not live together has the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.	F	625	4	6
		%	98.4	0.66	0.9
9	Children should be protected by the government from working in any jobs that might harm their health, growth, or education.	F	624	5	6
		%	98.3	0.8	0.9
10	Children should be protected by the government from any kind of neglect, exploitation and abuse.	F	623	8	4
		%	98.1	1.3	0.6
11	Every child has the right, as possible, to know and be cared for by their parents.	F	623	7	5
		%	98.1	1.1	0.8
12	There should be a standard of living that is good enough to meet children's physical and mental needs, and families who cannot afford to provide this must be supported by the government.	F	623	9	3
		%	98.1	1.4	0.5
13	The law should protect children from attacks against their privacy which contains their way of life, name, families, and homes.	F	622	5	8
		%	98	0.8	1.3

14	Children who have been neglected, abused, or exploited should receive help to recover and reintegrate into society.	F	622	6	7
		%	98	0.9	1.1
15	The government should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.	F	619	9	7
		%	97.5	1.4	1.1
16	Having a legally registered name and nationality are of the child's rights.	F	616	12	7
		%	97	1.9	1.1
17	The government has the responsibility to use available measures to make sure that the children's rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled.	F	615	12	8
		%	96.9	1.9	1.3
18	Children have the right to relax, play, and join in a wide range of activities.	F	615	4	16
		%	96.9	0.6	2.5
19	The government should do its best to protect and help children who are refugees, who are forced to leave their home, or who are affected by war.	F	600	24	11
		%	94.5	3.8	1.7
20	Children have the right to get and share information in any way they choose (e.g., talking or writing) if the information is not damaging to them or others.	F	600	15	20
		%	94.5	2.4	3.1
21	Children who are accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment in a justice system that respects their rights.	F	595	23	17
		%	93.7	3.6	2.7
22	The best interest of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them.	F	587	15	33
		%	92.4	2.4	5.2

23	Children who cannot be looked after by their own families (temporary or permanently) must be looked after properly by adoption or any other ways that must respect the child's ethnic group, religion, culture, and language.	F	573	32	30
		%	90.24	5.04	4.7 2
24	The government should respect the rights and responsibilities of the families to direct and guide their child.	F	563	22	50
		%	88.7	3.5	7.9
25	The government should protect children from the use of harmful drugs and from being used in the drug trade.	F	538	23	74
		%	84.7	3.6	11. 7
26	Children have the right to meet and join groups and organizations as long as they respect the rights, freedoms, and reputations of others.	F	533	33	69
		%	83.9	5.2	10. 9
27	No one should be allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way, even if they are the parents, and this must be by the law.	F	522	24	89
		%	82.2	3.8	14
28	The government should make the UNCRC's articles are known to adults and children, and adults should also help children learn about their rights.	F	519	84	32
		%	81.7	13.2	5
29	When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen, and their opinion should be considered.	F	455	44	136
		%	71.7	6.9	21. 4
30	Children's rights are for all children with no discrimination.	F	447	35	153
		%	70.4	5.5	24. 1

31	The freedom of thought, religion, and conscience is part of children's rights.	F	126	91	418
		%	19.8	14.3	65.8
32	A child is a person below the age of 18.	F	403	6	226
		%	63.5	0.9	35.6
33	Minority children related to different religions, races, or languages have the right to learn about their own culture, language, and religion.	F	182	256	197
		%	28.7	40.3	31

In this section, the items were ranked depending on the percentage of the sample who chose the same answer of the three choices (agree, do not agree, or have no idea.). However, as shown in Table 2, the participants agreed with almost all items of the questionnaire, except for two. The respondents did not agree with the item about the children's right to have the freedom of thought, religion, and conscience; of the sample, 65.8% did not agree. Also, 40.3% of the teachers' sample preferred to choose 'have no idea' to answer the item about the rights of minority children belonging to different religions, races, or languages to learn about their own culture. Yet 31% of the teachers' sample did not agree with this right, and 28.7% of them agreed. Those were the only items that had a high number of responses with 'do not agree' and 'I do not know,' while the rest of this dimension's items were rated as 'agree.'

The highest value was recorded for the item about the right of a disabled child to receive more care and support as he or she needs. On this item, 98.9% of teachers agreed with this as one of the child's rights.

Very close to this response, 98.7% of the teachers' sample chose 'agree' for four items. Those items are: the point about the government's responsibility to encourage the mass media to provide information that can be understood and whose benefits can be received by children; the child's right of receiving good-quality health care; the right of free primary education for all children, and that education should aim to encourage children to respect others' rights and cultures.

Directly after those items came the 6th and 7th places. These places include the items that the responsibility of bringing up the child should be shared between both parents with the child's best intentions in mind and that the child's personality, talents, and abilities should be developed to the fullest by education. Of the participants, 98.6% agreed with those points as the child's rights.

The article about the child's right to be in contact with both of his or her parents if they do not live together filled the eighth place with 98.4%. This means that most of the teachers' sample agreed with this article. With a 0.1% difference came the point that it is of the children's right to be protected from working in any job that might affect their health, growth, or education in a negative way.

In the 10th, 11th, and 12th places, respectively, came the following articles: children must be protected by the government from any kind of neglect, exploitation, and abuse; children have the right to know and be cared for by their parents if possible; and an adequate standard of living for all children and families who cannot afford this level for their children must be provided by the government. Of the teachers' sample, 98.1% agreed with these items.

The article claiming that the law should protect children from attacks against their privacy, which includes their way of life, name, families, and homes, came next with a high agreement of 98% of the teachers' sample. The same percentage of teachers agreed with the item concerning help for children facing abuse, neglect, or exploitation in order to recover and reintegrate into society.

After that, the teachers' responses addressed the point about the government's responsibility of ensuring that children survive and develop healthily. It was agreed by 97.5% of the teachers' sample, followed by the child's right to have a legally registered name and nationality. 97% of the participants agreed with this right.

After this response came the items about the government's responsibility to use available measures to make sure that children's rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled and that children have the right to relax, play, and join in a wide range of activities. Of the teachers' sample, 96.9% agreed.

Of the responses, 94.5% agreed with the items about the government's responsibility to protect and help children who are refugees, who are forced to leave their home countries, or who are affected by war, as well as the child's right to receive and share information in any way if that information does not harm them or others.

Of the teachers, 93.7% agreed with the item relating to ‘the child’s right to legal help and fair treatment in a justice system that respects his or her rights if he or she is accused of breaking the law’. This was followed by the item that the children’s best interest must be the primary concern in making decisions that might affect them. Of the teachers’ sample, 92.4% agreed with this item.

The right relating to adopting children with respect to their own religion, ethnic group, culture, and language came in 23rd place. Of the responses, 90.2% agreed with this item.

The item that the government should respect families’ rights and responsibilities to direct their children received agreement from 88.7% of the teachers’ sample. This was followed by the item about the child’s right to be protected by the government from being used in the drug trade. Of the teachers, 84.7% agreed with this item.

A high percentage of the respondents agreed with the children’s right to meet and join groups and organisations if they respected the rights, freedom, and reputation of others with 83.9%. After that came the item that the law should prevent cruel and harmful methods to punish children. Of the participants, 82.2% agreed with this item as a child’s right.

In 28th position, with 81.7% of responses, there was agreement with the item that the government should do its best to make the UNCRC’s articles known by all and that adults should help children to learn them.

Then, 71.7% of the teachers’ sample agreed with the children’s right to speak their opinion and that it should be heard when the adults make decisions that affect the children. This was followed by the item relating to indiscriminate between children and their rights, with agreement from 70.4% of the responses.

The definition of a child as any person below the age of 18 received the agreement of 63.5% of the teachers, but when the answers between females and males were compared, there was an inconsistency: 50.5% of the male teachers in the sample did not agree with this definition, while 71.3% of the females did agree.

As shown from the previous discussion, teachers who responded to the questionnaire agreed with 31 items in it, which means that they agreed with most of the rights that the UNCRC outlined.

From the previous discussion, it appears that the child’s right to be cared for and treated well in such items as that about children with disabilities and their needs for more care, the child’s right to be protected such as the child’s right to good-quality he-

alth care, and the right of education such as the right to free primary education, were the rights that the highest number of teachers in my sample agreed with. This supports the principals' views as discussed before, concerning the fact that the child's rights include protecting the child, caring about him or her, and providing him or her with a good education. The rights relating to religion, which are the rights of freedom of religion, thought, and conscience, as well as the right of minority children to learn about their religion and culture, received the lowest percentage of teachers who agreed.

Finally, it is obvious that the participating teachers held positive attitudes towards the UNCRC articles, which appeared in the previous discussion, although most of them were not acquainted with the UNCRC. Therefore, the previous discussion confirms that, although the teachers had limited awareness of the UNCRC, they were aware of some aspects of children's rights because they agreed with the most of the rights that were listed in this dimension of the questionnaire.

The following part will discuss the next part of the questionnaire, about the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia from the teachers' perspectives.

5.3 Teachers' Perspectives on the Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education

This section reports the participants' perspectives on several items designed to explore whether or not some of the UNCRC's articles apply to primary education.

This dimension contains 20 points related to the UNCRC's articles, which concern the school's responsibility to help its children to enjoy their rights. Participants' responses on this dimension are provided in Table 5.3, followed by a comparison of their ratings.

Table 5.3

Teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the UNCRC in primary schools in Saudi Arabia

No.	Items		Agree	Have no idea	Do not agree
1	Primary education is free for all children in Saudi Arabia.	F	576	26	33
		%	90.7	4.1	5.2
2	The use of physical or emotional punishment is prohibited in schools.	F	514	24	97
		%	80.9	3.8	15.3
3	School staff respect all children, regardless of their ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds.	F	487	49	99
		%	76.7	7.7	15.6
4	Students' problems are resolved carefully and privately by the school staff.	F	475	66	94
		%	74.8	10.4	14.8
5	All children have the freedom of expression in school, where all students are given the opportunity to speak and express their views and feelings and are listened to with open arms.	F	422	65	148
		%	66.5	10.2	23.3
6	The school, or one of its staff, reports to the authorities about any case of violence, neglect, or exploitation to which a child is exposed as soon as it is noticed, even if the violator is one of the child's parents.	F	416	113	106
		%	65.5	17.8	16.7
7	Adequate legislation and sentences exist to protect	F	379	143	113

	children's rights and punish violators in Saudi Arabia.	%	59.7	22.5	17.8
8	The school works to improve children's awareness about their rights.	F	379	85	171
		%	59.7	13.4	26.9
9	There is a law in Saudi Arabia that includes penalties for parents if their children are absent from school without an acceptable excuse.	F	115	175	345
		%	18.1	27.6	54.3
10	Students receive high-quality health care at their schools.	F	332	69	234
		%	52.3	10.9	36.9
11	There is an appropriate place for students to enjoy their free time safely at school.	F	323	45	267
		%	50.9	7.1	42
12	A copy of the UNCRC has been dispatched to primary schools in Saudi Arabia.	F	109	312	214
		%	17.2	49.1	33.7
13	The school provides its students with the necessary knowledge about hotline 116111.	F	310	125	200
		%	48.8	19.7	31.5
14	There are many organisations that protect children and their rights in Saudi Arabia.	F	307	224	104
		%	48.3	35.3	16.4
15	The Child Protection Law has been dispatched to primary schools, and the educators know about it.	F	271	230	134
		%	42.7	36.2	21.1

16	The media contributes well to publicising and educating people about the UNCRC.	F	213	163	259
		%	33.5	25.7	40.8
17	The schools and children's rights organisations work together to implement the UNCRC.	F	185	250	200
		%	29.1	39.4	31.5
18	There is an annual monitoring and evaluating of the schools to examine how well the UNCRC has been implemented by the MoE or the children rights organisations.	F	176	242	217
		%	27.7	38.1	34.2
19	There are periodic circulars for educators related to children's rights.	F	234	192	209
		%	36.9	30.2	32.9
20	My school works hard to implement and protect children's rights.	F	194	225	216
		%	30.6	35.4	34

According to Table 3, respondents agreed with 16 items, did not agree with two items, and have no idea about four items. These items will be explained in the following order: items teachers agreed with, items teachers did not agree with, and finally, items that most of the teachers have no idea about.

Based on Table 3, it appears that the child's right to primary education, which should be free, is applied in primary education in Saudi Arabia, according to the participants' perspectives. This item was agreed with by 90.7% of the teachers, which is the highest percentage in this dimension.

To protect children, the use of any kind of violence or abuse or cruel punishments, either physical or emotional, are prohibited at school. For this item, 80.9% of the teachers stated that they agreed. This is related to what four of the principals mentioned before, that there is a directive from the MoE that prohibits the violence against children at school.

Directly after these was the item stating that school staff respect all children, regardless of their ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds. It was agreed with by 76.7% of the teachers. This means there is no discrimination between children at school from the participants' perspectives.

After that, teachers' responses placed the item 'students' problems are resolved carefully and privately by the school staff in the fourth position. This item was agreed with by 74.8% of the teachers, which relates to the finding from the principals' interviews that children's problems are heard and solved by the student advisor. Also, in the principals' interviews, they mentioned that they did their best to help students with their problems by themselves.

There is also freedom of expression in school; many principals mentioned before that they open their doors to their students. If students have any complaints, opinions, or views, they can therefore feel free to talk to their principals at any time. This relates to the item 'all children have freedom of expression in school, where all children are given the opportunity to speak and express their views and feelings', which came next. This item was agreed with by 66.5% of the respondents, which means a high number of teachers agreed that this item is applied in primary schools in Saudi Arabia.

The item concerning reporting the violence, neglect, or exploitation issues that children might face in school to the authorities was agreed with by 65.5% of the teachers. That means they confirmed the implementation of this point, which is part of the children's right to be protected from any kind of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. They agreed with principals in this regard, who confirmed that if they could not solve the child's issue by contacting the parents, they reported the issue to the Education Office of Guidance, a human rights organisation, or the Child Helping Hotline to get their advice to solve the issue.

In the seventh place came the item 'adequate legislation and sentences exist to protect children's rights and punish violators in Saudi Arabia'. 59.7% of the teachers agreed with this item.

The item about schools' efforts to improve their students' awareness of children's rights came next, with the same percentage (59.7%). This is related to the principals' answers about their efforts to increase their pupils' awareness relating to children's rights, such as what the principals said about designing a complete and diverse program to increase children's knowledge of the Child Helping Hotline, organising a

program to educate students about child abuse, and posting videos on the school's YouTube account to increase children's awareness of their rights.

There were 52.3% of the teachers who agreed that students received high-quality health services at school. They agreed with the view of one of the principals, who mentioned that students receive health services at schools.

Almost half of the teachers (50.9%) agreed that there were appropriate places for students to enjoy their free time at school, while 42% did not agree.

Regarding the Child Helping Hotline, 48.8% of the teachers agreed that the school provides its students with the necessary knowledge about the hotline (116111), which is used to receive reports on cases of violence against children, while 31.5% did not agree with this item. This correlates with what four of the five principals said regarding informing students and increasing their knowledge of this hotline and its importance, aims, and uses.

Very closely and directly after that came the item about child protection organisations in Saudi Arabia; 48.3% of the teachers agreed that there are many agencies and organisations that protect children and their rights in Saudi Arabia. However, 35.3% of the responses rated this item as 'have no idea', which corresponds to the answers of four of the principals, who mentioned before that they did not know about children's rights organisations.

The item about the dispatching of the 'Child Protection Law', to primary schools in Saudi Arabia was rated as 'agree' by 42.7% of the teachers. This corresponds with one of the five principals, who confirmed that this law had been dispatched to schools.

Then came the item 'There are periodic circulations for educators related to children's rights'. This item was agreed by 36.9% of the teachers, while 32.9% did not agree with it. This is related to the principals' views that were mentioned before, that there are some directives concerning children's rights in schools, such as the prohibiting of hurting students and others.

These were the items that participants agreed with, but there were some items that the participants did not agree with. The first is the item about a law in Saudi Arabia that includes penalties for parents if their children are absent from school without an acceptable excuse. Of the teachers, 54.3% did not agree, which means they confirmed that parents are not accountable if their children do not attend their school for no acceptable reason.

The second item that teachers did not agree with is the item stating that the media contributes to improve people's awareness about the UNCRC. There were 40.8% of teachers who did not agree with that statement, while 33.5% agreed with it. This is related to what Mrs. Sara, one of the principals, said in her interview, that the media does not help to improve people's awareness about the UNCRC.

Four items were rated as 'have no idea' by the respondents. The item that got the highest percentage of 'have no idea' responses was the item stating that a copy of the UNCRC has been dispatched to primary schools in Saudi Arabia. For this item, 49.1% of teachers responded, 'I do not know'. 33.7% agreed with principals that schools did not receive anything about the UNCRC, however, including a copy of it.

In addition, 39.4% of the teachers did not know if there was any cooperation between children's rights organisations and schools to implement the UNCRC. This was supported by the principals, as they proved that there was no cooperation between schools and those organisations.

The annual monitoring and evaluation processes that the official authorities should conduct at schools came in next. The principals had already confirmed that the children's rights organisations do not visit schools or take any action related to these processes. This item was answered 'have no idea' by 38.1% of the teachers, while 34.2% of the teachers agreed with it.

The last item is 'my school works hard to implement and protect children's rights. 35.4% of the teachers did not know if that happened at their schools. Furthermore, 34% of the teachers did not agree with this.

In conclusion, we can say that schools, from the perspectives of the teachers who participated in my study, had implemented 16 of the items in Table 3. The highest agreement recorded was for the children's right to free primary education, but from the teachers' perspectives, it is not compulsory because teachers did not agree that parents are held accountable if their children are not attending school. Also, teachers did not agree that the media participates in a positive way to improve people's awareness of the UNCRC. Teachers did not know if there was a copy of the UNCRC in schools, children's rights organisations, or their own workplaces to protect children and their rights. Moreover, they did not know about schools' efforts to implement and protect the UNCRC.

This was an explanation of the participants' answers to the second dimension of the questionnaire, which was about the implementation of some the UNCRC articles in primary education. The next section discusses the participants' answers to the third

dimension of the questionnaire.

5.4 Barriers to the Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education in Saudi Arabia From the Teachers' Perspectives

This section is about the participants' answers to the questions about the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC. This section is divided to two sections:

5.4.1 discusses the participants' answers to the closed-ended questions about the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC, and the participants' answers to the open-ended questions are discussed in Section 5.4.2 as followed.

5.4.1 Analysis of teachers' answers to the closed-ended questions.

The teachers' responses to the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire about the barriers to the implementation the UNCRC is discussed in detail in this section. Table 5.4 contains a record of the teachers' ratings of the identified barriers.

Table 5.4

Teachers' perspectives about the factors that hinder the implementation of the UNCRC in primary schools in Saudi Arabia

No.	Items		Agree	have no idea	Do not agree
1	The lack of people's awareness about children's rights.	F	540	25	70
		%	85	4	11
2	Society gives priority to the family and its privacy Over anything else.	F	538	30	67
		%	84.7	4.7	10.6
3	The number of students in each school is so high that it is hard to fully implement the UNCRC.	F	470	80	85
		%	75	12.6	13.4

4	Saudi culture believes that children belong to their parents, so parents may treat children as they want.	F	444	26	165
		%	69.9	4.1	26
5	Undergraduate curricula focus on the development of teachers' academic skills with no focus on children's rights and its implementation in the work field.	F	437	98	100
		%	68.8	15.4	15.7
6	Schools are not being well prepared to apply the UNCRC.	F	327	154	109
		%	58.6	24.3	17.2
7	Educators are not well qualified to implement the UNCRC.	F	349	123	163
		%	55	19.3	25.7
8	The financial support for education is lacking.	F	343	86	206
		%	54.1	13.5	32.4
9	Saudi society is a traditional society, so it rejects anything from other cultures, such as the UNCRC.	F	330	83	222
		%	52	13	35
10	The UNCRC articles conflict with Islamic teachings.	F	155	323	157
		%	24.4	50.9	24.7
11	There are no laws or legislations that protect children and their rights.	F	255	118	292
		%	35.4	18.6	46

As shown in the above results, teachers agreed with nine items from Table 5, did not agree with two items, and have no idea' about one item.

The data reveals that the most important barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC at primary education in Saudi Arabia is 'the lack of people's awareness about children's rights'. This item was agreed upon by 85% of the teachers' sample. This is

similar to the principals' answers about how the lack of the people's awareness about children's rights affect their implementation, and that this shortage of awareness appears in society's beliefs and thoughts that the family and its privacy should be given priority over anything else, even their children. The item 'Society gives priority to the family and its privacy over anything else' was agreed upon by 84.7% of the teachers' sample. Teachers therefore agreed with principals in this regard.

The third item that was agreed upon by 75% of the teachers' sample was that the number of students at schools is high, which makes it difficult to ensure that the children can enjoy their rights.

In total, 69.9% of the participants agreed that society's awareness of children's rights is limited. This item relates to how Saudi society's culture denotes that children belong to their parents, so parents have the right to treat their children the way that suits them and their children. This factor was mentioned by Mrs Sara, one of the principals, in her interview.

The teachers' responses placed the following item fifth: 'Undergraduate curricula focus on the development of teachers' academic skills with no focus on children's rights and its implementation'. A total of 68.8% of the participants agreed upon this item. This supports most of the principals' answers about how they have not studied the UNCRC before. However, one of the principals and 61.7% of the teachers' sample proved that they had studied children's rights in Islam at their universities, which means there is a conflict between this and the teachers' response to this item.

After that is the item about schools not being prepared to apply the UNCRC. A total of 58.6% of the teachers agreed with this item, which relates to the principals' perspectives that schools are unprepared for the implementation of the UNCRC.

The item concerning the lack of qualified educators who could implement the UNCRC came in seventh. A total of 55% of the teachers agreed with this item, and this supports the principals' views that the shortage of qualified workers to implement the UNCRC at schools was one of the barriers. Also, 54.1% of the teachers agreed with the principals that the lack of financial support that schools receive hinders the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education.

Saudi society and its rejection of anything that comes from outside cultures, such as the UNCRC came next, with 52% of the teachers agreeing. This item confirms the lack of society's awareness of the UNCRC and agrees with the principals' perspectives about Saudi society and its members, who are closed-minded and who try

to refuse anything new while simultaneously trying to control others who live within their society.

Those items scored a high percentage of agreement from the teachers' sample. The next item, about a conflict between the UNCRC articles and Islam, was answered with 'have no idea' by 50.9% of the teachers' sample. This is in conflict with the principals' perspective that the UNCRC has the same rights as those mentioned in Islamic teachings. As in Section 5.2.1, however, 71% of the teachers confirmed that they had not read the UNCRC before and they could not identify whether it conflicts with Islam or not.

The last item is rated as 'do not agree' by those in the teachers' sample. This item is that there are no laws or legislation that protect children and their rights. It was rated as 'do not agree' by 46% of the teachers' sample, whereas 35.4% of the sample agreed with the statement. This supports their responses to the question about there being laws to protect children and their rights in Section 5.3, as 59.7% of them agreed with this statement.

In the end, teachers agreed that the lack of societal awareness about the UNCRC is the first barrier to its implementation. This can be demonstrated in the teachers' perspectives on how Saudi society gives the family and its privacy priority over the needs of the children. Saudi society also sees children as belonging to their parents, so no one can intervene in how parents treat their children. Furthermore, this society is very traditional, so its members refuse cultural elements that are imported from the West.

Another barrier concerning educators and their preparations is that educators have not studied the UNCRC before and that they are not qualified to implement it. Also, the schools, the number of students attending the schools, and the lack of financial support hinder the implementation of the UNCRC in primary schools.

These were the barriers with which teachers' sample agreed upon as hindrances to the implementations of the UNCRC at primary schools in Saudi Arabia. The next section discusses the teachers' answers to the open-ended questions in this part of the questionnaire.

5.4.2 Analysis of teachers' answers to the open-ended questions.

This section analyses the teachers' responses to the question, 'Do you have any additional information about the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education? If yes, please list them.' As mentioned in principals' and teachers'

answers on the previous part of the questionnaire, the awareness of children's rights is absent in Saudi society. This was the first barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC in the primary education that was highlighted by teachers when answering this point. As Mrs. Felwa said:

The non-implementation of the UNCRC is because of the lack of people's awareness about it.

She confirmed that the lack of societal awareness about the UNCRC is the most important barrier to its implementation. Mr. Osama added that Saudi society's views of children are based on the underestimation of children and people obtain their knowledge about children and their rights from this society. In this regard, he said:

Everyone in Saudi Arabia gets their knowledge about children's rights from society, which says to underestimate children.

He means that society—not the culture of Islam—despises children and their rights. The Islamic teachings state many rights for children, and it calls for respecting other's rights. Also, as stated before, teachers and principals agreed that children's rights in Islam are the same as the children's rights stated in the UNCRC. Mr Maher confirmed that Islam does not stop people from applying the UNCRC, but people themselves and the society do that:

Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country, and Islam knows and protects the rights of the child. The Islamic teachings are very interested in children's rights and duties, and therefore, the teachers are aware of these rights, but those rights are not activated. The implementation of children's rights is affected by the cultural and tribal aspects of the teacher.

Therefore, the absence of society's awareness is the most important barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia from the perspectives of the teachers, which is consistent with the perspectives of the principals.

The lack of society's awareness about children's rights appears in some of the teachers' answers. For instance, society's rejection of any new topic or cultural elements that come from the West appeared in some of the teachers' answers. For example, Mr Ahmad said:

I do not think that we need any international conventions to control bringing up our children or protecting them. Islamic law contains everything about human beings from their birth, and it is the only law we need.

Also, Mr Fahad said:

As an Islamic society, we do not need the UNCRC to know and respect children's rights. All we need is the obligation of Islam.

They used Islam as an excuse to reject the UNCRC, even though they might either not have read it or know much about it. This can be explained as a fear of Western culture overtaking Islamic culture. This also has been mentioned before by principals; although the perspectives and ideas of the new generations in Saudi Arabia are changing for the better, some people still reject modernisation in society by rejecting anything from Western culture and they try to control society by making people obey them.

The teachers' answers showed their disapproval of the idea of controlling how families treat their children. The current culture views that a child is the property of his or her parents. Two of the teachers agreed with each other about the UNCRC not being implemented in primary education in Saudi Arabia if it tries to restrict parents and their ways of bringing up their children. Mrs Jwahir said:

The UNCRC should not encourage children's disobedience towards their parents by giving them the power and priority over their parents.

Mr Yazeed said:

I do not know about the UNCRC's articles but, in general, I believe in children's rights if those rights do not conflict with the parents' role in bringing their child up.

He did not specify how these rights could be reflected with the parents' roles in bringing up their children.

The privacy of the family in Saudi society means that no one can intervene in how parents treat their children or even ask about it. Principals noted in their interviews how families refuse any sort of intervention from others in how they bring up their children. In regard to the privacy of Saudi families, Mrs Fatema said:

One of the factors that hinder the implementation of the UNCRC at primary schools in Saudi Arabia is the privacy of Saudi families. It is hard to access these families' houses, so specialists in protecting children's rights do not have the ability to know about the truth behind the walls inside the houses or to investigate the real situation of the child.

She confirmed that it is not easy to explore childhood issues in Saudi society due to families' privacy.

The previous discussion proves that there is more to the story than what we know about children and the violation of their rights, because the truth is hidden by the protection of the family's privacy, which has priority in Saudi society. Mrs Salma said:

Action must be taken fast by the government to protect the children. Our hearts are broken because of the cases of abused children that we see in schools; the children suffer badly from being in an unstable family.

This confirms that school administrations are aware of violations of children's rights at home. Such violations continue, however, because schools have to wait for action from the government and schools prefer not to intervene in such cases. This view was corroborated by Mrs Amlak:

Schools prefer to not intervene in protecting children and their rights because they are afraid of getting into trouble with the child's parents or try to protect the child from being punished more by his or her parent, stepparent, brother, uncle, or anyone if the school intervenes.

They think that they are protecting the child by keeping the child away from the problems at home, which confirms the absence of a rights-based culture in the school and society.

The misinterpretation of rights is also confirmed as a barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education. In this regard, Mr Bader said:

The misunderstanding of the articles on children's rights leads to the failure of implementing some of or all these articles, as well as the absence of training courses that explain and promote the culture of children's rights.

He pointed that to avoid the misunderstanding of children's rights, and for full implementation, there should be training courses—which are currently absent—for people in this regard.

One of the authorities responsible for improving the awareness of children's rights is the human and children's rights organisations, whose roles are absent in society. Mrs Amani agreed with principals in that those organisations do not cooperate with schools and society to implement the UNCRC. She said:

There is no cooperation between rights' organisations and schools. They do not contribute to seminars, speeches, or training courses for educators or parents to improve their awareness about the UNCRC.

Mrs. Amani argued that children's rights organisations do not cooperate on improving society's awareness about the UNCRC, which affects the implementation of the UNCRC.

Those were the external factors that affected the implementation of the UNCRC in schools from the teachers' perspectives. Many internal factors in schools also hinder the implementation of children rights at those schools, however. The first internal factor is the high number of students at a school. Mrs Shihana said:

It is difficult to give each child his or her rights at school because the number of children in each class is high, and it increases, versus the teachers' numbers, which decrease.

This means there is no balance between the number of students and the number of teachers in schools. Mr. Turkey mentioned the shortage of staff as a barrier of the implementation of children's rights:

Schools have a shortage of educational staff, and if there is an approach to implementing the UNCRC in schools, there should be employment of special cadres for this task.

This is related to what the principals mentioned before about the need of having qualified staff to take the responsibility of applying the UNCRC in schools.

The shortage of workers in schools leads to another barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC, which is teachers' heavy workload. Mrs Aream said:

Teachers do not have enough time to do their work within the curriculum, so they could not do anything with the enrichment or education programs given about the UNCRC.

She confirmed that the workload leads teachers to focus only on the curriculum that they teach, with little interest in the quality of school life, including the children's practice of their rights and improving their awareness of children's rights.

Primary education curricula also do not help the implementation of the UNCRC, as the UNCRC is not mentioned in any of them. Mr Ali said:

There is nothing in the school curriculum that refers to children's rights at all.

If it is absent from the curriculum, if the teachers are limited in teaching these curricula—which are their most important duties—at school with a heavy workload and the high number of students, and if the rights culture in society is absent or misunderstood, students will not be able to learn, ask for, and enjoy their rights within or outside schools.

According to the previous discussion, teachers agreed with principals about the existence of barriers that are both external and internal to schools regarding the implementation of the UNCRC. The external barriers concern society and its lack of

awareness about children's rights, as well as the absence of cooperation between rights organisations with schools and society. The internal factors include the high number of students in schools, the insufficient number of school staff, their heavy workload, and the absence of a rights culture in primary school curricula. These factors were identified by teachers as the main hindrances to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia. The next section will summarise the results of this chapter.

5.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter revealed the analysis and the results of the questionnaires. According to the questionnaire, teachers confirmed that they had some awareness of children's rights in general, but they did not have any awareness of the UNCRC. In addition, teachers had a positive attitude towards the UNCRC's articles except the article about freedom of religion. When male and female teachers' answers were compared, they did not agree with each other about the definition of 'a child'. Although female teachers agreed that a child is any person under the age of 18, male teachers did not agree with that definition.

From the teachers' perspective, some of the UNCRC's articles are being implemented in primary education in Saudi Arabia, such as protecting children from any kind of abuse, neglect, and violence; giving all children the right to free primary education; and allowing the freedom of expression through listening and respecting the child's views and opinions.

According to the teachers, the key barriers to implementing the UNCRC are the lack of societal awareness about the UNCRC, the high number of students in each class and in the school, preparing programs for educators at universities that focus only on children's academic skills, how schools are not suitable for applying the UNCRC, educators are not qualified to implement the UNCRC, lack of financial support, and the traditional Saudi society that rejects any elements of Western culture. In addition, teachers added the absence of the cooperation between rights-based organisations with schools and with society, the insufficient number of school staff, teachers' heavy workload, and the absence of a rights-based culture in the primary school curriculum as further barriers to implementation.

The next chapter discusses the analysis and the results of the focus group with students.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THE FOCUS GROUPS WITH CHILDREN

6.1 Introduction

This section discusses the analysis and results of the focus group with children. This focus group was conducted with 36 children aged 9 to 11 from 4 different schools. There were 12 focus groups in total, with 3 children from the same grade in each group. NVivo software was used for the analytical processing of the focus group findings.

This chapter is divided into three sections as follows: **Section 6.2** discusses the children's awareness of children's rights, the implementation of the UNCRC in schools from the students' perspectives is discussed in **Section 6.3**, and **Section 6.4** is a summary of the chapter. The next section discusses the first of the three subthemes.

6.2 Children's Awareness of Their Rights

This section discusses the children's awareness of their rights. The focus group with children revealed that children had awareness of some principles of their rights and the sources that were used in the focus group (the books and video) aided the children's memory in this regard. The discussion in this section focuses on five areas; the definition of children's rights, examples of children's rights, children's awareness regarding the UNCRC, children's attitude to children's rights, and the responsibility of adults regarding children's rights.

6.2.1 The definition of children's rights.

It was obvious that the children did not recognise the meaning of children's rights as it was presented in the focus group. At the beginning of each focus group, students were given a book entitled *My rights*. I asked them to read its title aloud, then asked them 'what does "my rights" mean?' Solaf, Reef, and Areej defined 'right' as a synonym of 'revenge'. For example, Reef said:

My rights mean that if someone hit me or deals with me unjustly I should take revenge to get my rights.

Budoor, on the other hand, said that ‘my rights’ mean getting back things that others borrow from me. Haya, Jury, Faten, Lina, and Lamia defined ‘my right’ literally as its meaning in some Arabic dialects (‘My right’ is something that is mine, such as ‘this bag is mine’).

These were the children’s interpretations of the meaning of ‘my rights’. After that, I gave the students in each focus group another book entitled ‘Children’s Rights’ and asked them again what the concept of ‘children’s rights’ referred to. The students’ interpretations of the concept of ‘children’s rights’ were clearer than their interpretations of the concept of ‘my rights’. Najla, Rawan and Saja saw children's rights as the responsibilities of the child. Saja said:

Children’s rights mean that there are things that children should do.

Thus, they understood children's rights as the child’s obligations; things that he or she should do.

Nouf defined children's rights as children enjoying their childhood. Banan said: ‘Children’s rights mean loving children’. These two answers clearly showed the children’s understanding of their needs, in this case the practice of children's rights leads children experiencing a peaceful and loving childhood.

Five students, Hend, Maha, Abrar, Rana, and Najd gave a meaningful interpretation of children's rights. They said that children's rights are things that every child should have and it is the responsibility of adults to give these rights to children.

The, previous discussion thus confirmed that 31 children out of 36 did not have a clear understanding of children's rights and its meaning, as only five gave a meaningful understanding of children's rights.

6.2.2 Examples of children's rights.

The rights that children mentioned were the right to education, having a name, living with the family safely, nutrition, protection from violence, and healthcare.

Memory recall was needed to remind the children of their knowledge about their rights. The children were shown a video on YouTube entitled *It is of My Right*. Then, they completed reading the books, which helped children to remember some of the rights that they already knew about before. Some children—Jury, Faten, Lina, Areej, Maha, Najd and Nada—confirmed that they had heard about the rights that were listed in the video and in both books but they did not remember them. Lina said:

I know about these rights for a while as I must have them such as the right to education, live with my parents, eat, have a good health care, and play. However, I could not determine exactly when or how I knew about them but I usually hear about these kinds of stuff.

Children mentioned some of the main children's rights that they knew. Areej, Saja, Rawan, Lura, Abrar, Mashael, and Raghad mentioned the right to education. Maha, Rawan, Ayah and Hend mentioned the right to live with their family in a safe place. Najd and Deem mentioned the right to nutrition. Jury and Tala mentioned the right to be protected from violence. Children did not, however, talk about other rights that are more complicated, such as children's right to not be exploited. Children knew the main and simple rights that they had already understood, but they did not understand the other rights that are so important for them but also more complicated.

Furthermore, the children reinforced the societal view that children belong to their parents, which had been mentioned before by principals and teachers. This appeared in Raghad's justification of parental violence as parents wanting to bring them up in the right way. She said:

They hit us to teach us the right things. It is not a violence.

Jury agreed with Raghad and said:

It is of our rights that no one hit us and if that happened there should be a reason for hitting.

Children understood, therefore, that children being hit by adults who have power over them, such as parents, is acceptable if there is a reason for it.

The previous discussion confirmed that children were aware of some of the principles of children's rights, but there was some conflict about how they understood these rights and their implementation. For instance, on the one hand, children believe that they should be protected from violence. On another hand, children said that it is acceptable to be hit by parents or even teachers if they misbehave. This shows how culture affects children's understanding of their rights, especially in relation to the imbalance of power between children and adults, which will be discussed later in the discussion chapter.

6.2.3 Children's awareness regarding the UNCRC.

The discussion with children confirmed that they had no awareness of the UNCRC. The video *It is Of My Right* and the book *Children's Rights* mentions the UNCRC and that Saudi Arabia is one of the countries that has signed and implement-

ed this convention. I asked the children, 'Do you know about the UNCRC?' All students said no except one of them, Haya. She mentioned that she had heard about the UNCRC on YouTube.

Furthermore, as mentioned before by principals and teachers, the official authorities in Saudi Arabia have established the Child Helping hotline to help children if they face problems such as violence. The principals confirmed that they had informed the children about this hotline service. Children agreed with principals that they had the knowledge of the Child Helping Hotline from their school. Henda defined the Child Helping Hotline as:

The hotline is a phone number for any child who needs help. So, the child can contact this number and they will help her or him.

Children generally understood the purpose of the establishment of this service. Furthermore, all students except nine of them knew about it, but no one remembered its number, which makes this service less efficient.

Lana explained why she did not remember the number of this service:

When we call the child helping hotline to report abuse or violence that we might face, they may take us from our family and find an alternative family for us. I do not like that.

Love for their family and the fear of losing them leads children to keep violations of their rights at home secret. This confirmed again that the children did not have adequate awareness about their rights.

6.2.4 Children's attitude to children's rights.

Children showed a positive attitude towards the need to implement the UNCRC. After talking about the UNCRC, some children mentioned the need for these rights to be implemented. They believed that these rights should be enforced and implemented by law. In this regard Mashal said:

We need these rights because some children face family violence. All children around the world must have a good life and be cared about.

The previous quote shows the child's understanding of the significant role children's rights play in protecting children, so she emphasised the need to implement children's rights for this reason.

Children also mentioned the importance of some rights in particular, such as Tala, who mentioned the importance of education. She said:

It is our right to be educated. That will help us to understand the world around us.

She believed in the importance of the education as a children's rights because it helps children to understand their surroundings. Also, Lana mentioned the importance of living with parents. She said:

Children need to live with their parents because they need the affection that parents give to their child.

They also did not forget about children in state care and their need to have a family. Nouf said:

It is the child's right to have a family that loves and protects the child and if the child does not have their parents, there should be an alternative family or live in a children's home.

Children understand the importance of the family in the child's life and they do not forget about children in state care and their needs.

From the children's perspectives, children could not realise their rights in some situations, such as children in poorer societies and in war-torn countries. In this regard, Rawan said:

Some children cannot have their rights because their family might be poor or they are in the wrong place, such as children who live in Syria.

She mentioned that places that have wars are not suitable for children to live in.

The previous discussion confirmed that children have a positive attitude towards these rights and the need for them.

6.2.5 The responsibility of adults.

Children confirmed that adults play a significant role in making the UNCRC practicable. In this regard, when I asked them about who helps them to get their rights, their answers were adults, parents, and the government. In this regard, Manar said:

Adults should help to make children's rights practicable.

In the same manner, Nouf said:

Little students need older people to help them...The educators must help children at school.

It appeared from the previous quotes that children recognised the importance of adults helping them as they could not enjoy their rights without the help of adults.

The previous discussion revealed that children believe in their rights and their importance; it is down to adults to facilitate them realising and enjoying their rights, but they had a shortage of knowledge about those rights.

Finally, children have limited awareness of the UNCRC, but they have some understanding of some aspects of children's rights. However, this understanding is affected by their culture. Some of the children understood the need for these rights after reading the books and watching the video about the UNCRC. Furthermore, children mentioned some rights, such as the right to education, to have a family, nutrition, and to be protected.

These were the findings about the children's awareness about the UNCRC. The next section discusses the implementation of the UNCRC in primary schools from the children's perspective.

6.3 The Children's Perspectives About the Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education

In the focus groups with children, they talked about their experiences relating to their rights in their schools, which revealed many issues with regards the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education as is discussed in the next section.

6.3.1 Children suffer from teachers' cruelty.

First of all, Deem believed that their rights are not implemented in their schools. She said:

My school does not apply the UNCRC and the ways that teachers use to deal with us prove this.

Children believe that their rights are not implemented at their schools because teachers treat them poorly. They confirmed that some teachers treat children badly by shouting at them, using bad words, and hitting the students. It has been noted that 82.2% of teachers in the questionnaire agreed that no one was allowed to punish children in cruel or harmful ways, 80.9% of the teachers agreed that physical and emotional punishments are prohibited in schools, and the principal confirmed that a directive had been circulated prohibiting these kinds of practices in school. However, principals confirmed in their interviews that teachers violated children's rights by using cruel ways to deal with children. The evidence from the children proved that teachers violated children's rights. In this regard, Halah said:

Some teachers yell at us in front of others so that it embarrasses us and some of them take us out of class to stand next to the class door as a kind

of punishment so everyone can see that we are being punished.

This confirmed that children suffer from the ways that teachers use to punish them. Six more of the children complained that teachers yelled at them loudly.

It is not only about teachers behaving cruelly towards children, but also the results of this cruelty. There are emotional and psychological effects from teachers dealing harshly with children. As Halah mentioned, for example, these behaviours embarrassed them in front of their friends and others in the school. Mrs Sara (one of the principal sample) agreed, as she said that punishing children in front of others affects them badly. This raises the question of whether children need love and care instead of this type of harsh punishment. Jury said:

I am afraid of my teacher when she yells at my classmates.

This comment suggests that schools are not always a safe place for children; school might be a scary place if the educators are harsh with them.

Teachers also use insulting and demeaning words and tell their students they have unacceptable qualities. Rana said:

Our teacher said to me once that your brain is like a chicken's brain.

This conflicts with the educational aim of developing the child's personality to the full and encouraging the child to respect others and their rights. If the teachers direct such language towards children, they will produce a generation that is not confident in their abilities and not respectful of others. Furthermore, teachers also threaten children with brutality, as mentioned by Banan, a fourth-grade student. She said:

My teacher told me once, 'I will kill you'.

The teacher might not literally mean it because people sometimes use this expression to show their level of anger. Sometimes it is also used by parents. But a teacher using this expression in school towards a child, especially a young child only in the fourth grade, should be taken seriously. This teaches the child that if you have the power you can say and do whatever you want.

Using physical punishment was also confirmed by 16 children during the focus groups. Students reported that some teachers had hit them and the same teacher was mentioned by many students from different grades in relation to hitting students.

Hend said:

One of my teachers noticed me talking to my friend at her class then the teacher brushed my desk, hit me on my shoulder, and punished me by standing at the back of the class.

Nada also said:

There was a child in my class wrote a wrong answer on the white board then the teacher slapped her. It was scary.

This action does not just affect the child who was punished, but also other children who then feel scared in class.

6.3.2 The culture of power.

Some children tried to make an excuse for their teachers in terms of them having the right to physically punish their students. Banah said:

Teachers just punish the students who did not do their homework and sometimes they hit them for this reason.

Also, Yara said:

When the teacher hits a student because the student made a mistake, it does not mean the teacher is tough.

The previous quotes reveal a culture of power in which the person who has the power has the right to do whatever he or she wants. This culture begins at home, as some children reported that they faced violence at home at the hands of their parents, which children accepted as a way to teach them. Nada said:

Parents hit us to teach us and to help us to learn from our mistakes.

This confirmed what was mentioned previously by the principals and teachers, that Saudi society believes that children belong to their parents and children themselves also believe in that. Children learn to subject themselves to the most powerful person in the home and excuse parental violence towards their children. Because this culture extends to schools, the students also accept violence from their teachers as teachers have power over them.

The use of power by teachers over children could be also seen as disrespecting the class and the children's time. For example, Rawan reported how one teacher used her phone during class instead of teaching children:

One of our teachers used her phone in class. She browsed Snapchat and watched the snaps of others. Once, our classmate made a mistake while she was reading but the teacher did not notice because she was busy with her phone. We told her the student had made a mistake.

This is a neglect of duty by the teacher and if the teacher does not understand her duties she will not uphold hers and others' rights. It is neglect of children, responsibilities, and the educational process.

6.3.3 Children do not complain.

Students feared objecting to violations of their rights. The bad experience following Saja's complaint taught children to be silent:

I complained about the teacher who hit me on the head with a book because I did not know the answer to a question. I talked to the principal, but unfortunately, the teacher came to the class and shouted at me because I had complained about her behaviour with us.

Children will not complain about educators at school because of the fear that their complaint will reach the person about whom they complained, as Ayah reported:

Sometimes when we complain about the school staff, the educator who listens to our complaint will be angry towards us. Also, the listener might tell the person who is being complained about.

This could stop students from asking for their rights to be upheld. They will accept cruel punishments to avoid worse, based on their fear of adults, as noted by Solaf:

We are afraid of complaining about the educators at school. They will know and punish us because of our complaints.

Maya agreed with Solaf and confirmed that she prefers to ignore the teachers' violence towards her because she is afraid to complain.

Furthermore, friendships between school staff stopped children from reporting the violence that they faced because there is no balance between personal relationships and children's protection and privacy at school. If there was a balance between these matters, the students might feel more confident to talk about their concerns knowing their privacy would be upheld. Lura said:

We could not tell the student advisor about our teacher and her behaviour in class because they are friends and the principal does not listen to our problems. The principal usually says 'this is the student advisor's responsibility, go to her'.

This confirmed what the principals mentioned before about the student advisor's responsibility to listen and resolve children's issues. If approaching the student advisor will further complicate the issue for children, however, then this raises a question about who can help students in school if the student advisor cannot.

6.3.4 No action to solve children's issues.

Principals mentioned before that their doors are open for students to listen to their problems. Listening to the students is not enough if there is no action, however, as Rama's quote confirmed:

I have complained to the principal about one of my teachers but she did not do anything.

The absence of a reaction from the principal meant that she does not listen to the children. Ignoring children appeared in the conversations with the children, although the principals themselves stated that they listened to and solved children's issues at their schools.

Furthermore, the children said that principals stopped children from talking about their problems with teachers as they believe that it is not polite to complain about educators. Budoor said:

I have complained about a teacher who took our lunch time as a part of her class time which affected us because we could not eat our lunch. When we told the principal, she said this is rude, you should respect your teacher and do not complain about her.

This could be seen as a violation of students' time. The teacher does not respect the students, their time, and their need to eat. Furthermore, the principal asked children to respect the teacher, but she did not defend the children and their rights.

This further exemplifies the culture of subjection and silence, which is in contrast with the freedom of speech and opinions that is promoted within the culture of children's rights. As Ghala confirmed:

If I complain about the educators, they will say that I am a trouble-maker.

It was apparent that the children had learnt the culture of silence and rationalised violence against them as a normal thing that they should accept.

6.3.5 Fear of adults.

Fear of adults extended not just to educators, but also other workers at school that children dealt with daily. Children mentioned the school guard, for example, who stands outside of the school near the gate to protect it. Haya, Reef, and Tala confirmed that the school security guard yells at them and uses bad words. Also, Tala reported that he hit children:

The school security guard hit me once on my hand with a wooden stick. It hurts.

Moreover, children also complained about the school bus driver being abusive toward them. Halah said:

The school bus driver is usually annoying us. He is rude and dreadful. Once he said to me you are beautiful look at me, but I ran away.

Ghala said:

When the bus stopped at the traffic lights, the driver turned his face to us and said with a hard look, 'You are beautiful'.

These words proved that the girls were afraid of the school bus driver and they considered his compliments a kind of abuse. Children are clever and they can differentiate between compliments and rudeness or abuse.

Children mentioned that they tried to report the driver's behaviour towards them, but no one listened. Halah said:

I went to the teacher who is responsible for the bus and complained about the bus driver's behaviour but she said, 'I have nothing to do'. I talked to my friend to complain as a group about the driver but again the teacher said she could not talk to him so there is nothing to be done. We were crying and asking her to help but nothing happened.

The previous quote confirmed that no one listens to students in school. There was no one to help children and solve their issues with the bus driver. They might not take children's fear seriously and leave children to face their fears by themselves with no help, even though the principals mentioned that there is a teacher who is responsible for the school bus and the children can use them for protection and safety. The children believed that this was not enough, however, as Ayah mentioned:

The teacher just stands near the school gate to observe the students in the queue and make sure that students line up in a queue to get on the bus. But there is no one to oversee the students while on their way from or to the school in the bus.

Children wanted protection from strange men such as bus drivers by having an adult woman with them on the bus. They asked for their right to protection, as Ghala said:

We asked our principal to have a teacher who will accompany us on the bus, but she said, 'I cannot afford that'. It is the MoE's job to pay for this worker in schools.

This response from the principal puts the responsibility of child protection on others. Children talked about their problem and gave a solution, but they were neglected and the principal did not care about their opinion; likewise their safety.

6.3.6 Bullying at school.

The fear of bullies is problematic at schools. The children's responses indicated that they need to be protected from bullying. 12 of the children confirmed that there are children who yell at others and hit them. They also said that those children cause trouble in school by pouring water on students' books, stealing from others, and writing bad words on the walls and desks. Children also mentioned the reasons for bullying in school, as appeared in Mashal's quotes:

Bullying at school happens because some students are more popular than others so they feel special.

Najd added:

They act as if they are the leaders and they want to control us by being bullies.

The previous quotes show that a child's popularity at school can lead to bullying.

Children also confirmed that the schools do not take any action to protect them from bullying. Raghad said:

I complained to our students' advisor about the students who hit me many times, but she did not do anything about my complaints. I decided to defend myself and hit them back. There was fighting between me and them, then the students' advisor punished me with them. I told her it was too late to intervene, I told you many times about them but you took no action.

Again, as mentioned previously, students were left to face their fears alone and no one listened to them. In addition, student' complaints were not listened to. The fear of adults with power over children affected children's safety at school; as mentioned before, students' safety at school is affected by educators as well as staff such as the school bus driver, school security guard, and bullying students.

6.3.7 No freedom of expression.

The children felt that freedom of expression was absent in schools. Although 66.5% of teachers in the questionnaire agreed that children had freedom of expression with regard to respecting their opinions and views, children did not agree with that, as mentioned by Maya:

We cannot tell our opinion to our teachers because they do not ask us about our opinion at all.

Lana added:

We are afraid of telling teachers or workers at school our views and opinions.

These comments reinforced the fear of adults. Abrar clarified this fear when she said:

If we ask the teacher about something we did not understand, she says you did not understand because you are stupid.

If children could not even ask about more clarification of the information teachers gave to them, how could they express their opinions?

Raghad added that they do not learn to express their views at home, which affects their ability to practice this right. She said:

I do not express my feelings or tell my views or opinions to my mother because I know she will not listen to me or at least take them into account.

This supports the principals' perception that children learnt from their parents that their opinions and views are not to be listened to. Awareness of children's rights thus appears to be lacking in both home and school contexts.

6.3.8 No freedom of choice.

Children also confirmed that freedom of choice is absent in school, which diverged from the principals' perspectives. For example, there is a student leaders' group in each school, but students confirmed that those leaders are chosen by the teachers, as noted by Jury:

There are some conditions to be a student leader. Those leaders must be from the sixth grade and the teachers decide who can be a student leader.

Teachers rather than students, therefore, controlled who could be accepted as a leader. As mentioned by the children, however, the student leaders' responsibilities are just to

control the children at the school and observe them. That means those leaders do not represent children or get their voices heard by the educators at school.

Furthermore, children mentioned that there are some extracurricular activities that the school organises for students, but these activities are not chosen by the children. Although these activities are a kind of implementation of the UNCRC for children to enjoy their time, they are chosen and planned by the educators. Lana said:

In general, the school just informs us about what they decided to do as activities and the dates.

Loura added:

Sometimes they ask us if we want to participate in the activity to record our name as a participant. But we do not choose or suggest what activities we want.

This confirmed the absence of the freedom of choice at school and the absence of listening to children about the matters that affect them, activities in school being one of these matters.

6.3.9 Activities do not achieve their aims.

In each school in Saudi Arabia, there are two hours of activity classes weekly as a part of the education system. These classes aim to improve students' abilities and talents and include a variety of classes such as art, social studies, and language classes. Children confirmed that they can choose the activity class they want, as Nouf said:

In the activity classes, you have the chance to choose the activity you like then attend its class.

Children have the right to choose from these classes but those classes are often just for talking or doing homework, as Jury said:

The activity class is just for talking. We do not do anything in this class.

The aims of these activity classes are thus not achieved.

During times when a teacher is absent and their classes are cancelled, children confirmed that this 'leisure time' is wasted with no benefit to it. Haya said:

If one of our teachers is absent, we stay in our class to do whatever we want, like talking or doing homework, but we should be quiet and there will be an alternative teacher to observe us and ensure that we do not disturb others.

From the previous quotes, it could be clearly seen that the activity classes and leisure time were not really what they are assumed to be. They were just for talking and do-

ing homework. Also, there were no real choices, such as choice of activities, for children in school.

Improving children's skills is one of the schools' goals as a right of the child and diction is one of these skills. The school morning assembly that happens every morning in all schools is one of the ways to improve this skill. Children who participate in the school assembly are chosen beforehand by teachers, however. Bana said:

There is a group of students whose organise and participate in the school assembly. This group is determined and chosen by teachers. The school assembly is not for anyone.

Ghala added:

My friend likes to sing and she dreams of singing in the school assembly. But the school assembly group do not like her so they do not let her participate by singing in the assembly.

The school assembly thus does not help to improve all children's talent, as it is not open to all children. This is a kind of discrimination in school which students accept as normal.

6.3.10 Discrimination in school.

Children confirmed that there is discrimination in school and educators do not treat them equally. Najd said, 'There is no equality at school'. Najd, Mashal, Nouf, Ghala, Halah, and Deem mentioned that if the student's mother works at school, if the student is clever, or if the teacher loves the student for no apparent reason, the educators treat the child differently. Abrar added the child's nationality as a reason for inequality:

Last year school organised a trip which was the first and last trip at school. This trip was only for Saudi students.

Discrimination between children at school may thus depend on their background.

Students were also aware of discrimination between children outside of school. They mentioned that gender discrimination is widespread at home and in society. Manar and Lamia said that boys and girls are not the same. Areej believed that boys are special. Areej answered my question 'Why do you think that boys are special?' by saying:

I learnt that from what I see around me. I learnt from the people in society. People treat boys differently and they prefer boys to girls.

'Society' includes parents who teach girls that boys are different and persuade children to accept this discrimination, as Lina said:

I do not care about the discrimination between boys and girls.

They learnt to accept this discrimination wherever it took place.

Some children felt their rights and the violation of these rights, but if they do not have the right of freedom of expression, it is difficult to see how they could discuss these sensitive issues, especially equality issues.

6.3.11 Unsuitable environment for children.

Unsuitable places for children at school is another violation of the UNCRC, for example, unsuitable place for celebrations. Mashal said:

Last year the school celebrated the Saudi national day. When we came to the celebration place, there were no chairs to sit on. So, we sat on the floor and that would have been OK if the floor was clean, but it was not. We sat on the dusty and dirty floor in a small hall with a large number of students. It was hot and we felt like we could not breathe.

This is an important celebration and children should be able to enjoy this day. If the venue is not suitable and students feel uncomfortable, the celebration is rendered meaningless. This confirmed that children understood the problem and disliked it, but no one listened to them.

Children also mentioned that the toilets at school were not clean. They said that the toilet situation in general at school was 'horrible', as Najla said:

Toilets are not clean. They are not suitable for human use.

Abrar agreed with Najla and she added:

The toilets are not clean. I think there is no one who cleans it at all. It is not for human use. We could not go to the toilet because of the smell and dirtiness.

The previous quote shows neglect of the children and their needs, as having no worker responsible for cleaning bathrooms and leaving them dirty is a way of disrespecting children as human beings.

Principals blamed the children for the toilet situation, as mentioned by Halah:

The principal was so angry with us and she talked in the school assembly about the toilets being so dirty and the students being responsible for that. Toilets are dirty because there is no one to clean the toilets, not because of us.

Children again felt the problem and gave the solution, that there should be a worker to observe students in the toilets and keep the toilets clean. Furthermore, Deem said that toilets walls and doors contained some unacceptable drawings and words that had been drawn and written by other students. This is a moral issue for students who are too young to understand those kinds of words and drawings. This would be an unsuitable environment for children under 11 years old.

6.3.12 Healthcare.

Regarding the healthcare in schools, there is a health advisor in each school to be responsible for the children's health and take care of children with illnesses, as mentioned by the principals. Children mentioned, however, that the health advisor did not help them if they had a health issue. Najd said:

If we are sick, the health advisor does not do anything. She just asks if you brought your medication to take or gives you a painkiller. If you are sick she will contact your parents.

Students agreed with principals that the health advisors at schools are not really qualified to take on this responsibility. If a student had a life-threatening health issue at school, there would be inadequate support or help.

Finally, it was evident from the children's perspectives that the provision of appropriate environments for children's learning and well-being was absent at school. The appropriate environments for children require feeling loved and cared for in the classroom, that no one hits or threatens them, and no one discriminates between them. The students felt safe if others listened to them, believed them, and respected them. In terms of hygiene, 'safe' meant that students live in a place that respects them and its facilities are suitable for human use and do not adversely affect their health, both physically and morally. All this means appropriate environments for children in the context of the responses in the focus group. The focus group with children confirmed several kinds of violation of UNCRC in primary schools. The next section summarises the above discussion of the analysis and results of the focus group with children.

6.4 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter revealed the analysis and result of the focus group with children. The results showed that children have some awareness of their rights and the most common right that children were aware of was the right to education. Furthermore, children believe in the importance of these rights and the role of adults in facilitating their enjoyment of their rights.

The focus groups with children revealed many issues regarding the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education. The findings indicate that the safety of students is not ensured in school, as shown by their fear of adults at school and the inappropriate use of power by adults and some peers. For instance, those with power in school used their power to intimidate students by using physical and emotional punishments. This was perpetrated by educators, school security guards, the school bus driver, and bullying students. In addition, students' health was compromised by unclean facilities.

Furthermore, children mentioned that they did not have the freedom of expression and choice in school and that the activity classes and leisure time at school were not used to improve children's skills. In spite of these problems, however, students did not complain about the violence that they faced because of their fear of adults, as well as a society that teaches children to submit to those with power and to respect adults in general.

These were the main findings from the analysis of the focus group with children. The next section discusses the analysis and the results of the focus group with teachers.

CHAPTER 7: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THE FOCUS GROUP WITH TEACHERS

7.1 Introduction

A teachers' focus group was conducted. Five female primary school teachers participated. This was done following the analysis of interviews with principals, the questionnaires completed by teachers, and the focus group with children. The dialogue with the teachers was recorded and transcribed directly from discussions that occurred within the focus group. NVivo software was used to complete the analysis.

The main aim of this focus group study was to clarify the major issues that emerged from the data obtained from principals, teachers, and children. This chapter is inherently dependent on these issues. It is also divided into three sections as follows. **Section 7.2** discusses awareness of children's rights, while **Section 7.3** discusses the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education. The barriers to the implementation of UNCRC at school are discussed in **Section 7.4** and **Section 7.5** reveals the summary of the chapter.

7.2 The Teachers' Awareness of Children's Rights

Although most of the principals posited that teachers have no awareness of children's rights in their interviews, in the focus group, teachers disagreed with the principals. They said that they are aware of children's rights, as they had studied them before. Mrs. Sultana said, *'I have studied children's rights before'*. Mrs. Mariam and Mrs. Latifa agreed with Mrs. Sultana's statement regarding their familiarity with children's rights. Mrs. Latifa confirmed that she studied children's rights from the Islamic perspective and that those are the same rights as those covered in the UNCRC. This was consistent with the results of the questionnaire and one of the principal's interviews, in which it was stated that the teachers studied children's rights in the context of Islam, although not in the context of the UNCRC, while they were at university. Mrs. Huda, one of the principals, mentioned that the way teachers treat their students manifests in their lack of awareness regarding children's rights. One of the students also suggested that the way teachers treat students is evidence that children's rights are not implemented in schools. Mrs. Mariam rejected this idea:

The poor way teachers' deal with their students is relative, and we cannot generalise it to all teachers. I cannot say that it is not true, but it is rare.

She thus confirmed that physical punishment is still used at school by teachers.

The teachers agreed that the training courses they attend annually as a part of their evaluations help improve their awareness of children's rights. They mentioned that there are some compulsory training courses related to the curriculum that are taught by teachers, as well as other elective courses they can take in order to complete the number of required courses. In this regard, Mrs. Reem said:

As a part of their evaluations, teachers are required to attend 10 courses per year, some of which are compulsory. However, I have not heard of any courses that focus on children's rights, although this topic might be discussed as a part of a course theme.

Mrs. Mariam agreed with Mrs. Reem and added:

Many courses, such as those about children's behaviour modification or about the right way to treat students, discuss children's rights as a side theme.

Mrs. Sultana, Mrs. Latifa, and Mrs. Hanan agreed with Mrs. Reem and Mrs. Mariam that some of the training courses deal with one or more children's rights ideals, although they do not teach children's rights as a specific topic. They also confirmed that these courses are optional; therefore, it is not possible to verify that all teachers have attended these courses. Improvements in their awareness of children's rights may thus be limited. This finding related to only 25.8% of the teachers who completed the questionnaire and who confirmed that they had attended some training courses regarding children's rights from an Islamic perspective while they worked as teachers. Only 6% of the teachers surveyed confirmed that they had attended courses on the UNCRC.

While the teachers maintained that they had an awareness of children's rights, some of them believed that the use of physical punishment was an acceptable way to modify child behaviour. Mrs. Latifa said:

I believe that parents should use occasional physical punishment in raising their children.

Mrs. Hanan agreed with Mrs. Latifa, while Mrs. Reem said:

It is an unacceptable way to treat children. I do not agree with it, and it is not in line with our religion (Islam) to use such harshness with children.

Mrs. Mariam also expressed disagreement with the use of physical punishment with children, but she justified it for some adults who choose to use it by saying that they are nervous as a result of the child's behaviour. In contrast, Mrs. Sultanah said:

I believe that parents can discipline their children in a way that is both acceptable and effective. I do not agree with the use of physical punishment, but it is one of the ways used to discipline children. So, if the parent feels that the circumstances require the use of this kind of punishment, it is okay for them to use it. As I said, it is a disciplinary tool.

Mrs. Hanan agreed with that and added:

Every parent knows their children well; they are the only people who understand their children and wish the best for them. So, they can use disciplinary methods that they feel suit them and their children.

Four of the teachers agreed with the use of physical punishment by parents, which confirmed their belief that children are the property of their parents, as well as the fact that the culture affects the teacher's understanding of children's rights. This also exemplified the cultural belief about children belonging to their parents, which was mentioned by principals and surfaced in children's conversations and in the questionnaire analysis. Therefore, although teachers have some awareness of children's rights, this awareness is affected by their culture which, in turn, influences their interpretations and implementation of these rights.

7.3 Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education

The discussion of the teachers' perspectives on the implementation of UNCRC in Saudi primary education focuses on the following four aspects in the sections of the following discussion. 9.3.1 covers school activities, 9.3.2 discusses discrimination at school, 9.3.3 takes a closer look at freedom of expression, thought, and religion at school, and 9.3.4 analyses children's safety at school.

7.3.1 School activities.

This section discusses the issues that emerged from the findings of the principals' interviews, children's focus groups, and teachers' questionnaire regarding the activities at school. The activities in which children engage at school are diverse. There are activity classes, which are two hours on a weekly basis, celebrations, and other varied activities. There is also leisure time, which is unsupervised by the class teacher.

Mrs. Reem described the activities classes as follows:

Activity classes consist of groups of students with one or two teachers to manage the groups. Each group engages in a specialised activity, such as arts or cooking. The teacher supervises the activities at school and is responsible for distributing the tasks to each group.

Mrs. Mariam added:

Every week, the activities supervisor determines the work that should be done during the allotted activity time and provides groups with the equipment that they need to complete their assigned tasks. For example, one week she may visit the activity groups' teachers and tells them that the theme of the week's activities should be the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. All the groups are therefore expected to produce work about this subject.

Mrs. Hanan added:

The teachers in each activity group are periodically required to provide the activities supervisor with a file of the completed work.

The activities at school have aims that should be achieved. The themes of the activity classes are predetermined by the MoE and are the same in all Saudi schools, as mentioned by Mrs. Latifah and Mrs. Hanan. The fact that the MoE pre-plans school activities and requires someone to supervise them confirms the Ministry's belief that such activities are important. The teachers agreed that these plans are not implemented, which was also mentioned by the students. Mrs. Sultanah said:

I have worked in three different schools, and the activity plans have never been implemented in any of them.

Mrs. Reem said:

Unfortunately, in the activity classes some teachers just stay in the class with students and have no work to do during this time. Others stand outside of the class, near the door. There are no activities in these classes.

This statement confirms the students' earlier claim that there are no real activities in these classes. The activity supervisor is a part of this failure, as Mrs. Reem indicated:

Twice a year, the supervisor is required to send a report on the activities that were put into practice at the school to the Education Office of Guidance and Supervision. To avoid accountability, the supervisor sends the report and says that the activities plan was implemented although it was not. The principals support this action.

Mrs. Mariam added:

There are those who manage the activities' supervisors in the Education Office of Guidance and Supervision, and they are required to visit schools to ensure the implementation of the activities plan. However, some of them do not visit the schools; rather, they just ask the activities' supervisor to send pictures of the work that has been done in activities classes at school—so, some might send fake pictures.

There is dereliction of duty in following up the implementation of the school activities plan by the schools' teachers and principals, as well as by the Educational Office of Guidance and Supervision.

As mentioned earlier, the school activities are not just those that are conducted in the activity classes. Many other school activities are included in the activities plan, as determined by the MoE. The teachers mentioned open-day activities, during which students sell goods under school supervision. Mrs. Mariam said:

The open-day activity has been initiated. Our schools make it as a beautiful open-air market.

Mrs. Reem agreed and explained why schools are interested in these kinds of activities:

The open-day activity is successfully implemented because it provides income for the schools.

Mrs. Sultanah and Mrs. Hanan agreed. Students have the opportunity to explore business as they buy and sell goods while they earn money for the school. Mrs. Reem said that some students do not agree with this type of activity, however:

Some problems have occurred at the schools because of these activities. Sometimes students pay to bring something to sell at the school's open-day activity. For example, once a group of students rented an ice cream machine and sold the ice cream at a high cost. The income was taken by the school, so the parents contacted the school and complained about it. They asked for a deal between the school and the students, asking the school to take just a percentage of the income rather than all of it.

The 'Little Business Woman' is an activity similar to the open-day activity and aims to improve the students' abilities in selling and trading. If the school takes the students' profits from this activity, along with the capital, the children will not feel that they are earning anything from their work, however, which makes the activity ineffective. Mrs. Hanan said:

In this activity, the school takes the child's efforts, earnings, and capital money.

This activity has thus lost sight of its goal. Because of that, it has also exploited the students' efforts in order to earn income for the school. To be exploited in this way is a violation of the children's rights.

Other activities that were mentioned by students in their discussions and once again by the teachers were celebrations, especially the National Day Celebration. This kind of celebration is compulsory for every school. Mrs. Hanan said:

The celebrations are compulsory and included in the activities plan without considering whether or not there is a suitable place available for these events.

The previous quote confirmed that teachers agreed with students about the lack of a suitable place for activities. The only places available for these activities were the school field and some small halls inside the school. Mrs. Reem said:

There is no place for activities or events in the school. The students sit on the ground in the school field. There are no chairs or carpets for students.

Mrs. Mariam added:

Students sit on the dirty floor, which is an indignity for the children. There should be a place equipped to hold these events. Unfortunately, none of the public schools provide a suitable place for celebration activities.

This kind of treatment shows disrespect to children, which is a violation of their rights. Some of the places where these activities must be held are not just dirty, but also cramped. Mrs. Reem said:

If the event is not held on the school field, it is held in a small hall inside the school. There are 300 to 400 students, sometimes even more, who are packed into small rooms. This overcrowding makes it hard for them to breathe, especially those who are suffering from an illness such as asthma.

Students mentioned feeling uncomfortable at these celebrations because these are held in unsuitable places. The events are intended for the children to enjoy and to improve their skills. If they feel uncomfortable, these goals will not be achieved.

Another problem with respect to school activities relates to children's participation. Mrs. Latifa said:

It is assumed that all the students are given the same chance to participate in the school assemblies, as every class takes responsibility for it for a whole week. The teacher is supposed to choose a group of students every day to ensure that all students in the class who want to participate are given the opportunity to do so by the end of the week. Unfortunately, the reality is different: There is a group of students in the school who repeatedly take over every school assembly or activity regardless of their class.

The previous quote illustrates that participation in activities is restricted to specific groups of children as Mrs. Reem said:

Participation in certain school events, such as the National Day Celebration, is predetermined, as there is a group of children who is known to participate in the events. There are no new faces.

Participating in presenting events and shows at school is therefore not for all children. Some children are simply spectators, with no chance to be a part of the events. Teachers appear to be the reason why the same children participate again and again in the same activities. Some children have skills in speech or in singing, or they might possess some other ability that could contribute to these kinds of activities and they need encouragement from their teachers to participate. Mrs. Reem, Mrs. Sultana, and Mrs. Latifa all stated, however, that they do not have the time to find those children and encourage them because they are busy administering the curricula.

Mrs. Reem and Mrs. Hanan agreed with each other regarding the fact that particular children have become used to organising and participating in activities, so teachers just work with them on the activity themes and supervise them while the other children do everything else. This leads to another violation of children's rights, discrimination against children. This is discussed next.

7.3.2 Discrimination at school.

Discrimination against children begins within society, because as mentioned by some of the children, there is inequality between boys and girls in some Saudi families. Mrs. Latifah agreed with this. She said:

Discrimination against children appears in our society, as some families prefer boys over girls. They justify this preference by stating that the boys retain the family name forever.

Mrs. Reem agreed with Mrs. Latifa's claim that the discrimination against children appears first in the Saudi society. Mrs. Reem, Mrs. Latifa, and Mrs. Mariam, however, agreed with the children, who pointed out that there is discrimination against children

at school.

Children mentioned that this discrimination might stem from the students' parents or from the students themselves. Mrs. Reem agreed with that and said:

A student might be treated differently because her mother works at the school or in the Educational Office of Guidance and Supervision or because her father is a senior official. Students with likeable personalities also might be treated better than students who are less likeable.

Mrs. Reem affirmed that the position of the child's parents determined the way in which they were treated by the school's employees. Mrs. Mariam also agreed with this.

Mrs. Latifa said that the children themselves influence the ways in which they are treated. She said that smart children tend to be treated better than other children:

I cannot stop myself from liking a student because of her personality. I am inclined to like her because of her good manners and intelligence.

Mrs. Mariam added another reason for preferential treatment by saying that the child of a social media celebrity will likely be treated better than other children. Mrs. Latifah, Mrs. Hanan, Mrs. Reem, and Mrs. Mariam confirmed that this discrimination applies only to how the children are treated; it does not affect their academic evaluations or their grades. This discrimination can also be observed in participation in school activities, as mentioned earlier. Mrs. Mariam said:

The children whose mothers work at the education sector participate in all the activities that their mothers attend.

Mrs. Latifa believed, however, that this type of discrimination creates a competitive environment among the children. While Mrs. Reem and Mrs. Mariam disagreed with Mrs. Latifa, they confirmed that this discrimination causes children to become jealous of each other and that leads to friction between the children. Teachers thus confirmed that there is discrimination at school and it has a negative impact on children.

7.3.3 Children's freedom of expression, thought, and religion at school.

The previous section confirmed that school activities are planned by the MoE and that the school is responsible for implementing the plan. This indicates that children are not given the right to choose the activities that they feel best meet their needs. That conflicts with the principals' perspectives, who maintained that children have the freedom to choose the activities they want, while the children argued that they do not have such freedom. The children also mentioned that there are student leaders at school who are given the responsibility of supervising other students. The children stated that

these leaders are chosen by teachers and are not elected by students, and the teachers confirmed this. Mrs. Reem said:

The student leaders are chosen by the school's administration or by teachers.

Children do not choose those who represent them as student leaders; rather, the student leaders are imposed upon them by the school staff. This finding further confirms that children lack freedom of choice at school.

Regarding the freedom of expression and speech, the teachers indicated that they listen to children, regardless of whether the children expressed their views, opinions, or even complaints. Mrs. Hanan said:

We are very kind to our students. We talk to them and listen to what they say. Even if they want to complain, we listen to them carefully and with interest.

The teachers also confirmed that the principals' office doors are open to children, who pass up their student advisor in favour of the principal. Mrs. Latifa said:

The principal in my school opens her doors to students. She talks and listens to the students. They go to her before their advisors because she welcomes them.

Mrs. Reem and Mrs. Hanan agreed. The children, however, claimed that although the principals listen to them, they take no actions to resolve their problems. It is not enough for principals to open their doors and listen to children when there is no sincere interest in what children are saying, or when no action is taken in order to address their concerns.

Mrs. Sultana said that such disinterest is rare and that, if the principals ignore the students' complaints, it is because their complaints are not serious or that the students are frequent complainers. By 'not serious' she meant, for example, that if the teacher simply touches the child's shoulder as a warning, the child considers it the same as hitting and complains about it. She thus did not consider threatening children as a kind of violence. This is prohibited in schools. Mrs. Reem agreed with Mrs. Latifa's assertion that principals rarely ignore children's complaints and added:

In general, the child's complaint should be taken seriously and investigated to determine whether or not it is valid. The child might need our help, so we cannot ignore her or any complaints she makes.

The teachers agreed with the principals' stated belief that children have the right of expression at school and that the school's educators listen to children with interest.

Teachers also confirmed, however, that some principals open their doors to children who they then exploit in order to learn about what happens in classes. Mrs. Sultana said:

In the fifth grade, there is a student who tells the principal about everything that happens in the class or even in the whole school. The principal uses this student as a 'spy'.

This confirmed a violation of UNCRC at school, as principals exploit their students to achieve their goals.

A serious issue concerning a child's freedom is the freedom of religion. The questionnaire responses revealed that 65.8% of the teachers did not agree with the item stating that children should have the freedom of thought, religion, and conscience; in other words, these teachers did not believe in the child's right to freedom of religion. Teachers in the focus group, however, did not agree with that. Mrs. Reem said:

Islam believes in the diversity of religions, as we believe in some of the Christian and Jewish prophets in their religious books. This is a part of our faith.

Mrs. Latifah agreed with Mrs. Reem in this regard. The teachers clarified the high percentage of questionnaire respondents who did not agree with this right, as this diversity does not appear in Saudi public schools, a statement with which Mrs. Hanan and Mrs. Reem agreed. Mrs. Hanan said:

Public schools students in Saudi Arabia are all Muslims. But the international schools have a mix of religious views. In these schools, they do not teach religion-related subjects, as they are under the supervision of the MoE; however, they do not teach the Saudi curricula. The Saudi government has given the right to any international group to open, with their country's embassy, schools in which they may teach the curricula of their country; they also have the right to teach their religions in those schools.

Although there is no religious diversity in public schools in Saudi Arabia, there is diversity of Islam doctrine (Madhhab). There are two groups of Muslims in Saudi Arabia: Sunnah and Shia. The Saudi Arabian regime, however, is Sunnah. Mrs. Reem said:

The diversity of doctrine in Saudi Arabia, which is both well-known and slight, is determined in some cities that are in the east of Saudi Arabia. If the parents of the child do not need their child to study religious subjects, they can make that request, and the school will not deny their request. Also, the parents, and not the school, are responsible for teaching their children about their religion or doctrine.

Mrs. Hanan agreed that children who adhere to non-Sunnah doctrines should

not participate in Islamic studies at school and have the right to learn about any aspect of their cultures outside of school. Mrs. Mariam said:

The Saudi schools are Islamic schools that teach the basics of Islam, which is nearly the same in any Islamic doctrine. So, a child who adheres to any Islamic doctrine needs to learn these basic issues of the religion.

The teachers thus believed in the diversity of religion and doctrine and the right of the child to learn about his or her religion, but not in Saudi Arabian public schools.

7.3.4 Children's safety at school.

This section discusses the issues related to children's safety at school. The first issue related to children's safety at school pertains to the uncleanliness of the school toilets, which might affect children's health. Children stated that the school toilets are not suitable for use. In this regard Mrs. Sultana said:

I think the uncleanliness of the school facilities is because of the careless way students use them and the students' failure to practise cleanliness.

Mrs. Reem agreed with Mrs. Sultana about the children's carelessness. They also mentioned that children do not take their rubbish to the bin, but leave it anywhere. Mrs. Reem explained:

Students leave their rubbish behind after using the school facilities. Their leftovers of food, papers, and anything else remain after they have left the place, although rubbish bins are available throughout the school. Unfortunately, children in our society have learned that they can leave their rubbish anywhere, and the maid will clean up after them. Children bring their home cultures with them to school, so it is not easy to change them. We cannot teach them to be responsible. The principles of cleanliness should be learned at home from early childhood.

Mrs. Reem agreed that it is normal in some cultures to have someone assume another's responsibilities. Children thus grow up with no responsibility, which makes it difficult to teach them about the culture of rights and duties. Mrs. Hanan argued that they are young children and that they could not clean up after themselves even if they tried.

Mrs. Mariam agreed:

I agree that little children should learn to be responsible for their use of the facilities and for their cleanliness, but we're talking about primary school students who cannot perfectly clean up after themselves. There should be a worker at school to clean up after them.

Mrs. Reem, Mrs. Latifa, Mrs. Hanan, and Mrs. Sultanah agreed about the importance of providing workers at school for cleaning. Mrs. Reem said:

We need a worker to clean the school toilets daily. There are almost 300 students who use just 10 toilets. These toilets need to be cleaned many times a day. Unfortunately, there is no one to clean them.

The children have confirmed before that there is no one to clean toilets at their schools. There is, however, a janitor at each school, but as Mrs. Sultana mentioned, this person is viewed as an office worker, so she does not clean any of the school's facilities.

Principals have a contract with a cleaning company and pay for its services from the school budget. Some principals have a contract for simple cleaning on a daily basis and a deep clean at the end of the week. Others prefer to have a contract for deep cleaning once a week with no daily cleaning. Mrs. Reem said:

The company that our school has a contract with comes daily to sweep the school with no cleaning solutions or even water. At the end of the week, they used water, with no cleaning solutions, to clean the school.

Mrs. Hanan's school has a contract with a company for a deep cleaning once a week, with no daily cleaning, which leaves toilets and other school facilities dirty and unsuitable for use. Because the school's educators do not consider this acceptable enough for the facilities they use, teachers mentioned that they bring in private workers to clean their offices and toilets. They pay for these services with their own money, so the workers they bring in are responsible only for cleaning the facilities that the education staff members, including the principal, use. Such a disparity is a type of discrimination, as the school facilities that children use remain dirty, or are barely cleaned for an entire week. The educators' facilities are, in fact, different. As mentioned earlier, aside from the indignity of children having to use dirty facilities, their rights are violated and their safety at school is threatened by these unsanitary conditions.

Children's safety is also threatened by others at school, including teachers, school bus drivers, and other students. Both the children and the principals mentioned that some teachers are cruel to children at school. Teachers confirmed that children are subjected to inappropriate and harsh language by educators and other children. Mrs. Hanan and Mrs. Mariam posited that this phenomenon has almost disappeared, while Mrs. Reem said:

These days, teachers are more aware of what language is acceptable to use with children. Older teachers might use bad words with their students, but the younger teachers do not use this type of language in their daily lives, so how could they use it at school, where their jobs could be jeopardised by being rude towards students?

Mrs. Latifa mentioned that the teachers who use these words in their daily life at home

usually do the same at school because they feel that it is acceptable and because they are used to it. Mrs. Mariam, Mrs. Hanan, and Mrs. Reem agreed.

The children claimed that some teachers hit children, and this was confirmed by the principals. Mrs. Mariam said:

It is rare for a teacher to hit a student. I cannot say that it does not happen, but it is rare.

According to Mrs. Hanan and Mrs. Mariam, physical punishment, while prohibited and rare, does take place at school. Mrs. Mariam said:

It is prohibited to expose students to any means that are prejudicial to their dignity.

Mrs. Mariam's statement was confirmed by 80.9% of those who completed the questionnaire, as well as by the principals. Teachers are not permitted to harm students in any way. Mrs. Hanan said:

If children are punished in any way that might hurt them, even if it is not physically, I might be placed in a bad situation, as there will be an investigation and a sanction for that. It could result in dismissal from my job.

While the use of physical punishment is not allowed at schools, some teachers nonetheless continue to use it.

Teachers gave some reasons for the use of physical punishment at school. As mentioned earlier, teachers deal with children in the same ways that they do in their daily lives. Mrs. Reem agreed with Mrs. Asma, one of the principals, that teachers who hit children were likely hit when they were children. Mrs. Reem said:

Some teachers use the means that were used on them as they grew up. They were hit at school or at home. They grew up to believe that hitting is the most suitable way to treat children. So, they use it with their students or even with their own children at home.

Mrs. Reem confirmed that she was one of those children who were subjected to hitting at school by their teachers:

Because they have felt this type of pain, those who have been hurt should try to avoid hurting others. My teacher hit me when I was in fifth grade, and, as a result, I suffer even now. It made me lack self-confidence and caused me to be afraid of people in power, like the school principal.

Mrs. Mariam, Mrs. Sultana, Mrs. Latifa, and Mrs. Hanan all confirmed that their teachers were cruel to them. Mrs. Mariam added another reason why some teachers hurt their students:

Children with certain personalities are hurt by their teachers. These children do not complain about harsh treatment. Their teachers know that hurting these children is acceptable, as no one will ever know about it.

Mrs. Mariam agreed with the principals that children do not report violence because they do not know their rights and added that this silence leads to further violations of their rights. Mrs. Sultanah and Mrs. Mariam added that some teachers deal with pressure in their lives and thus might not be aware of their behaviour with the children. Some teachers use children to vent their rage and despair.

Beside the cruelty from teachers to children, other individuals who threaten children's safety at school are school bus drivers. While the principals confirmed that there are teachers who are responsible for ensuring the safety of children who use school buses, children mentioned that this is not enough, as some of the school bus drivers have abused them. Mrs. Sultana said,

The teacher responsible for students who use the school bus is not doing more than organisational work; she simply takes down the students' details and lines them up at the bus gate. That is all she does—nothing more.

Mrs. Hanan and Mrs. Reem agreed. Mrs. Mariam, Mrs. Reem, and Mrs. Sultana stated, however, that there is an allowance for the teachers who are assigned this responsibility. Mrs. Reem, Mrs. Mariam, Mrs. Sultanah, Mrs. Latifa, and Mrs. Hanan agreed with children about the importance of having a female adult accompany children on the bus for their protection. Mrs. Mariam said:

The MoE requires schools to offer a worker who is wholly responsible for students who use the school bus in each school. This responsibility includes being with them on the bus. It is dangerous to leave young students alone with the driver, who might have a problem such as paedophilia. We have to protect children from danger.

Mrs. Reem agreed with that. Mrs. Sultanah, however, said:

The students' protection should be a function of the school bus staff instead of adding it to a teacher's workload.

Mrs. Mariam agreed that someone should take responsibility for the children's safety on the bus, and that this responsible body or person should be someone working in the school.

Children's safety at school is not only threatened by adults, but also by student bullies. Teachers in the focus group confirmed the presence of bullying in the schools.

Mrs. Hanan said:

There are many acts of bullying at my school, especially those involving stealing from each other. I know that a student in my class steals from her classmates. When the students lose something, I know it is because of that student. I try to return the object without hurting her. I usually say to all the students, 'Let's try to find the thing that your classmate lost. It might be under your desk.' The responsible student usually returns the stolen object this way.

Mrs. Reem stated that there are many instances of stealing in her school also, and, as mentioned earlier by Mrs. Hanan, the school staff members try to find whatever is lost, usually stationery, or sometimes money. The school reimburses a child for anything that is stolen from her. Mrs. Hanan, Mrs. Reem, and Mrs. Latifah confirmed that schools do their best to help children who have had something stolen from them, which contradicts the children's claim that no one helps them in these cases. The way these kinds of cases are handled depends on the educators at school and their efforts they feel are appropriate.

Mrs. Reem stated that bullying behaviour is a concern and that bullies need to be treated. Mrs. Hanan agreed:

Bullying is a psychological problem, as the bullying child feels inferior to, or is jealous, of others, so she tries to hurt them. It is for the student advisor to work with these children and to help them rid themselves of these feelings.

As mentioned by both the principals and the children, the student advisor may, however, not be qualified to tackle these kinds of problems and help students.

Mrs. Sultana posited that the school's educators encourage students to be bullies. As she mentioned earlier, there was a child who had been exploited by her principal and had been used as a 'spy'. She said that this child feels that she is better than others, as she is the principal's friend and this encourages her to hurt others. Sometimes school employees support the bullying at school in this way instead of resolving it.

This section has highlighted some issues that students face at school which threaten their safety. The following section discusses the teachers' perspective on the barriers to the implementation of children's rights.

7.4 Barriers to the Implementation of Children's Rights at School

The teachers agreed with the principals about their society, because the members of such a society do not have an awareness of children's rights, which plays an important part in hindering the implementation of the UNCRC. While Mrs. Reem agreed with this, she also posited that society has a better awareness than before:

Society is not aware of children's rights. But our society is no longer an extremist society. On the contrary, today's society has become more open and far different from that of the past, but the culture of children's rights is still absent.

Mrs. Mariam and Mrs. Latifa also agreed that Saudi society has become a more conscious society. Mrs. Sultanah, however, said:

Our society is conscious in general, but there are still some illiterate people who affect others negatively.

Mrs. Sultanah agreed with Mrs. Nora (one of the principals) that society has changed with regard to awareness in general but she believed that a small number of people still have a poor relationship with social change and thus attempt to stop it. The changes in awareness in general, however, do not confirm the improvement of society's awareness about children's rights, as it appears from the discussion that this awareness is absent in Saudi society.

Teachers also mentioned three more issues as barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education. These issues were the school buildings, the school budget, and heavy workloads for teachers. Mrs. Latifa and Mrs. Mariam agreed with Mrs. Huda and Mrs. Sara (two of the principals) that school buildings are not equipped for the implementation of children's rights. Mrs. Latifah said that there are no labs, such as computer or science labs, in her school. She also mentioned that the cafeteria is inadequate and that there are no rooms for educational resources or for the arts. Mrs. Mariam agreed with Mrs. Latifa, in that her school also does not have a room for educational resources. Also, as Mrs. Mariam's school applied the inclusive education that serves students with disabilities along with other students, she mentioned that the school building's design is not suitable for students with disabilities. She said:

There are no facilities for children with disabilities in the school. In addition, the school itself does not have passageways, lifts, or toilets for children with disabilities. The school is not suitable for children with disabilities though it is a mainstream school.

The MoE did not, in fact, take into account the requirements for children with

disabilities before choosing a school for inclusive education. This is a violation of the rights of children with disabilities and an example of how inclusive education is misunderstood in education.

Mrs. Hanan did not agree with Mrs. Mariam, as her school also applies inclusive education. It is, however, equipped to meet the needs of children with disabilities. The difference between Mrs. Mariam's school and Mrs. Hanan's school is that Mrs. Mariam's school is an older school with an older design, and Mrs. Hanan's school is a new school, with a new design that makes it suitable for inclusive education. Mrs. Latifa agreed, however, that old schools are completely unsuitable for implementing children's rights at all, whether that is for a child with a disability or an able-bodied child, while new schools are suitable.

Mrs. Reem commented on another type of school building that is unsuitable for implementing children's rights:

There are the leasehold and public buildings built by the MoE. Unlike the public buildings, the leasehold buildings are not at all suitable to apply children's rights. The plan is that by the end of 2018 there will be no more leasehold buildings.

The leasehold buildings are houses that the MoE rents for use as schools. Children's rights aside, their design makes them unsuitable for education purposes as there are no labs, rooms are limited, the number of toilets is not enough, and they are designed as homes rather than schools. Mrs. Sultana agreed with Mrs. Huda (one of the principals) that private schools are more suitable for the implementation of children's rights than public schools, especially as it pertains to the cleanliness of school facilities. Mrs. Reem clarified:

Private schools are an investment, and the owners use their own money to improve their schools and maintain high standards. There is competition among investors: each wants their school to be the best.

The previous discussion reveals that, the teachers agreed with that the old buildings and the leasehold buildings are not adequate for implementing the UNCRC, while the new buildings are more suitable.

Despite the unsuitability of the old buildings in ensuring children's rights and the shortage of equipment and facilities in these buildings, some of them were chosen for use as schools for inclusive education, which is a violation of children's rights, especially the rights of those with disabilities. It is negligent for the MoE to denote such schools for inclusive education; they should first examine the school with its function

in mind, in order to ensure that the requirements for inclusive education are met. The MoE has therefore shown a dereliction of duty in this regard.

With respect to the earlier mentioned issue regarding the lack of financial support, the teachers agreed with principals and some of the questionnaire respondents that schools faced some financial issues that have a negative effect on children's rights. From the teachers' perspective, shortages in school budgets are another barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia. As mentioned earlier, there are not enough funds in the budget to pay for a cleaning company and to ensure the cleanliness of the school. Furthermore, the teachers mentioned that they used their own money to pay for school equipment. For example, Mrs. Sultana said that she had bought a projector for her class because she needed it in her teaching daily and the school did not have enough projectors. Also, Mrs. Reem said:

The school budget is small and does not cover all of the school's needs. The principal of our school uses her own money to pay for the services that the school needs, such as cleaning services.

If the budget were sufficient, neither the principals nor the teachers would have to use their own money to cover the school's needs. Another problem Mrs. Mariam mentioned is that school budgets are the same for all schools, both inclusive schools and non-inclusive schools. Mrs. Mariam added that there are no specific items in the school budget for the special needs of children with disabilities. An inadequate school budget is another example of the MoE's neglect of their responsibilities to schools.

The teachers perceived the fourth barrier to the implementation of children's rights at primary schools to be teachers' inordinate workloads. In the previous discussion, teachers mentioned the heavy workload many times and also posited that it prevents them from thinking about the children and their rights. Mrs. Hanan said:

I have 45 minutes, and in this time, I'm expected to give the lesson, review the students' books, correct their notebooks, and determine the homework for the new lesson, which I am supposed to write on the lower-grade students' assignment recorder, all while ensuring that the upper-grade students write it correctly.

Mrs. Reem added that teachers must write a daily comment on the students' recorder for the whole class, which usually consists of 38 students. Evaluations of the teachers by the school principals depend on the completion of these tasks. Mrs. Hanan said that the principal takes a random sample of the students' books, notebooks, and assignments recorders to ensure that the teacher has written her comments and corrections. She added that teachers focus on receiving a good evaluation more than on their

students' improvements. Mrs. Latifa added:

They evaluate our work by ensuring that we have done all these tasks within the 45 minutes allotted for each class. Most teachers have at least four classes every day, which are successive and without breaks. Every teacher teaches at least two different curricula, and some of them teach as many as five. This workload puts a lot of pressure on us.

The teachers mentioned that they are responsible not only for their classes and curriculum, but that they are also required to take a rotating duty shift, which requires them to be the first to arrive at school and the last to leave the school after ensuring that no students or workers remain inside the school. Also, the teachers' duty shift requires teachers to supervise students during the lunchtime. Mrs. Sultana said:

It is not only our curriculum. We are responsible for the activities classes and have to take as many as two teachers' duty shifts a month. Also, if a teacher is absent, we must attend her class to ensure that the students do not disturb other classes.

Mrs. Reem said that because of the heavy workload, teachers do not have time to improve their skills. The heavy workloads thus prevent teachers from focusing on the children and ensuring their rights. They do not have the time to learn about these rights, or to teach them to their students. They do not focus on the children and their problems, because doing so might affect the teachers' evaluations, especially if they do not complete the required tasks every day.

Finally, Mrs. Mariam mentioned another important issue as a barrier to the implementation of children's rights:

The legislation exists, but no one is committed to it. It is a sociocultural issue, not a legislation issue.

Saudi Arabian society and its culture is the most important barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education.

To sum up, teachers determined that unsuitable school buildings, inadequate school budgets, and teachers' heavy workloads are some of the most significant barriers to the implementation of children's rights in primary schools in Saudi Arabia.

7.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presents the analyses and results of the teachers' focus group. It clearly demonstrates that teachers had studied children's rights in Islam and attended some training classes in which children's rights issues were discussed, if not included

as a specific focus. They did, however, lack awareness about the UNCRC.

It appears from the discussion with teachers that some violations of UNCRC occurred in schools. These violations include discrimination against children, a failure to meet the children's need to improve their skills by providing adequate activities, a lack of freedom of choice, exploitation of children, failure to protect children from harm such as abuse or threats to their health, and poor treatment of children in schools.

From the analysis of the focus group with teachers, it appears that they are aware about some aspects of children's rights because they studied children's rights in Islam and attended some courses that discussed some of the principles of children's rights. Furthermore, the teachers talked clearly about these rights, and they recognised the violation of these rights. Therefore, although the teachers were aware of children's rights, their role in influencing these rights and implementing them is affected by many factors that hinder that implementation. Factors that hinder implementation include inadequate school buildings and school budgets, teachers' heavy workloads, as well as the absence of oversight by the MoE. Society and culture are significant barriers. The next chapter will clarify and discuss the findings of my study.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

A discussion of the results is presented in this chapter in relation to the theoretical framework, literature review, and the context of Saudi Arabia. To understand the participants' perspectives and link them to wider insights on the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia, I used sociocultural and ecological theories as a framework of my study.

The discussion chapter comprises four sections related to the study questions as follows: **Section 8.2** discusses principals', teachers', and children's awareness of the UNCRC. The implementation of the UNCRC in primary education from the perspective of the study sample is discussed in **Section 8.3**. **Section 8.4** examines barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education from the perspective of principals and teachers. Lastly, **Section 8.5** presents a summary of the chapter.

The discussion chapter focuses on the main conceptual issues apparent in chapters four, five, six and seven. The following section looks at findings regarding principals', teachers' and children's awareness of children's rights.

8.2 Awareness of Children's Rights

In determining principals', teachers' and children's awareness of the UNCRC, the findings of this study were diverse, as shown in the preceding four chapters. In this section, which is divided into two parts based on the study groups (educators and children), the results will be discussed in detail.

8.2.1 Educators' awareness of children's rights.

This section answers the first question of my study: do educators (i.e., teachers and principals) have an understanding of children's rights that accords with that of the UNCRC? The data yielded by this study provide strong evidence that educators in primary education have a limited awareness of the UNCRC, while they have an awareness of children's rights derives from an Islamic perspective. The findings about the educators' awareness of children's rights will be discussed in the following three sections: Section 8.2.1.1 looks at educators' awareness of the UNCRC; Section 8.2.1.2 considers educators' awareness of children's rights in Islam, and Section 8.2.1.3 discusses misunderstandings of children's rights.

8.2.1.1 Educators' awareness of the UNCRC.

My study confirmed that educators have limited awareness of the UNCRC, with four of five principals having never previously heard of it. Furthermore, only 37.5% of teachers had heard of the UNCRC. This provides evidence to confirm that educators lack awareness of the UNCRC. This finding could be supported by Isaac (2010) who found that a high proportion of Saudi kindergarten teachers in Makkah Al-mukarrama were unaware of the UNCRC. Similarly, Mohammed and Ibrahim (2011) found a lack of awareness about the UNCRC and children's rights in general among kindergarten teachers and school principals in Egypt's Qalyubia Governorate.

My finding is supported also by the studies of Alakroush and Alzayoud (2011) and Alzabon, Almouadia and Almouajda (2016), Campbell and Covell (2001), and Homed (2009), who also found that educators lack awareness of the UNCRC and its articles in Jordan, Canada, and Arab Gulf countries. The UNCRC came with some obligations and responsibilities that adults should provide for children. The result shows that if educators are not aware of the UNCRC, they will be unaware of their responsibilities and obligations towards children to ensure that their rights are realised.

According to Alakroush and Alzayoud (2011), and Alzabon et al. (2016), the lack of awareness of the UNCRC among educators in Jordan is due to university academic programmes that focus on preparing teachers academically without developing their social awareness, including awareness on the topic of children's rights. Khoury-Kassabri and Ben-Arieh (2009) agreed, finding that university studies in Jerusalem did not prepare educators with regards to the UNCRC. Similarly, my study found that university study does not improve educators' awareness of the UNCRC, as five of five principals, 67.7% of teachers in the questionnaire and the five teachers in the focus group confirmed that they did not study the UNCRC at university.

Moreover, awareness of the UNCRC requires knowledge of its articles, which implies having read the convention. This study found that 71% of teachers, and four out of five principals, had not read the UNCRC before even though there are copies available in both Arabic and English. This finding supports Isaac's study (2010), which reported that kindergarten teachers in Saudi Arabia had never read the UNCRC. Based on the interviewees' opinions, the MoE and even children's rights organisations do not improve educators' awareness of the UNCRC because they do not dispatch a copy of it to schools. Alakroush and Alzayoud (2011) supported this finding, mentioning that the

MoE and children's rights organisations in Jordan did not dispatch their publication about the UNCRC (or even brochures) to schools, which would have helped spread knowledge about the UNCRC. In Saudi Arabia, this failure to distribute information about the UNCRC not only limited educators' awareness of the convention, but also their awareness of laws that aim to protect children in Saudi Arabia, such as the Child Protection Law.

Although principals lacked awareness of the UNCRC, they are aware of some aspects of children's rights as they were able to name two rights: the rights to education and protection. The right to education was mentioned by two out of five principals. In addition, the child's right to education obtained the highest percentages of endorsement by teachers in the questionnaire. The principals' and teachers' belief in the right of every child to education may reflect the popularity of education in Saudi society; statistics show that 96.45% of children in Saudi Arabia were enrolled in primary school in 2016, with a drop-out rate not exceeding 6% (Ministry of Education, 2016).

The high proportion of children enrolled in primary education in Saudi Arabia reveals that education has become part of the country's culture. This was confirmed by Alsaban in her interview in the *Al Watan* newspaper with Alfawaz (2011), in which she said that education in Saudi Arabia is not merely accepted today, it has become a requirement in life and something in which the society believes. This point of view was supported by Lundy (2012), who stated that education is widely accepted as a fundamental right in a large number of societies around the world. In Saudi Arabia, this right was acknowledged by the government through the establishment of the Compulsory Education Law, which emphasises that education is compulsory for all children aged 6 to 15 years old in Saudi Arabia (Abuelsameh, 2013).

The educators' awareness of the right to education may have been influenced by this law, which represents an important improvement in education in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, cultural endorsement of the importance of education may be a factor in awareness of this right. This has the result that denying the right to education is rare in Saudi Arabia, with Alfawaz (2011), noting that it occurs only in rural areas that are far from cities. As my study was conducted in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, it is not surprising that a high number of principals and teachers in the sample believed in the child's right to education. The right of education is not just about access to education, however; it is about the provision of high-quality education. The previous discussion confirmed that there is a structural inequality in Saudi Arabia against children in rural

areas who may not have access to education, despite the Islamic beliefs that support the educational rights for children and the Saudi policy that says that children must attend school.

The other right mentioned by principals was the child's right to protection, which involves keeping children safe and treating them in an appropriate manner. The child's right to protection was mentioned by three out of five of principals. Kepenekci (2006), in her study about university students' attitudes towards children's rights in Turkey, found that female students have a more positive attitude towards children's rights than the male students; in her view this was because of the maternal instinct. The principals in my study sample were all women. According to Kepenekci, the innate female desire to protect children, which may have led female principals in my study to believe that protection is one of the children's rights, may be an innate desire. Furthermore, women in Saudi Arabia have maternal roles and a need for greater sensitivity and a desire to protect children forced upon them due to Saudi culture, beliefs and history, which believes that bringing children up is of the women's responsibility alone. This is caused by the interpretation of the importance that is given to the mother by Islam, which they believe confirms that the mother has more obligations toward her children than the father. This finding reveals a problem; if Saudi Arabia is going to move forward and it is ambition to implement the UNCRC then there should be equal obligations for male and female adults towards children.

However, 98.6% of the questionnaire respondents confirmed that bringing up children is the responsibility of both parents and a high percentage of participants agreed with the child's protection rights. This might be because the rights to protection is a part of the child's rights in Islam, as mentioned in Section 2.3, of which educators have a rich awareness, as will be discussed in Section 8.2.1.2.

While the educators' knowledge of the UNCRC was limited, the majority of the questionnaire respondents agreed with most of the UNCRC articles included in the questionnaire. This means that, although teachers have limited awareness of the UNCRC, they are aware of some aspects of children's rights, in general, as clearly demonstrated in their ability to discuss these rights and the violation of these rights, as noted in Section 8.2.

This might be due to the educators knowledge of children's rights in Islam, as described below.

8.2.1.2 Educators' awareness of children's rights in Islam.

Islamic culture is an essential part of Saudi culture, and children's rights is an element of Islamic teachings, which are obligatory to all citizens in Saudi Arabia, as a Muslim nation (as mentioned in Section 1.4). People wishing to obey these teachings would obviously be aware of them, which may account for the study's finding that principals and teachers are aware of children's rights in Islam. These teachings are found in the main religious sources for Muslims: the Quran and the Sunnah, which believers are encouraged to read daily. The study sample suggests that Saudi citizens have some knowledge of children's rights in Islam as a part of their religion and culture. Bronfenbrenner (2005) suggested that religion is included in the macrosystem level of his ecological system as it is a part of culture, which is passed on from one generation to another through the socialisation process. Knowledge of children's rights in Islam is thus a part of Saudi culture that has been passed on through the generations.

These Islamic teachings on children's rights have been taught at university, as confirmed by one of the five principals, 61.7% of the teachers responding to the questionnaire and three of the teachers in the focus group. The educators' study of these rights at university undoubtedly raised awareness of them. So, due to the importance of Islam in all aspects of life in Saudi Arabia, the educators' awareness about children's rights in Islam is greater than their awareness of the UNCRC. These are deeply cultural and religious beliefs that are not open to question or consideration of their utility in contemporary society. However, based on my findings, I argue that further work needs to be done in regard to educators' awareness about children's rights as, the awareness acquired from Islam is not sufficient to provide the necessary protection for children's needs and rights, as will be discussed in Section 8.3.

Moreover, the teachers' endorsement of most of the children's rights in the questionnaire, as mentioned in Section 8.2.1.1, could result from their knowledge of children's rights in Islam, which are almost the same as in the UNCRC, as noted by one of the five principals. The notion of similarity between the UNCRC and children's rights in Islam is supported by Bilbakay (2014). Bilbakay noted that the children's rights in the international legislation are similar to those described in the Quran and Sunnah. Because the teachers' knowledge of children's rights derived from an Islamic background, however, most teachers disagreed with the child's right to freedom of religion. This reflects the fact that freedom of religion is a controversial issue in Islam, and I suspect that the teachers may have preferred not to express their opinion explicitly because of religious concerns. Similarly, most teachers chose 'have no idea' on the item

about the rights of minority children to learn about their culture, as they do not face this situation in Saudi schools, as confirmed by the teachers in the focus group. Having not dealt with multi-faith schools before, the teachers preferred to answer, 'have no idea'. Therefore, it may be inferred that culture affects the teachers' agreement with some of the children's rights, as discussed above.

8.1.1.1 Misunderstanding of children's rights by educators.

The study's findings show that teachers are aware of some principles of children's rights but that they misunderstand some of these rights, including the definition of 'a child' according to the UNCRC and the matter of parental violence toward children, as discussed in this section. This misunderstanding of children's rights reveals tensions around the educators' perspectives of these rights, and how these rights should be implemented in the local cultural context, as discussed below.

The society's culture appeared to influence the principals' and teachers' perspectives on the UNCRC definition of a child. The results indicate that male teachers disagreed with the assertion that a child is any human being under 18 years old, while female teachers agreed with it. This confirms that there is diversity in the understanding of children's rights, a conclusion supported by Boushel's study (2014), which found dissimilarities in the understanding of children's rights among its sample of professionals who work with children in the UK. In the present case, this dissimilarity may be due to a Saudi culture that encourages dealing with a boy as with a man in order to instil 'masculine' qualities. This is a result of Saudi understandings of childhood, which are culturally determined. If they are treating male children as a full man, then it constitutes a denial of childhood and of the child's rights to a childhood. According to Vygotskiĭ (1987) humans inherit cultural concepts passed on from the old generation to the new one. The concept of the male child as a man is thus an inherited cultural concept.

Although teachers learned about children's rights in Islam and had a positive attitude toward the UNCRC, they believed in parental use of physical punishment. Minor punishments which do not cause injury are not considered to be violence in some societies (Freeman & Saunders, 2014). Saudi society is one of these; it tolerates corporal chastisement of children, especially by their parents, on the grounds that children should be submissive to parents. According to Imoh (2016), the main reason for the acceptance of this practice in many societies is that people consider it the best way to socialise children. This is reflected in the high value given to parents in Saudi

culture. This may confirm that, although they did not say it directly, teachers believed that a child is the property of his or her parents. Campbell and Covell (2001) argued that this belief can be detected in human behaviours. Additionally, the teachers agreed that parents have a right to rear their children as they see fit, which may be evidence of the teachers' endorsement of the prevailing view of children as the property of parents. Albaker (2013b) agreed with this idea, as she said that Saudi cultural beliefs support the idea that a child is the property of his or her parents. This is an important issue about the misuse of power. Helping children to achieve their rights is not about having power over them. The awareness of children's rights is affected by the culture of Saudi society. Such cultural influence, as Vygotskiĭ and Luria (1993) suggested, participates in the creation process of human thinking. On the one hand, we have the children's rights culture that comes from Islamic teachings and the UNCRC, which is fixed, but on the other hand, there are other external influences penetrating this culture and affecting it in many different ways.

In summary, the study's findings revealed that, although there is a limited awareness of the UNCRC among educators, they are aware of some aspects of children's rights, but their understanding of these rights is affected by the cultural context of Saudi society. According to Vygotskiĭ and Luria (1993), the culture and its social elements determine how the people think and act. Thinking with and through the tools of the culture embodies people's understanding and interpretation of cultural knowledge, including the knowledge of children's rights. Thus, the educators' understanding of children's rights in Saudi Arabia is affected by the Saudi cultural context. With regards to the culture of children's rights in Saudi Arabia, we can see that there are two different sources that affect awareness of children's rights. These are the Islamic culture and the international culture of children's rights that is portrayed in the UNCRC. Those different cultures create a space between them that needs to be filled. The space that is created is where social and cultural conventions of Saudi society seem to fail to respect and understand children's rights in Islam and to be willing to accept different international perspectives such as the UNCRC. Vygotskiĭ (1869-1934) and Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) emphasised the cultural role in the acquisition of knowledge. If the children's rights culture is absent, and conflicts in some parts with society, it will not be easy to disseminate the knowledge of the UNCRC. It is no wonder that the study shows a gap between the educators' awareness of children's rights from the Islamic perspective and the UNCRC. It is not only the issue of the educators' awareness about the children's rights that affects the implementation of these rights, it

is also the children's awareness of their rights, which is discussed in the next section.

8.2.2 Children's awareness of children's rights.

This section answers the second part of the first question of my study: do children have an understanding of children's rights that accords with that of the UNCRC? The results of the focus group with children revealed that although they have a limited awareness of the UNCRC they were aware of some concepts of children's rights in general, because they mentioned some of these, and they talked clearly about the violation of their rights. They also have an intuitive understanding of what is right and wrong, and how they experience any violations in their everyday lives.

The rights that children most frequently mentioned were their rights to education, to live with their parents, to nutrition, to be protected from violence, to healthcare, and to play.

The study indicated that children lacked awareness of the UNCRC. This is evident from the fact that, of the 36 children in the study sample, not one knew of the UNCRC. This finding is supported by Ejieh and Akinola's study (2009), which found that children's awareness of their rights as stated in the UNCRC was very limited in Nigeria. It is sometimes argued that if educators have no awareness of the UNCRC, children's knowledge of the UNCRC will be limited (Lundy, 2007).

After discussion in the focus group, however, the children showed a significant interest in these rights and their implementation. In a similar manner, the Zimbabwean children in Mutepfa's et al. study (2014) showed interest in the implementation of these rights. In contrast, Ejieh and Akinola (2009) found that children believed there is no need for children's rights. This difference may reflect the different areas in which the data were gathered, as my study was in the KSA while Mutepfa et al. (2014) was in Zimbabwe and Ejieh and Akinola (2009) was in Nigeria. The diversity of the children's attitudes may be due to the effects of their experiences and cultures. According to Vygotskij (1993) the individual's core reflects the environmental conditions that include the culture, people and history. People are therefore diverse in opinion depending on the environment surrounding them.

The children were asked to give a definition of their rights and their answers confirmed their lack of awareness of them. Only four of 36 children gave a meaningful definition of children's rights and the responsibilities of adults to children. Those children recognised adults' responsibilities to make children's rights practicable, which indicates that they have some knowledge regarding their rights.

Similar to Wyse's study (2001), although children were not aware of the UNCRC, when asked to give examples of their rights, they mentioned some significant principles of the children's rights. The number of children who mentioned these rights was less than 50%—16 of 36 children—which confirmed the limitations of their awareness of their rights. This finding is supported by Roscoe (2011), who found that in Canada, children have misunderstanding of their rights. Moreover, Khoury-Kassabri and Ben-Arieh (2009) found that children from traditional societies, such as Arab societies, were unlikely to understand their rights. Based on their findings, Saudi children, because they also belong to a traditional society, would be expected to have a limited awareness of their rights. According to Khoury-Kassabri and Ben-Arieh (2009), this is because traditional societies lack awareness of children's rights, suggesting that children cannot expect the support of their society in improving their knowledge in this regard. That might be because those traditional societies are afraid of changes that might affect their identity. As they do not have the awareness about the UNCRC, and the UNCRC is an international culture that might cause change in their societies, they therefore prefer to not learn about it or even support it.

The discussion with the children revealed that children have some knowledge about their rights but there are some conflicts between their awareness of their rights and their understanding of these rights. This may be due to children's lack of agency in Saudi families. The view of children as the property of parents means that they have a lack of agency, and that may cause them to misinterpret their rights. The lack of agency implies a subjective and subordinate positioning of children in families, schools and society, which prevents them from enjoying their rights; this is an important issue. It is a significant barrier, preventing children from achieving their rights in Saudi Arabia. According to sociocultural theory, individuals are formed within their social and cultural environments, which influences their perceptions, skills and intellectual capabilities (Vygotskiĭ & Luria, 1993). Vygotskiĭ stated that culture precedes the existence of a child; therefore, children accept the culture they are immersed in when they are born (Van der Veer, 1991). Once children become part of their specific environment, they are subject to rapid changes in order to adapt using means that were generated historically by adults within the same environment (Vygotskiĭ & Luria, 1993). Therefore, children accept the culture's norms even if these norms deny them their rights, due to them being in a less powerful position than adults.

Due to the influence of society on children's awareness of their rights, some children in my study believed in parents' and teachers' rights to punish children by

beating them. This is because disciplining children by beating them is traditional in some parts of Saudi society. Furthermore, these children grow up in a culture of obedience to those in authority, such as parents and teachers, therefore they do not consider the use of physical punishment by parents and teachers to be child abuse. Albaker (2013a) noted that the understanding of 'child abuse' is affected by culture, as what is considered abuse in some cultures is an acceptable method of childrearing in others. This indicates that in Saudi Arabia there are some areas for debate, as there are certain voices offering different interpretations about acceptable and unacceptable practices against children. However, in the context of Saudi Arabia, religious influences on the interactions between people with each other and between people with the community are significant and beating children is encouraged by the religion (even though it is just in one specific situation, as mentioned in Section 2.3). The experience of the use of physical punishment is normalized because it is reinforced by the social environment and, according to Vygotskiĭ (1997), the social environment determines the individual's experiences.

Ejeh and Akinola (2009) and Khoury-Kassabri and Ben-Arieh (2009) supported Albaker's view, confirming that children's awareness of their rights is affected by their backgrounds and cultural norms. This could be explained by Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) and (2005), a child's behaviour and beliefs are affected by interactions with many factors surrounding him or her, and the factors that are closer to the child have greater influence. The family is the closest factor to the child, and its influence affects the child for all her or his life. Consequently, a child's beliefs and behaviours derive from their family's input at the beginning, then other factors from the society will contribute to the child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The danger, therefore, is that children are powerless to change their circumstances when adults do not convey their obligations and responsibilities toward children, which may lead them to reproduce what happens to them by applying it to others such as their peers, siblings, or even their own children in the future. According to Vygotskiĭ (1997), the individual's collection of experiences is transmitted from previous generations and creates his or her behaviour. He added that the individual's reaction towards others influences their behaviour.

Education was the right most mentioned, being cited by eight students. This confirmed that children agreed with educators about the importance of education as a right for all children, and, as shown previously, this reflects their society's belief in the importance of education. According to Beiter (2006), education is the most accepted

right in the world. This is supported by Mangamu's study (2013), which found that education is the right that children more commonly know about. Children in his study were also aware of healthcare and nutrition rights, which supports my study's findings, with the difference that in my study these rights were not as well known, with only three students mentioning the right to nutrition and one the right to healthcare. The rights to life, to live with parents, to play, and to protection from violence were also mentioned by the children in my study, but no more than four students mentioned them.

The preceding discussion answers the second part of the first question of my study: do children have an awareness of the UNCRC? The findings indicate that children have limited awareness of the UNCRC, but they are aware of some aspects of children's rights in general. The most commonly known among children was the right to education. The children's understanding of their rights is influenced by their cultural context. The next section will address the answer to the second question in my study, about the implementation of the UNCRC at schools from principals', teachers' and children's perspectives.

8.3 The Implementation of the UNCRC in Primary Education in Saudi Arabia

This section answers the second question of my study about the perspectives of the principals, teachers, and students on the implementation of the UNCRC at primary education in Saudi Arabia. According to the findings of my study, there have been some significant efforts by official authorities to apply the UNCRC, but the findings show that the results are unsatisfactory given the many violations of the UNCRC itself in primary education in Saudi Arabia. The four main issues faced by children in primary education that are discussed in Sections 8.3.1, 8.3.2, 8.3.3, and 8.3.4 respectively are the right to spread knowledge about the UNCRC, the child's right to be protected, the child's voice at school, and the right to an education.

8.3.1 The right to spread knowledge about the UNCRC.

The previous section indicated that the educators and children in the study sample lack awareness about the UNCRC and this is a violation of Article 42, which states, 'Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike' (UNICEF, 1989, p. 12). The dereliction of spreading knowledge about the UNCRC is a breach of the convention. This is supported by Lundy (2007) who claimed that it is a violation of the UNCRC if there is an absence of awareness about one of its articles, as spreading

knowledge of these rights is part of children's rights.

Furthermore, based on a study in Turkey, Kepenekci (2006) indicated that part of the reason for the implementation of the UNCRC is to educate the people, especially children and people who work directly with children, about the convention and its articles. However, the limited understanding about the importance of the UNCRC is the main reason its meaning and value are not spread. Sund and Vackermo (2015) argued that in some countries, policymakers found it easy to agree to sign the UNCRC, but there was no plan formulated for its implementation. They noted that other than producing some text about the convention, there was no strategy created for adopting the UNCRC. If policymakers do not take the necessary actions to increase the level of awareness about the UNCRC within the society, then Article 42 of the UNCRC will not be implemented. Kepenekci (2006) agreed that in Turkey the lack of awareness about the UNCRC is a reality because policymakers have not acted to broadcast its articles. The UNCRC is problematic from its policy through to its implementation not just in Saudi Arabia, but also in other countries.

This can be explained by a sociocultural perspective, which indicates that understanding of knowledge is linked to social and cultural influences on people and society (Vygotskiĭ & Luria, 1993). Some societies do not believe in children as subjects with rights, as mentioned by Kepenekci (2006), as is the case in Saudi culture, which believes children are subjects of their parents and have no individual rights beyond the parents' rights. The Saudi understanding of the UNCRC as an international concept might have negative effects on essential relationships, such as the relationship between children and their parents. Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014) said that educators and parents prefer children who are uninformed of their rights. As long as the society does not believe that the child is an individual with rights, the knowledge of the UNCRC will not be accepted. Furthermore, the implementation of the UNCRC will not progress if knowledge of the convention cannot be spread in a society that does not believe such things. According to Vygotskiĭ and Luria (1993), people's understanding and interpretations, which are parts of the function of thinking, are determined by the culture that they live in and its social elements. Cultural problems can be reproduced, or challenged, with each new generation.

8.3.2 The child's right to protection.

Based on the study's findings, some efforts were made by the official authorities in Saudi Arabia to implement the child's right to be protected from any kind of violence, abuse, and neglect as stipulated by laws and legislations. On the other hand, the findings showed many violations of these rights and the perspectives of principals, teachers, and children at primary schools will be discussed in this section.

The findings show that there are many official efforts to protect children in Saudi Arabia, such as establishing Child Protection Law, implementing Child Helping Hotline, and prohibiting violence against children at school. These efforts are in response to Article 19 of the UNCRC, which emphasised the child's right to protection from any kind of violence, abuse, or neglect (UNICEF, 1989). Child abuse is prohibited by law in many countries around the world, such as Venezuela, Kenya, Tunisia, and Brazil (Imoh, 2016). In 2014, national efforts were made in Saudi Arabia concerning the conservation of children's rights by organising the Child Protection Law. This law prohibits violence against children as stated in Article 2:

The child protection law aims to protect children from any kind of violence and neglect that they may face wherever they are, including home and school, regardless of who the violator is. (BECM, 2014, p. 1)

This law defined violence as any form of abuse, exploitation, or threat to a child. One of the principals, and 42.7% of the respondents to the questionnaire, confirmed that Child's protection Law have been dispatched to primary schools. Additionally, as is the case in other countries such as the UK and Yemen (Freeman & Saunders, 2014), corporal punishment is also prohibited at schools in KSA and the MoE emphasised this prohibition in its regularly issued circulars (UNICEF, 2017). This was confirmed by the study sample as it was mentioned by five principals and 80.9% of the questionnaire respondents and teachers in the focus group.

Furthermore, the Child Helping Hotline has been established to protect children from any kind of violence, neglect, and abuse. Four of the principals and 48.8% of the teachers said that the school provides children with the necessary knowledge about the Child Helping Hotline. Homed's study (2009) highlighted the importance of establishing this type of hotline to receive calls by children or their parents to report any child abuse cases with confidence and privacy. According to the annual report of the Child's Helping Hotline, this line received 272,088 calls in 2015, 30,478 of them were deemed serious (NFSP, 2015). In 2017, the number of serious calls received by the Child Helping Hotline has exceeded the numbers in 2015 and 2016 as reported by

NFSP (2017) with no determination of the exact number. According to NFSP (2017), 37% of those calls were in Riyadh, the site of the current study. Figures 8.1, 8.2, and show some details about these calls depending on the clients' gender, age, and the subject of the children's calls respectively as reported by NFSP (2017).

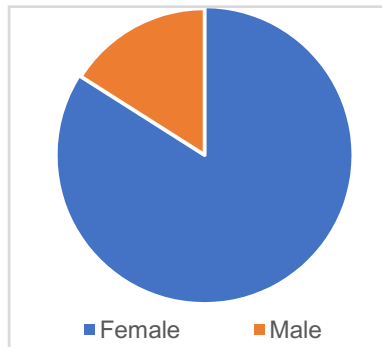


Figure 8.1 clients' gender

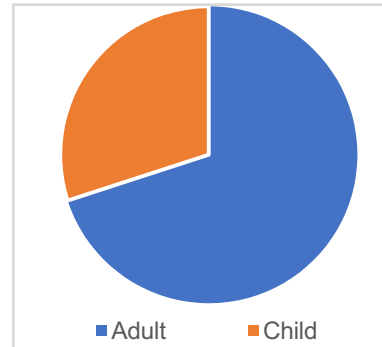


Figure 8.2 Clients' age.

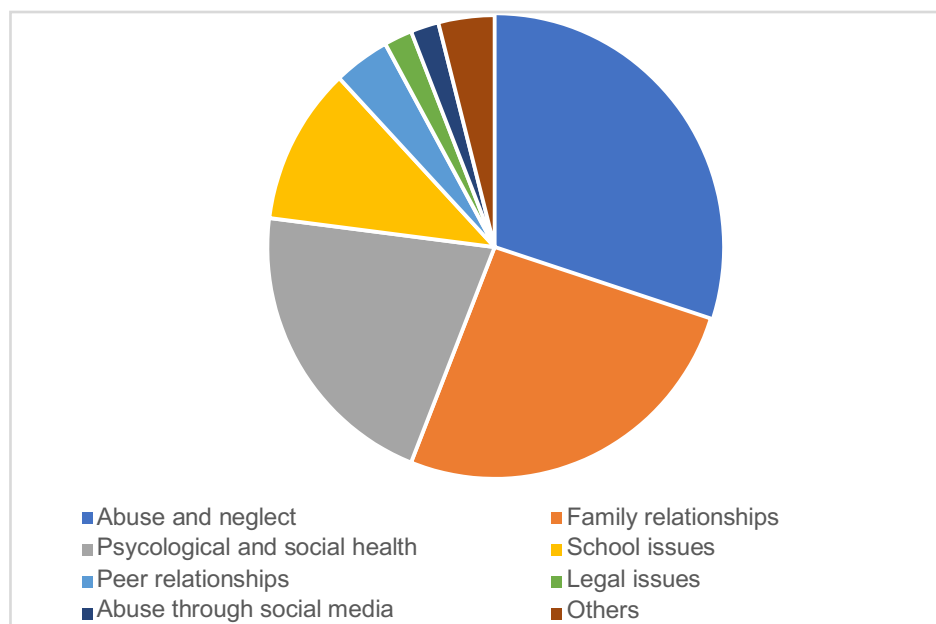


Figure 8.3 The subjects of the children's calls

This shows that there have been some movements in Saudi Arabia in regard to child protection by the official authorities. This could be an example that there is some ground-up influence being seen in Saudi Arabia, which is a positive step. According to Freeman and Saunders (2014), however, child abuse will not be stopped until it is legally banned and, even with the current efforts, my study still shows some violations of child protection rights.

Based on the findings, child abuse still exists in primary education in Saudi

Arabia. This finding is supported by a new report prepared by the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishments that revealed the full prohibition of this practice has still not been achieved in schools in Saudi Arabia (UNICEF, 2017). Imoh (2016), Lansdown et al. (2014), and Smith and Haslett (2017) confirmed that the legal prohibition of physical punishment of a child does not stop its practice in many societies around the world, due to global cultural and societal diversity. Tiwari (2018) found that although the use of physical punishment is banned at schools, it is still practiced in India. Imoh (2013), Smith and Haslett (2017), and Vasabhai, Chaudhary, and Bhagyalaxmi (2014) confirmed that children are subjected to violence at school in Ghana, the Solomon Islands, and India, respectively. Saudi Arabia is thus not the only country in this regard; it is a worldwide problem. Homed (2009) mentioned that in 2006 almost 65% of the children in developing countries reported they were subject to verbal or physical punishment at their schools. Similarly, Arif (2011) confirmed that 18.3% of abuse issues that doctors address in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia had happened at school. In the same manner, principals, teachers, and children in my study confirmed that children face different types of violence in schools. This might mean that children's rights have not moved from being such principles to be a national policy or social action. Even though the UNCRC principles are enshrined by law, the problem might exist on the level of the social policy and social actions. It is easy to have children's rights in law, but it is much harder to have them in practice. According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), the law, which is a part of the macrosystem level of his ecological system, affects the society and people's interactions within the society, but it is also influenced by culture and beliefs. If the law is not embedded into social policy, which is created by culture and beliefs, its implementation will therefore be problematic. This is because, according to sociocultural theory, the individual's behaviour is driven by his or her culture (Daniels, 1996).

Based on the study's findings, the most common types of violence in school are physical, verbal, and emotional. This finding is supported by Alghamdi et al.'s study (2018), which confirmed that physical and emotional abuse are the most common types of abuse that children are subjected to in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. As these types are also common in the community on the whole, it is not surprising that they are the same at school. Furthermore, children in this study confirmed that their teachers, or even other children at school, subject them to emotional and verbal abuse that acts as a form of public humiliation as stated by Rana: 'Our teacher has said to me once that your brain is as a chicken's brain'. This coincides with the research by McCowan (2012)

which stated that children at schools are subjected to physical punishment and indignity because of their learning difficulties in many parts of the world. In my study, the principals agreed with the children that teachers abuse children most at school; however, the teachers in the focus group mentioned that such violence against children at school is rare. This rarity does not confirm its absence, but instead is an assertion of its validity. Freeman and Saunders (2014) said that hitting children at schools is still practiced even if it is declining. Almahroos (2007) indicated that the low number of reported issues about children's abuse is in fact a sign of its occurrence and we should respond to this by implementing the protection rights of the child. Freeman and Saunders (2014) said that the reported issues of physical punishment do not represent the real number of cases as there are many others behind closed doors that are left unreported. The difference in the teachers' views in this regard may be a reaction to the accusation of teachers being the abusers, which they did not accept. While they did not disagree with its occurrence, they admitted it was rare. Additionally, based on my findings, the teachers supported that children may abuse or bully each other at school. This finding agrees with Smith and Haslett's (2017) findings that violence against children could be caused by either abuse by teachers or bullying by other children.

Moreover, the school bus driver was another abuser of children at school, as noted by children and teachers. This finding is supported by the study by Alghamdi et al. (2018), which found that bus drivers are the worst abusers of children in Riyadh city. The difference between my study and Alghamdi et al. (2018) was that the teachers received the lowest ranking as child abusers, while my findings showed teachers were the most common individuals that abused children. This difference could be a result of my study focusing specifically on schools, while their study was about child abuse in the Riyadh community. This study states, therefore, that teachers, other students, and the school bus driver are the most common offenders that abuse children in primary education. Based on the study findings, it is obvious that on one hand educators can talk about children's rights to some extent, but on the other hand they are not fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities in this regard. They know that children are being hurt, bullied, and fearful but there is little action by educators to protect children.

Regarding the Child Helping Hotline, although principals and teachers confirmed that they had passed on information about this service to children, not one of the children in my study remembered its dialling number. This could be due to them not recognising its importance in protecting them from any kind of violence caused in their homes or schools. One of the children indicated she did not believe in the Child Helping

Hotline as a form of protection because she did not want to lose her family if she complained about them. It is the strong relationship between a child and their family which, she believes, should not be questioned or replaced under any circumstances. This is the reality that children are taught within the culture of Saudi society; the family holds a position of high value which should be protected and respected and, according to Vygotskii and Luria (1993), children are a product of this culture.

According to the findings of my study, the chasm between legislation and practice with regards to violence against children in schools could be a result of the lack of training sessions regarding these laws and legislations, the ingrained culture of the society, the use of violence to reduce stress, and the abuser's previous experience with violence. The principals confirmed there is a lack of training about the new laws and legislations concerning child protection in school, which may influence the educators' abilities to understand the seriousness of this legislation. In the same manner, Alsaif et al. (2017) found that the lack of training sessions regarding child sexual abuse affected the teachers' abilities to value the significance of the issue and their reporting of the cases. This lack of training may also affect the children's recognition of the Child Helping Hotline as a way to protect them from violence, neglect, and abuse. Therefore, the lack of training sessions is a barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC (as will be discussed in Section 8.4). Svevo-Cianci, Hart, and Rubinson (2010) found that the implementation of child protection laws and article 19 of the UNCRC could not succeed if there are no information-based programs such as training programs for professionals and improving the society's awareness of this article and those laws.

The violence against children could be a result of the society's culture and beliefs. The teachers in the focus group said that even though the use of violence against children is not accepted as a method of punishment for children in their culture it is still being used by some educators. This might be because of the misuse of power over children caused by cultural norms that place children in the position of objects instead of as rights holders, as mentioned by Freeman and Saunders (2014). In this regard, Burr (2015) said: 'Our constructions of the world are therefore bound up with power relations because they have implications for what it is permissible for different people to do, and for how they may treat others' (p. 5). Therefore, in Saudi culture, teachers have the power in their relationships with students, which gives them permission to treat children in the ways that are culturally accepted. The culture determines individual and institutional practices and the interaction practices in a society (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Additionally, societal beliefs that children are usually aggressive and naughty by nature support the use of physical punishment as a way to control children for the well-being of society (Smith & Haslett, 2017). Lyle (2014) said that, in Wales, the teachers who saw children as 'evil' do not respect children's rights. Han (2011) and Owen (2005) argued that the view that children are corrupt and that they need to be controlled leads to the use of corporal punishment with them. Han (2011) said that even children were disciplined, the educators' view towards children as aggressive leads to the use of violence against them. People's beliefs have been constructed by the culture and their interactions with others then reinforce this culture (Vygotskij, 1993). The tools that people in society use to support the process of disciplining children will thus be acceptable throughout society and that may be reinforced by other social, cultural or religious beliefs. The misapplication of religious beliefs and traditions in Saudi Arabia leads to misapplication or abuse of the power that adults hold over children. According to Alanazi (2008), the use of corporal punishments is permitted by Islam for the purpose of discipline children but in a specific situation. This reinforces the point noted in Section 2.3 that beating children is mentioned once in Islam regarding the order of prayer. People hence use this as evidence of the use of physical punishments as a discipline tool.

The misinterpretation of the prohibition of violence against children could lead to violation of the child's right to be protected. Freeman (2000) and UNICEF (2015) argued that corporal punishment, which is used in the name of disciplining children, could not be interpreted as part of the violence prohibited by Article 19 of the UNCRC and other legislation in some communities. This leads to the use of this practice as a way of ensuring children's discipline. A study in (2001) about reported child abuse and neglect in Canada showed that 69% of substantial physical abuse was caused by disciplinary action (Trocme et al., 2001, as cited in Freeman and Saunders, 2014). Imoh (2013) and Smith and Haslett (2017) agreed that in Africa and the Pacific Islands the society believes in the use of physical punishment in the socialisation process of children. Freeman and Saunders,(2014), argued that physical punishment against children is culturally accepted in most societies. In the same manner, Saudi society accepts this method as a way of rearing children and for disciplining them, as mentioned in the study by Alghamdi et al. (2018). As this practice is socially accepted, it will have been established through generations by the socialisation process carried out by different cultural institutions that characterise the individuals' beliefs and behaviours, such as families and schools (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Therefore, cultural upbringing

leads to the distinction between violence that is banned by legislation and UNCRC and harassment or physical corporal punishment used in the disciplining of children. Overcoming violence against children will not be achieved if societies do not admit that physical punishments used in the name of discipline are a form of violence.

The findings also indicated that the teachers' feelings of stress could affect the way their students were treated by the teachers in the focus group. Teachers have been known to use violence as a way to overcome their daily stress. This finding was supported by Smith and Haslett (2017) who found that teachers in the Solomon Islands emphasised the use of violence against children as a consequence of feeling stressed and angry at school. This could also be used to understand bullying at school, when children who feel ignored or have a poor home environment use bullying to release the anger they feel.

Previous experience with violence is another reason for the use of these practices with children at school; one of the principals and five teachers in the focus group in my study confirmed that teachers who used these forceful methods with their students were subjected to the same methods at school when they were children. In the same manner, Almahroos (2007) and Freeman and Saunders (2014) argued that violence forms a cycle that moves from one generation to another; people who were smacked when they were children are more likely to smack their children. This could be interpreted from the sociocultural perspective. Vygotskiĭ and Luria (1993) emphasised the importance of previous experience in controlling our learning and behaviour. He argued that new experiences are built on old ones. Bronfenbrenner (2005) said that the positive and negative subjective experiences, which emerge in early childhood and through the whole of life, can contribute in powerful ways in individuals' future development and interaction with others. Teachers, for example, relate their experiences from their childhood with their reality and reuse the same tools that their teachers used with them. Consequently, new ideas, laws and beliefs need to influence the society to effect changes.

Another consequence of the violence cycle is that children who are bullying others at school may be abused themselves. Almahroos (2007), Almuneef et al., (2012), and Freeman (2000), agreed that abused children may become abusers of others. Campbell and Covell (2001) argued, however that a child who has experienced a violation of his or her rights will be more likely to not respect others and their rights. Violence against children that is a violation of the child's right to protection is also a

violation of Article 29 of the UNCRC, which states that encouraging children to respect others and their rights is the goal of UNCRC education. This is a violation of the child's right to education, which will be discussed in Section 8.3.5. Finally, although official efforts regarding child protection have been put forth, these efforts are still only ink on paper, and children's rights to protection are still violated in primary education.

8.3.3 The child's right to health and the healthcare services.

Article 24 of the UNCRC states that:

States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services. (UNICEF, 1989; p. 8)

This includes providing children with the best possible quality of healthcare and a clean environment (UNICEF, 1989).

According to the findings, 52.3% of the questionnaire respondents confirmed that the children received high-quality healthcare at their school. This could be understood by the government policy, which established the School Health Units that are responsible for the school children's health. These units are small health centres that do some periodic visits to schools to give the children the necessary vaccines. Also, they look after school children if they are ill. According to one of the principals, all children at school have received all vaccinations needed by the School Health Units. Furthermore, to ensure the good quality of healthcare at school, one of the principals, the children, and the teachers in the focus group highlighted that the MoE employs a health advisor in each school to tackle the children's health problems.

Principals, teachers, and children agreed with each other that this health advisor was not qualified for this position and the only help that she could provide for children was contacting their parents. Alshehry (2011), who is the general director of the school health administration in the MoE, on 6 September 2011, admitted in his interview with AL Riyadh newspaper that the health advisors are teachers and they are not qualified to tackle this responsibility. But he mentioned that there are some training courses to improve their skills in first aids so they can treat the ill child until the arrival of the medical team from the nearest hospital. Based on my study findings, there had been no signs of improvement of the health advisors' capacity in dealing with children's illness issues at school. However, principals and children did not mention what the

health advisor actually did except providing the child with pain relief and contacting the child's parents. This may be because the medical jobs are under the Ministry of Health and there is no cooperation between ministries, so the MoE cannot provide schools with nurses or medical specialists. This may lead to the interpretation that the health advisor position has not been understood as a necessary position at school and that because of the beliefs about schools as academic places, they should not provide any services except education. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological system, the macrosystem, which contains the society's culture and beliefs, influences and determines the nature of the components of the exosystem, which includes the social services system (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In this manner, if the society does not believe in the importance of any extra positions at school such as the health advisor position, it will not be effective.

Another breach of the health rights of the child is that school environments are not clean. This was confirmed by children and teachers in the focus group. Children indicated that some school facilities, such as the toilets, are not suitable for the human use. The unclean facilities could partially be a consequence of the children's own behaviour, as some of the teachers in the focus group indicated that the children do not clean up after themselves, which may arise from a common phenomenon in Saudi society of being dependent on maids at home. Homed (2009) confirmed that the phenomenon of widespread use of maids in Saudi society has a negative influence on children's behaviour. The school further contributes to this unclean environment by not having anyone to help clean it, however. According to UNICEF (2009), an unclean school results in an unhealthy and unsafe environment that conflicts with the rights requirements of the UNCRC.

I can therefore say the health rights of the child are partly implemented at schools as children were being provided with the necessary vaccines that are determined by the Saudi Ministry of Health. However, there is a lack of school health care services and clean environments in primary schools in Saudi Arabia.

8.3.4 The child's voice at school.

Based on the study findings, a child in primary education in Saudi Arabia does not have a voice as it pertains to the freedom of expression, views, thoughts, beliefs, or even participation. Regarding the child's rights to have freedom of view and expression that are stated in Article 12 and 13 of the UNCRC, the principals and teach-

ers indicated that these rights are implemented at school to give children the chance to express their views and opinions and confirmed that there is a student advisor in each school, who is responsible for listening to children and solving their problems. Additionally, 66.5% of the questionnaire's respondents agreed that these rights are implemented at school. In contrast, children expressed their concern that they do not have a voice at their schools. The conflict between educators' and children's perspectives regarding the implementation of these rights arises from the educators' belief that listening to the children's problems is the children's form of freedom of expression. According to Avcı and Yol (2016), listening to a child's problems is part of the child's rights to express his or her views and opinions, but it is only a narrow part of these rights and it requires further action for any complaints to be taken seriously. Having an adult merely listening to children's problems does not mean that children have freedom of expression.

The children in my study confirmed they are not heard at school even if they talk or complain, which indicates that the children have no voice at school. Lundy (2007) argued that Article 12 of the UNCRC contains two elements that should be implemented at the same time: providing children with the right to express their views and giving due weight to these views. Lansdown et al. (2014) agreed that listening to children without giving serious consideration to their talk is a breach of Article 12 of the UNCRC. According to the study findings, one of these elements is absent, which confirmed the violation of this right at primary education.

The children's right to participate in decision making on matters that affect them is important. There is no doubt that a child not having a say will affect the implementation of the child's right to participate. This also relates to Article 3 of the UNCRC, which emphasises that the best interests of the children in all matters that affect them will not be achieved if the child is not heard or takes no part in the decision making. The study findings confirmed that children do not participate in making decisions that affect them at school. For example, teachers confirmed that activities at school are pre-planned by the MoE without taking the children's opinions into account. Children agreed with teachers in this respect as they confirmed that no one asked them about their opinions with regards to activities. Furthermore, children mentioned many issues at school they did not like but were not given the opportunity to change the situations. Based on the study findings, children have no say in the issues that affect them. This finding is similar to those of Ejie et al. (2009), who found that children do not discuss any issues with adults in Nigeria. Additionally, Lundy (2007) suggested that

more action should be taken in the UK to improve the situation of the child's say in the society. My study findings conflict with the findings of Powell and Smith's (2009) study, however, which found that the child's right to participation is implemented in educational settings in New Zealand. This difference may be a result of different education policies between New Zealand and Saudi Arabia, as well as different views of children's rights and adults' roles.

The violation of Article 12 and 13 of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia is a consequence of the society's views of the child. This translates into the children's lack of confidence in expressing their views because they fear the educators' anger. This view is similar to Lundy (2007) who found that children prefer to be silent because they fear that teachers will shout at them. This fear that is instilled by people who have power over children, such as teachers or even adult family members. This prevents children from having a voice in primary schools in Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, in Saudi culture, the child has low status in the family and society. They are not consulted on any matters, even those relating to them such as choosing the child's school, as mentioned by one of the principals who said that families do not give their children the freedom of expression to participate in making decisions on family issues. This is supported by Cassidy (2012) and Smith and Haslett (2017) who asserted that a child's status in the family is lower than adults, so they do not have a say in their family and consequently in society. This low status of children could arise from the belief that children are vulnerable and need adult assistance. A consequence of this vulnerability is that adults think they know what is best for children. This leads to children's silence and justifies the adult's ability to make decisions instead of the children, as mentioned by Tobin (2015). AVCI and YOL (2016) and Sund and Vackermo (2015) also found that adults make decisions instead of children on a wide range of issues that affect them. As long as society looks at children as being vulnerable with lower status than adults, they will not have a say in any aspect of their rights.

Furthermore, treating children to become the adults of the future seems to be a reason to restrict their rights to freedom of expression and participation. Cassidy (2012) and Freeman and Saunders (2014) argued that treating children as 'a becoming' not as 'a being' is a problem. Children are being designed to fit into a future that society constructs for them, rather than giving them freedom to choose. As a result, the information and knowledge that adults impose on children are only meant to achieve society's goals instead of the focus on the child. This view of the child as future citizen is related to the idea of human capital, where children must contribute to the economy

and society. In Saudi society, it seems that children must reproduce the culture rather than contribute to change. Children should drive the change with the adults like it or not.

Finally, the study findings confirmed that children's rights to freedom of expression, rights to express their views and opinions, and rights to participate in making decisions in matters that affect them are not implemented in primary education in Saudi Arabia. This is mainly due to the society's view of the child as a means to the society's future, the child's vulnerability, and the low status assigned to children in society. These views are based on the cultural discourse in Saudi society that control ways of interacting with children. From the sociocultural point of view the child development process requires a guided participation between a child and an adult (Daniels, 1996). These interactions that are guided by cultural discourse thus build the child experience and the behaviours that he or she needs to adopt with the society. The consequence of this experience for children in Saudi Arabia is that the children fear adults who have power over them and become silent, which is a breach of the UNCRC.

8.3.5 The child's right to education.

Based on the questionnaire in the study, 90.7% of the teachers in the sample indicated that primary education is free for all children in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the right to education is widely known among principals and children as a right of all children. In the same manner, as highlighted previously, the Saudi government adopted compulsory education for all children between the ages of 6–15 years old. These are some means to implement Article 28 of the UNCRC which refers to the child's right to education. Alzaidy (2010) noticed that new compulsory education legislation emphasises teaching children about the religion of Islam, the principles of Arabic language in reading and writing, and numeracy. This is an attempt to comply with the requirements of international organisations and conventions, such as the UNCRC, which call for the right to basic education for every child. However, based on this understanding of compulsory education in Saudi Arabia, there would be no need for schools because the child could learn this knowledge at home or even, as mentioned by Albaker (2013c), at the mosque.

In addition, 54.3% of the teachers confirmed in the questionnaire that Saudi Arabia has no mechanisms in place to enforce parents to send their children to school, which is supported by Said (2007) who confirmed that there was no legal or formal accountability for families if their children did not attend school. As Albaker (2013c)

points out, Saudi society is still tribal in the sense that no one can force a father to register his child at school if he is not convinced of the importance of school, because this conflicts with the father's power over his children, which has priority over any other power. As per Alfawaz (2011) in Section 8.2.1.1, the people in rural areas in Saudi Arabia, where tribal communities live, refuse the child's right to education. The right to education cannot, therefore, be achieved by forming legislation if there is no means to enforce the people to follow the legislation. According to UNICEF (2009), there should be clear strategies and guidance to overcome the barriers that prevent children from having equality in education, but based on this study, such guidance is absent in Saudi Arabia. This absence is a result of the nature of Saudi society, which places high value on the father's responsibilities and powers over his children. A child's attendance at school is the father's choice, which must be respected.

Article 28 of the UNCRC refers to compulsory and free education for each child, but it also emphasises the quality of the education that ensures the school disciplines in ways that respect the child's humanity. According to UNICEF (2009), a child's right to education should focus on education quality rather than the simple fact of children attending school. Providing children with access to education is therefore part of the implementation of the right to education, but the quality of education is the essential part of this right. If a child's education does not meet the criteria of good quality, then the child's right to education has not been adequately implemented (Arif, 2011). A good quality education system is a system that organises child-friendly schools, which respond to the child's needs and respects the child's humanities and rights (UNICEF, 2009). Based on my study findings, schools lack this quality of education as the children are not provided with appropriate environments for their learning and well-being in these schools. This is further evidenced by the previous section which discusses violence and the children's lack of voice at school.

The right to education, as stated in Article 28, is followed by the aims of this education in Article 29 of the UNCRC. One of the aims of education is: 'The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential' (UNICEF, 1989, p. 9). According to the ZPD concept of development, produced by Vygotskiï in 1896-1934, the child's development to his or her fullest potential requires an engagement in activities with adults or peers, who assist the child by demonstration, questions, and introducing elements of the task's solutions (Vygotskiï, 1987). Based on the findings of my study, children are prevented by their teacher from asking for clarification or help in understanding the tasks, meaning that if

they do not get the assistance to improve their skills, they will not achieve their optimal development.

The MoE has established activity programs in all schools, as confirmed by the study sample, which aim to develop the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. This program contains two hours per week of activity classes, school assembly, and other activities, such as the little business woman activity. However, teachers in the focus group agreed with the children that these activities were not implemented well enough to improve the children's talents and abilities. They asserted that the activities were implemented on paper to complete the required reports to be sent to the Education Office of Guidance and Supervision, but they did not further the children's education. In the same manner, Alshafei (1994) and Aldakheel (2000) found that activity programs in public schools in Saudi Arabia were not adequately established. The teachers in the focus group reasoned that this may be due to the heavy workload that teachers have at school who considered the school activities to be an additional burden they did not need. In addition, teachers and children mentioned that the schools do not provide suitable places for activities. It also appeared from the conversations with teachers that they do not believe in the importance of the activities as an essential part of the children's education. This is supported by Alshafei (1994) and Aldakheel (2000), who added that parents also interfere with the application of school activities because they do not believe in the importance of school activities in improving their children's skills. It is the society's view that the school is a venue to provide children with academic information, whereas activities are more for enjoyment and considered a waste of time in a place that is supposed to focus on academics.

Another aim of a child's education, as stated in the UNCRC, is to, 'develop the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations' (UNICEF, 1989, p. 9). As discussed in Section 8.2.2, children have a lack of awareness about the UNCRC, which confirmed that this aim is not achieved in school. Furthermore, children do not have freedom at school, as mentioned in Section 8.3.4, so if their freedom is not respected, they will not learn to respect the fundamental freedom of others.

The UNCRC states that education should prepare children to deal with equality and develop friendships among peoples of all ethnic, national, religious, and indigenous groups. According to the study findings, however, there is discrimination of children based on behaviour and background. This is supported by Lansdown et al.

(2014) who said that in many countries discrimination against children is still prevalent in schools. For example, in South Africa, Maboe (2013) found that the discrimination between children at school is one of many violations of the UNCRC in South Africa. According to my study findings, the discrimination in primary education not only affects how children are treated, but also affects children's chances to improve their talents. The children and teachers in my study confirmed that the child's participation in school activities, such as school assembly, were not equally assigned to all children. This discrimination arises from the society in general since discrimination appears in family units and tribes that can show a preference to boys over girls. In addition, family wealth and parents' social positions are other discriminatory factors in Saudi society which flow over into discriminatory behaviour in the schools. Discrimination in Saudi culture is rooted in the old Arabic culture before Islam, and even though Islam introduced the concepts of equality and justice to overcome such discrimination, it is still practiced in most Arabic societies. This particular pattern of belief and behaviour is acquired from the culture and history of the society and passed on from one generation to another through the socialisation process (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

The last aim of education stated by the UNCRC is to develop respect for the natural environment (UNICEF, 1989, p.9); however, the children and teachers in my study have confirmed that the school environment is not adequately clean for children, which does not help in developing respect for the environment. This is therefore a breach of the child's right to education, as the school environment is not consistent with a child's dignity and rights. It is obvious that schools have not been designed to be child-friendly and children's rights to education have not been adequately achieved even though legislation has been established by official authorities.

In summary, the discussion in Section 8.3 answers the second question of my study: 'What are the principals', teachers', and students' perspectives on the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia?' The answer to this question is that while Saudi Arabia has signed the UNCRC and there is some legislation in place to implement it, the study findings show that there are clear violations of children's rights in primary education. This is supported by Al-mohaimed (2009) and the third and fourth report on the application of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia (2012) which confirmed that, despite legislation and official efforts to apply the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia, it has fallen short in being adequately and effectively implemented. Imoh's study (2013) and Mohammed (2013) found the same result in Ghana and Iraq, respectively. Abdullah (2003) noted that the practical application of the UNCRC

articles do not match the aspirations, given there are violations of it in many parts of the world. This is caused by the barriers that affect the implementation of the UNCRC. These barriers will differ depending on the country of implementation, and the next section will specifically discuss the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia.

8.4 Barriers to the Implementation of the UNCRC

This section answers the third question of my study regarding principals' and teachers' perspectives on the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia.

Based on the study's findings, there are many key barriers stopping the UNCRC from being applicable. These key barriers are Saudi society itself, insufficient efforts from authorities, the lack of qualified employees in schools, and inadequate school buildings and equipment. These barriers will be discussed in depth in the following sections.

8.4.1 Saudi society.

Saudi society and culture are the main barriers preventing the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education. This is due to a lack of awareness about the UNCRC in the society, the society's customs and norms, and people's resistance to change.

The principals and teachers who participated in the focus group agreed that if people do not have knowledge of the UNCRC, it will not be implemented. Additionally, 85% of the questionnaire respondents confirmed that people's lack of awareness regarding the UNCRC is a barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC. This agrees with Isaac (2010), who found that people's lack of awareness about the UNCRC affects its implementation in Saudi Arabia. This could be because of the high rate of illiteracy in Saudi Arabia, as argued by Almuneef et al. (2012), who claim that child abuse cannot be prevented because the illiteracy rate is so high in Saudi society, which means that people treat their children by the same means that their parents used with them. According to Bronfenbrenner's (2005), the parental behaviour of neglect, abuse, or any other parental behaviour could contribute to formatting the individual's behaviour due to genetic potential. Vygotskiï (1997) said that human behaviour is a result of the experiences obtained from previous generations, reinforced by physical in-

heritance. It is the reproducing of child abuse because the illiterate people do not have any knowledge of what constitutes child abuse and they also do not have much awareness of children's rights. However, because educated people who work directly with children, such as teachers and principals, also do not have any awareness of the UNCRC (see Section 8.2), it is not surprising that society also lacks awareness of the UNCRC.

Society not only lacks awareness of the UNCRC but also there are widespread misconceptions of childhood and children. Mr Osama, one of the questionnaire respondents, stated, 'People obtain their knowledge about treating children from society, which is based on the underestimation of children.'

According to this quote, culture constructs people's beliefs, which control their interactions with others and acquired through experiences that gained by these interaction activities. The Saudi people's beliefs about children come from the culture they belong to, which underestimates children. Vygotskiĭ (1997) argued that the individual's experience is completely driven by the social environment and because of that the individual's reactions are diverse dependent on the historical, geographical, and social circumstances surrounding him or her. The occasional video emerges on social media of children being abused by their relatives or teachers to illustrate that child abuse issues exist in Saudi society, which usually irritates the society at large and leads to pressure to sanction the abusers and the intervention of the official authorities. According to the study's findings, the spread of child abuse in Saudi society can be understood by cultural norms, which hold that a child is the property of his or her parents as confirmed directly by two of the principals and 69.9% of the questionnaire respondents. This agrees with Albaker (2013b), who stated that Saudi culture supports the belief that children are the property of their parents.

The belief in parental ownership of children does not just exist in Saudi society; it is evident around the world. Campbell and Covell (2001) point out that this belief about the ownership of children also hinders the fulfilment of the UNCRC in Canada. They mention that although Canada's society has become more civilised than others, people in this society still treat children as parental property. This may be because this belief is deeply rooted in their culture and it is not easy to change. Campbell and Covell (2001) indicate that this culture conflicts with the reality of children as rights-bearers and their rights should be respected. If a society views children as the property of their parents, however, the children are not considered rights-bearers. Cassidy (2012) and Kepenekci (2006) agree that children are seen as humans with no

219

rights in some societies, which makes it difficult to reach the full implementation of the UNCRC.

The idea of the ownership of children in Saudi society may be because of a misinterpretation of the Islamic discourse from the Quran and Sunnah. This misunderstanding of Islam leads to that people don't protect children they see being abused in Saudi Arabia (Almuneef et al., 2012). One example of this misunderstanding is the Prophet Mohamed's—peace be upon him—words, 'You and your wealth belong to your parents' (Ibn Hanball, n.d.; p. 503). This saying is understood to mean that sons and daughters are the property of their parents. The meaning of this saying, however, as explained by Ibn Hanball (n.d.), is that if a father needs his son's money because he is poor, he can take as much as he needs, and if the son is able to work and earn money, the son is required to spend from this money on his poor father; this saying does not allow the father to take his son's money as he pleases but only as he needs it. The problem here is the literal understanding of the religious discourse in the Quran and Sunnah. This misunderstanding has transferred into knowledge that creates a culture, which is learnt through the daily interactions among people and inherited by subsequent generations. Vygotskiï and Luria (1993) said: 'Man is a social creature, and social-cultural conditions profoundly change him, developing a whole series of new forms and techniques in his behaviour' (p. 213).

Such societies that hold these beliefs in the parents' ownership of the children may consider the UNCRC as a restriction of the parents' rights to their children. My study's findings confirmed this as there were two questionnaire respondents who stated the view that the UNCRC may conflict with parents' rights in raising their children. Campbell and Covell (2001) and Freeman (2006) agree that some people reject the UNCRC because they think it is incompatible with parental rights, which are sacred. This is the situation of parental rights in Saudi culture, which embraces the Islamic belief that gives parents a high value. According to Alhilali and Khan (2017), in Surat Luqman, Verse 15, Allah says: '...if they (the parents) endeavour to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness' (p. 551). This quote confirms the high value given to parents by Islam, as even if they refuse Islam and also try to persuade their son/daughter to do so, they still have the rights over their children.

Furthermore, disobedience of children against their parents is one of the biggest sins in Islam; the Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—mentions disobedience to parents as the second worst sin after polytheism when he says, 'Shall I inform

you of the biggest of the great sins?’ They said, ‘Yes, O Allah’s Apostle!’ He said, ‘To join partners in worship with Allah and to be undutiful to one’s parents’ (Albukhari, n.d., p. 1332).

This statement confirms the great value given to parents by Islam. Some people may hence reject the UNCRC as it is in conflict with the order to obey one’s parents. Although Islam supports the rights of parents, it does not ignore children’s rights, however. One of these is children’s right to be treated with mercy because the Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—tells the story of when he kissed Al- Hasan bin Ali (his grandson) while Al-Aqra’ at-Tamim was sitting beside him. Al- Aqra said, ‘I have ten children and I have never kissed any one of them.’ Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—cast a look at him and said, ‘Whoever is not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully’ (Alnisaburi, n.d., p.1809).This confirms the mercy of Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—towards children and his message to all Muslims to treat children with mercy and love. People seem to be placing parental rights over children’s rights because they are selective and take what works with their benefits as adults; however, it is a misuse of power.

The culture of a society affects interventions for preventing violations against children. One of the principals in the study confirmed that families refuse interventions by others into their children’s problems, such as child abuse. Families consider this to be a breach of the family’s privacy. This affects the reporting process of violations against children in Saudi society. While Aleissa and Almuneef (2010) indicated that the rate of reporting of child abuse cases to the authorities increased tenfold from 2000 to 2008, the National Family Safety Program (2011) confirmed that child abuse and neglect are widespread in Saudi Arabia and that the number of actual cases is higher than the number of reported cases. Protecting family privacy is one of the reasons for not reporting these types of problems. Three of the principals and 84.7% of the questionnaire respondents confirmed that society places a higher value on family privacy than on child protection. This is supported by Albaker (2013a), who said that reporting child abuse cases in Saudi Arabia is affected by the idea that this is a type of violation of family privacy.

The fear of getting in trouble with families such as family complaints, putting pressure on teachers to quit, or even threats of violence or legal sanctions stops educators from reporting child abuse cases to the authorities, as confirmed by one of the principals and one of the questionnaire respondents. This agrees with Albuhairan et al.’s (2011) study, which found that protecting the relationships between school pro-

221

professionals and children's parents was a factor that impacts the reporting of child abuse. This is due to the importance of social connections in Saudi society and their influence on all aspects of a person's life because it is a tribal society and everyone tries to protect his or her tribe members. Educators will therefore not report child abuse as it might become a personal affront and the whole tribe could be affected by this report, especially if the abuser is a family member. Alsaif et al. (2017) confirmed that educational professionals worry about the intra-familial effects of reporting child abuse, particularly when the abuser is one of the victim's family members.

It is also possible that the fear of scandal can affect the reporting of cases of child abuse, as confirmed by the school principals. This is especially true in sexual abuse cases when the victim is a girl. Saudi culture places a high value on girls' virginity and its protection before marriage, and Islamic teaching forbids sexual relationships outside of marriage (Alsaif et al., 2017). Alsaif et al. (2017) added that the fear of affecting a child's reputation also stops the children themselves from reporting sexual abuse cases. In traditional societies such as Saudi Arabia, a child who faces sexual abuse is treated as a criminal, and his or her future will be affected, as confirmed by one of the principals in my study. As a boy, this will affect his sense of manhood, as others may look on him with shame. Girls in particular are affected because they usually will not be considered desirable for marriage. The reactions of Saudi society towards children's issues thus affects child protection. These reactions are a product of the culture and it is wholly determined by the structure of the environment that the individual grows in (Vygotskiĭ, 1997). These reactions are behavioural functions, which are products of cultural and social influences, relating the individual with his or her environment and determining his or her perceptions (Vygotskij, 1993). In this way, the culture of fearing a scandal produces powerless adults who cannot protect themselves or their children.

The principals in my study confirmed that not reporting child abuse cases has a negative influence on society as it will contribute to these cases increasing in number. This agrees with Lansdown, Jimerson, and Shahroozi (2014), who point out that not reporting these cases helps to protect the criminal instead of the victim because the criminal will continue to practice his or her crimes unchallenged. The culture of keeping these kinds of cases secret therefore hinders the protection of children in a society that is a part of the UNCRC. However, this is not the only negative effect of not reporting child abuse. For example, abused children may grow up to be abusers,

as confirmed by Almuneef et al. (2012), Freeman & Saunders (2014), and McCowan (2012). Furthermore, abused children are more likely to be violent or abuse drugs/alcohol as mentioned by Almuneef et al. (2012). In contrast, Glasser et al. (1994) challenged the belief of the cycle of abuse as they found that male victims of abuse in their childhood are more likely to become perpetrators than females, especially if their abuser was female, but they found that for just a minority of males in their study. The Office for National Statistics in UK (2016) found that the abused child is more likely to be a victim of more abuse as an adult, especially female.

Saudi society also hinders the implementation of the UNCRC by refusing change, even if it is for the better. The principals and teachers in the focus group and 52% of the questionnaire respondents confirmed this. They noted that some people in their society reject anything from the West. This is in line with Clarke (2008), who found that in Trinidad, anything from the West is treated with suspicion. This is in part because of the radical differences between Western societies and non-Western societies in terms of traditions, customs, and beliefs. As the UNCRC is a Western-based convention (Imoh, 2008), it may hence be rejected by Saudi society, as predicted by the principals in my study. The principals also mentioned that those who reject change may be seeking to control society by influencing the decision makers. Imoh (2008) argued that people who reject change aim to achieve their personal goals by protecting the customs that serve their own benefits. Imoh (2008) added that there is a fear of the consequences that Western concepts such as the UNCRC could have for the cultural and social structure of their society such as the introduction of new norms, which do not belong to their culture, or the abandonment of traditional customs and norms. In Saudi society, the adults fear negative influences on their religion, as they believe that Western concepts are products of non-Islamic religions; this leads them to reject all Western concepts even though they have not researched them and do not understand them. Pearson (2015) mentioned that the decision-makers are influenced by local policies and beliefs and the international legislation, therefore, there should be a balance between the international polices and the local uniqueness in order to implement the international polices and protect children's rights and needs.

From the previous discussion and based on the study findings, it is obvious that Saudi society and its culture are the key barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia. Mrs Mariam (one of the teachers in the focus group) said, 'The non-implementation of the UNCRC is a sociocultural is-

sue, not a legislation issue.’ She emphasised that legislation on the UNCRC will not be obeyed if the culture and society have not been changed. She agreed with Imoh (2008) that the implementation of the UNCRC is a cultural issue. Lundy (2007) agreed with the need for cultural change in school to implement the UNCRC articles, such as Article 12 about the child’s voice at school. However, to implement the UNCRC, there is a need for a cultural shift in society, not just in school. Almahroos (2007) indicated that child protection laws and conventions will not be applied unless society’s attitudes change, which requires changing the cultural roots that control the people’s behaviour towards children. This can be interpreted in terms of sociocultural and ecological theories, which emphasises the role of the society and culture in which a person lives in shaping his or her understanding, behaviour, and skills and this occurs through the interaction activities between people (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Daniels, 1996). Thus, the society believes of rights determine the people’s understanding of the UNCRC.

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological system, however, there is a concentric circle of influences on the developing person, which determine his or her characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In regard to the implementation of the UNCRC I could say that the implementation of this convention includes not just the influences within the circle, but also the influences from outside—as the UNCRC is an international law—into the circle. Culture is very dynamic, especially in the 21st century; there should be a change in Saudi culture itself in order to implement the UNCRC.

8.4.2 Insufficiency of authorities’ efforts.

The study’s findings reveal that the authorities have made insufficient efforts in the implementation of the UNCRC. This finding is supported by Almohaimeed (2009), who said that there are barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC at the level of the authorities in Saudi Arabia. The NCC (2012) also found that there is a lack of proper care and attention to protecting children. This may be because Saudi Arabia signed the UNCRC with reservations on the articles that conflicted with Islamic teachings, with no determination of exactly what these articles were. This may lead to difficulties in the implementation of the UNCRC. Alkaabi (2012) argued that there are many disadvantages of the reservations that the Saudi government has made on the UNCRC as these reservations are not clearly determined. Homed (2009) said that the reservations that the Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, made regarding the UNCRC should nonetheless not affect the essence of the convention.

These insufficient efforts, confirmed by the study's findings, can be specified as the lack of planning for implementing the UNCRC, which requires increasing overall awareness. There are no training sessions to increase educators' awareness about the UNCRC. This is in agreement with Al-Zaboon et al. (2016) findings, which indicate the lack of training sessions for teachers about the UNCRC in Jordan. The teachers in the focus group revealed that the training sessions that are available to improve educators' knowledge of children's treatment at school do not mention the UNCRC in any way. Moreover, although there are many directives dispatched by the MoE to schools that deal with some aspects of children's rights such as banning violence of any kind, these directives do not consider this to relate to children's rights. Albuhairan et al. (2011) found that the training sessions and directives that address child violence are readily available to educators, but they do not address any of the UNCRC articles. This can be understood as authorities working to keep up with international law and to fulfil their obligations to the international community in terms of international conventions by signing the convention and organising some laws. This is supported by Sund and Vackermo's study (2015), which found that the efforts of decision-makers in implementing the UNCRC do not include much more than signing it and making some laws, but there are no real efforts to implement it. This is because the decision-makers are a part of a society that does not believe in the UNCRC, as mentioned in Section 8.3.1.1 According to Vygotskii and Luria (1993), individuals are social beings and their behaviours, thinking, and perceptions are created by their culture. The UNCRC will thus not be seen as 'real' as it may be in other societies because it is not a part of Saudi society's culture and it is not embedded in people's interactions, such as in the interactions between parents and their children.

The limitations of school budgets are another shortfall in the authorities' efforts; the principals and teachers in the focus group and the questionnaire respondents revealed that the school budget is not enough to cover the UNCRC's requirements, such as providing children with a clean environment. Pearson and Sim (2013) mentioned that the stakeholders' priorities affect the financial support of institutions that support children's development. Thus, according to Pearson and Sim (2013), if it is not on their priority to support children's and their rights, there will be a shortage in the financial support in this regard. Clarke (2008), Mangamu (2013), and Wallace (2005) found that financial issues were one of the main barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in Kenya, Zambia, and Ethiopia. They indicate that the reason for this is the extreme poverty in these countries and the need for help from wealthier countries to overcome

these issues. In Saudi Arabia, however, the situation is different as the total education budget for 2016, which was the year of the data collection for my study, amounted almost to \$51,109,067 (Ministry of Finance, 2018). Nonetheless, schools still suffer from a shortage of financial support from the MoE. Homed (2009) said that the weak financial support for children's institutions such as schools is one of the main barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC. This may be because the education budget in Saudi Arabia covers public education, higher education, and special education; additionally, education is still in the improvement process as many new universities have been established in the last five years and there are many school buildings currently under construction. Most of the teachers in the focus group said that they had paid out of their own pockets to provide equipment for their schools, which would indicate that the school budget is insufficient.

The other issue with the budget is that it does not include a specific amount in the budget for disabled education in inclusive schools, as confirmed by one of the teachers in the focus group. This lack of funding may be because of the belief in Saudi society about children with disabilities and their ability to be educated. In Saudi society, people with disabilities are treated as burdens on their families and most people believe that they do not have the ability to be educated. As argued by Hodge (2014), children with disabilities lost their personhood in society because they were considered a problem instead of a human being. Alquraini (2011) confirmed the negative attitude against children with disability in Saudi society has negatively impacted the disabled children. Alquraini (2011) confirmed that disabled children are considered to be a punishment or test from God to their parents, which leads to them being ignored by society and prevented from having certain rights, such as to education. This culture and these beliefs affect decision-makers and their decisions because they are a part of this culture and society, which constructs people and their understanding (Vygotskiï & Luria, 1993).

Another shortfall in the authorities' efforts is the absence of guidance in implementing the UNCRC and protecting children, as confirmed by the principals in the study. The principals indicated that they did not have clear guidance in how to deal with children's issues such as abuse and how to report them. There was also no guidance in implementing the UNCRC in schools. Albuhairan et al. (2011) and Alfaryan (2014) confirmed that there is an absence of guidance in reporting child abuse and protecting children in schools in Saudi Arabia. This could be because of the wide spread notion that it is not the school's responsibility to report these kinds of cases (Albuhairan et al., 226

2011), part of which is the belief that schools are academic places to provide children with academic knowledge and nothing else. Cassidy (2012) and Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014) say that with no guidance or framework to work within, the UNCRC will not be fully implemented.

The previous discussion confirms that the insufficient official efforts regarding the implementation of the UNCRC affect its implementation negatively. These efforts include financial issues, the lack of effort to increase awareness of the UNCRC, and the absence of a framework to implement the convention.

8.4.3 Lack of qualified employees.

Based on the study's findings, the schools suffer from a lack of qualified employees to help in the implementation of the UNCRC. This was confirmed by the principals and teachers in the focus group and the questionnaire respondents. Homed (2009) also found that there is a problem with the availability of competencies and cadres to implement children's rights

The most important condition to fulfil is having knowledge and awareness of the UNCRC. The study's findings confirmed that educators did not have enough awareness of the UNCRC, as discussed in Section 8.2. Cassidy (2012) indicates that with no awareness, the UNCRC will not be implemented. Alfaryan (2014) and Isaac (2010) also point to the lack of staff awareness, which affects the protection of children and the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi Arabia. As discussed in Section 8.2, this could be because teacher education programmes in universities do not focus on children's rights concepts as well as the absence of this concept in Saudi society.

Even if educators have awareness of the children's rights, their heavy workload leaves them unable to implement these rights. This was confirmed by the study sample of principals and teachers, who stated that they have a heavy workload that means a lack of time to influence and implement children's rights and teach children about their rights. They pointed out that there is no balance between the number of children at the school and the number of teachers, which makes it difficult for teachers to manage their work. This is supported by Arif (2011), who confirms that in Saudi Arabia the number of children far exceeds the number of teachers such that it creates a tremendous burden on teachers and makes them less able to focus on the children's needs.

Another issue is employing unqualified staff in important positions such as student advisors and health advisors, as confirmed by the study. The student advisor is responsible for listening to the children, helping them, and solving their problems. This

position needs someone who understands children's personalities, who can deal with differences, and who can solve children's problems. Psychology graduates may have these qualities, but student advisors may also be mathematics graduates or Arabic language graduates, which means they are less qualified for this position. The same is true for health advisors, who are often just teachers and cannot help children with their medical issues. This may be because decision-makers do not believe in the importance of these positions at school, which could be a result of the low status of the child in the society. In addition, as discussed earlier, children do not have a voice at school, so it is believed that there is no need for specialists to listen to their opinions or even their problems.

Finally, it is clear that the educators in schools are not qualified to implement the UNCRC as they do not have awareness about it. Furthermore, although educators are aware of some of the principles of children's rights, in general, their role in influencing these rights and implementing them is affected by society. This is supported by Ali (2013), whose found that, although kindergarten teachers in Saudi have some awareness of children's rights, this awareness does not transmit to behaviour, since the teachers do not implement these rights due to the influence of Saudi society. According to sociocultural theory, human behaviour is a collection of experiences transmitted from previous generations to new generations. These experiences are reinforced by cultural and social norms and practices (Vygotskiĭ, 1997). Thus, people's behaviour towards children in Saudi society is transmitted from the previous generations, and affects the teachers' role in implementing children's rights. Moreover, the teachers' heavy workload, and the fact that they work in positions in which they are not specialised in the area of children's rights, affect the role they play in influencing and implementing those rights at school. Based on the study sample, this is one of the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary schools in Saudi Arabia.

8.4.4 School buildings and equipment.

The study's findings indicate that the schools themselves are not suitable for the implementation of the UNCRC. The principals said that the school buildings do not help in the implementation of the UNCRC. Furthermore, the teachers in the focus group mentioned that the schools are not suitable because they do not have suitable places for activities and some schools do not have labs. Another principal said, however, that the schools were suitable and there was one teacher who agreed with this view. Almegren (2003) also found that school buildings do not meet their users' needs.

The teachers gave a clarification of these differences in their perspectives about the suitability of schools for the implementation of the UNCRC as there are many types of school buildings: there are new buildings, old ones, and leasehold buildings. The new buildings are provided with labs and equipment and spaces that can fully accommodate the number of children, while the old buildings and the leasehold buildings are less well appointed. The use of the leasehold schools is because of the expansion of cities, which requires providing schools in these new areas. For this reason, the MoE rents houses as temporary schools until the school buildings are ready. Alluhaidan (2018) and Alhumaid (2017) state that the rapid increase in the number of students and the cities' expansion has led to the use of leasehold buildings, which are usually houses being used as schools. Alhumaid (2017) adds that the rapid increase in the number of students has led to quick leasehold schools without focusing on their quality. Almegren (2003) confirms that the old school buildings and leasehold buildings lack proper facilities such as labs compared to the new school buildings. Furthermore, in Almegren's study (2000), he found that the school buildings in Riyadh needed to be improved in accordance with the safety requirements for school buildings. These findings are supported by Alhumaid (2017) and Alluhaidan (2018), who mention that school buildings do not have the basic elements of schools: the rooms are small, the corridors are narrow, there is a lack of proper ventilation, there is overcrowding due to the large numbers of students, and there is a lack of security and safety such as emergency exits or fire extinguishers. These facts confirm that these schools are not suitable for the implementation of the UNCRC.

The other issue mentioned by one of the teachers is that some of the schools that apply inclusive education are not prepared with the facilities needed by children with disabilities, such as customised corridors. This is because these buildings are old. On the other hand, the new buildings are well-prepared for this purpose, as confirmed by another teacher. This may be because of the misinterpretation of inclusive education, as it is an international concept that cannot be followed when there is no understanding of the needs of children with disabilities. 'Inclusive education' is clearly not being interpreted correctly, as some schools are not suitable for the children with disabilities but are still used as inclusive schools. This issue is out of the scope of this study, but needs further research. Also, as mentioned before in Section 8.4.2, as this society does not believe in the capability of disabled children to learn, they may not be focusing on the quality of schools for the purpose of inclusive education. Vygotskiï and Luria (1993) argued that the social prejudices against individuals with disabilities affect their

development. This is because the social expectations and attitudes toward children with disabilities influence their access to sociocultural knowledge, experiences, and opportunity to participate in activities with peers (Kozulin et al., 2003).

It is obvious that the school buildings and equipment are barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC. Not all schools are the same, however: the new school buildings are suitable for the implementation of the UNCRC as confirmed by my study findings, but the old-school buildings and leasehold buildings are not.

To sum up, this section answered the third question of my study regarding the barriers of the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia. According to the previous discussion, it is obvious that the society, insufficient efforts from authorities, the lack of qualified employees in schools, and inadequate school buildings and equipment are the most significant barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education.

8.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter discussed the results from the study sample to answer the study questions. According to the discussion of the findings, it is obvious that the biggest challenge to empowering children of their rights and activating international conventions on children's rights is the cultural challenge. Saudi culture combines religious culture with traditional culture. Religious culture is a culture that does not accept debate, although in some of its respects it carries individual interpretations of religious texts which may bear some misinterpretations. Culture in a society consists of established customs and traditions that are passed on through generations. These cultures determine the individuals' perspectives, perceptions, and beliefs that do not accept change and modernisation easily. Saudi culture therefore does not readily accept the UNCRC, as it originates in a Western culture which in some respects is in opposition to the conservative Saudi culture. Moreover, the social norms inherited from previous generations prevent society from rapidly responding to the reforms sought by social development to improve human civilisation. These challenges affect educators', children's and even the wider society's awareness of children's rights and the UNCRC. Although Islam has some concepts of children's rights, the misinterpretation of some of the religious texts and the cultural norms affect people's understanding of these rights.

The cultural and social characteristics of Saudi society also affect the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia. Although Saudi Arabia signed the UNCRC more than 20 years ago and has established some laws to pro-

tect children and their rights, there are nonetheless violations of children's rights in primary education in Saudi Arabia. The violations of the UNCRC, according to the study findings, relate to the right to spread knowledge of the UNCRC, the child's right not to be discriminated against, the child's right to protection, the child's right to health and health services, the child's rights of freedom of expressions and views, and the child's right to education.

Many barriers to the implementations of the UNCRC are caused by cultural and social challenges. These barriers are insufficient efforts from authorities, the lack of qualified employees in schools, and inadequate school buildings and equipment. Although the study findings have shown a need for change, the question is, how would these changes come about in Saudi Arabia? This is discussed in the study recommendations section, which is included in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents my study's conclusions and recommendations and is divided into six sections. In **Section 9.2**, the findings are summarised in relation to the study's questions. In **Section 9.3**, the study's limitations are discussed. In **Section 9.4**, the implications of the findings are addressed, and in **Section 9.5**, areas for future research are outlined. In **Section 9.6**, my study's contributions to the literature are discussed, and finally, in **Section 9.7**, I present my personal reflections on this study.

9.2 Summary of the Findings

I used a mixed-methods approach that used interviews, a questionnaire, and focus groups to collect data from principals, teachers, and children. My study's main questions were as follows:

- 'Do educators, i.e. teachers and principals, and children understand children's rights in a way that accords with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)?'
- 'What are the perspectives of the principals, teachers, and children regarding the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia?'
- 'What are the principals' and teachers' perspectives regarding the barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia?'

Regarding the first question, the study showed that educators and children were underinformed about the UNCRC but they are aware of some aspects of children's rights in general. However, Their understanding of children's rights is affected by the socio-cultural context of Saudi Arabia.

The misunderstanding of children's rights appears in some issues such as the educators misunderstood the issue of parental violence toward children, as they had divergent personal beliefs. In addition, they held diverse attitudes towards how the UNCRC defines 'children'. Regarding the definition of 'children', the male teachers did not believe that anybody under 18 years old is a child; in contrast, the female teachers did agree with the UNCRC's definition of 'children'. This is a result of Saudi

understandings of childhood, which are culturally determined. The Saudi society treats male children as a mature man to improve their manhood. The educators and children also believed that it was acceptable for parents to physically punish their children.

Regarding the second question, the study showed that the authorities have made significant efforts to implement the UNCRC. The implementation did not succeed, however, due to the primary schools' many violations of the UNCRC. The findings revealed that the violation of the UNCRC appeared in four main issues: the right to spread knowledge about the UNCRC, the right to protection, the child rights to participate at school, and the right to education. Regarding the right to spread knowledge about the UNCRC, the study found that the educators had not been taught about the UNCRC at their universities, that they had not been trained to follow the UNCRC's guidelines, and that the official authorities had not sent copies of the UNCRC to all the schools. Moreover, the media did not try to raise awareness about the UNCRC.

Regarding the right to protection, the study showed that the authorities made some efforts to ensure children's safety, such as establishing the Child Protection Law, implementing the Child Helping Hotline, and prohibiting violence against children at school. There was a significant gap between the legislation and actual practice, however. Many children reported experiencing physical, verbal, and emotional abuse at school. The teachers were most likely to be the abusers, followed by other students and bus drivers. Furthermore, regarding the Child Helping Hotline, though the schools, as proved by the study sample, sought to teach children about this service, not even one child in the sample had memorised the dialling number of the Child Helping Hotline, which is 116111. They did not know how it could protect them.

Some authorities sought to provide children with high-quality healthcare at school, including vaccinations and health advisors responsible for addressing children's health issues in school. Despite these efforts, however, the healthcare services were insufficient because the schools were unclean and the health advisors were unqualified.

Regarding the child rights to participate at school, the study found that Saudi primary schools frequently infringed upon the children's freedom of expression, views, and participation. Even though there were student advisors responsible for listening to the children, and even though the teachers and principals claimed that they gave the children opportunities to express their views, the study found that they did not adequately account for the children's views. The children in this study confirmed that

they are not heard at school even if they talk or complain, which indicates breaches of the children's right to freedom of expression and views. Moreover, the children did not have the ability to participate in making decisions relating to matters that affected them.

Schools also frequently violated the children's right to education. Even though primary education is compulsory, there are no mechanisms in place to compel parents to send their children to school. Furthermore, many schools had inadequate learning environments that affected the quality of the children's education. The teachers in this study did not consistently help the children improve their skills, preventing them from developing their personalities, talents, and their mental and physical skills to their fullest potential. Moreover, schools frequently breached the UNCRC by discriminating on the basis of behaviour and background.

Regarding the third question, the study showed that the following obstacles interfered with the application of the UNCRC: Saudi society, insufficient efforts by the authorities, shortages of qualified employees, and inadequate school buildings and equipment. Due to society's resistance to change, Saudi social customs and norms, and general ignorance about the UNCRC, Saudi society and culture are the main obstacles to the implementation of the UNCRC.

Further limitations are evident at the level of governance. The authorities failed to plan for the implementation of the UNCRC and to provide sufficient guidance for its implementation and for the children's protection. Moreover, the implementation itself was limited by reduced school budgets. Since the educators were, in general, unaware of the UNCRC, they were unqualified to implement it. Furthermore, many were unable to fulfil their responsibilities because unqualified staff occupied important positions, such as student and health advisory roles. Lastly, the school buildings, which are small and do not have suitable places for activities; some schools do not have the necessary labs, and shortages of necessary equipment interfered with the implementation of the UNCRC.

These findings were discussed through the lenses of sociocultural and ecological theories, which were the theories most relevant to my study, relating to both children's rights and how environmental factors can affect individual's development. These theories argue that a person's development is influenced by his or her social, cultural, and political contexts. Consequently, one's knowledge (such as knowledge about the UNCRC) is affected by his or her environment, which also influences the actual practice and application of this knowledge.

9.3 The Study's Limitations

The study's primary limitation is its lack of generalisability. It took place in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia, which raises some reservations about the ability to generalise to other locations. The data were collected from five teachers in the focus group and five principals, 36 children, and 635 teachers (male and female) who answered the questionnaire. Furthermore, the sample of schools and principals was chosen by the Education Department in Riyadh which affected the probability of generalisation of the result and its representative of the local area of Riyadh. Since the primary education system is standardised throughout Saudi Arabia, however, it is possible that many of the study's findings could appear in different contexts. Nonetheless, this study provides useful data concerning the implementation of the UNCRC in similar academic systems in analogous cultures.

Another limitation is cultural. The data collection focused on female educators and children, while male educators were included only in the questionnaire responses. Though it would be valuable to examine the differences (if any) in how male and female primary school teachers implemented the UNCRC, I was unable to conduct face-to-face interviews, focus groups, or even phone calls with male teachers due to cultural norms that prevent communication between men and women, which I wanted to respect. Nonetheless, examining how the UNCRC was implemented in girls-only primary schools enabled me to collect valuable data about the state of the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia.

The last limitation is that the study focused only on rights related to education, such as the right to spread knowledge about the UNCRC, to freedom of expression, to participate in making decisions, to protection, and to healthcare. It did not, therefore, cover every aspect of the UNCRC. Nonetheless, the study's findings offer valuable insights into the perspectives of educators and children about improving the implementation of the UNCRC in Saudi primary education.

9.4 Implications of the Findings

My study identified many problems regarding children's rights in primary education that do not have quick and easy solutions. With this research, I am seeking to improve future plans to implement the UNCRC, which should begin with social changes. Since I assume that such changes should be driven primarily by policymakers and secondarily by society, my study has a number of policy implications.

First, the study found that, even though policies such as the Child Protection Law seek to protect children from harm, child abuse and neglect are still rampant in Saudi Arabia. This indicates the necessity of activating this law in society. This could be achieved by spreading knowledge about this law through the use of mass media or any other means and monitoring the implementation of this law. Policymakers should enforce this law and the UNCRC by imposing sanctions on violators. Since child abuse is addressed in Islamic teaching and in the UNCRC there would be no cultural inconsistencies in this recommendation

The literature review found that there are many government ministries in Saudi Arabia that, to varying extents, are responsible for children. Efforts to implement the UNCRC will thus be hindered if these ministries do not cooperate and know exactly what their responsibilities are. Authorities that are responsible for children, such as ministries and human rights organisations, should therefore cooperate and develop institutional connections before seeking to implement the UNCRC.

Raising public awareness about the UNCRC is a critical factor in its success. This requires several cultural changes that would be more complex and would take time. For example, the social status of children would have to be improved. It would also require the reformation of cultural beliefs that affect how people treat children, such as the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure. Before child protection laws can become meaningful and enforceable, the cultural roots of societal attitudes must be changed. This change should be driven by the reality of a society and its beliefs and could be accomplished by relating the UNCRC to this reality. We must hence work towards making the UNCRC a cultural norm, in spite of the complexities that this might entail.

In Saudi Arabia, Islamic teachings shape society and culture. Those who are seeking to implement the UNCRC should thus build it on the foundation of Islamic teachings to ensure that people will engage with its principles and goals. For this reason, it is important to find a middle ground between the UNCRC and these Islamic teachings and improve people's awareness of children's rights in accordance with this compromise position.

Even though the implementation of the UNCRC should be primarily driven by the culture, societal institutions should also participate. It is important to expand institutional responsibilities related to the UNCRC. Since mosques are the most important institution in Saudi society, they should therefore take part in advocating for children's rights, especially during Friday sermons.

Education should be used to change social attitudes regarding childhood and children's rights; this is critical for ensuring that people understand why these rights are necessary. Adults and children should be educated about these rights and encouraged to act upon them in their daily lives. Curricula about children's rights should be created and taught at several educational levels to embed the conceptual basis of these rights in primary education. Furthermore, education about children's rights should take place throughout the school within the 'hidden curriculum', in which these rights would serve as a framework for the school's policies and practices. If successful, these values would become embedded in all aspects of life at the school.

Implementing the UNCRC in primary education would also require preservice and in-service education for educators. Current educators should take part in compulsory in-service training sessions to improve their ability to implement these rights. In addition, it is recommended that training be provided to everybody in the country. However, if training of this magnitude is not possible, it should be, at minimum, compulsory for educators, government employees, and children, as well as anyone else who deals with children.

The study identified the potential of using the media to raise awareness of the UNCRC. Since mass media, with its wide reach and diversity, can reach everybody in the country, it could be used to improve society's awareness about children's rights. Mass media are accessible to everyone, regardless of his or her educational background. Public television and newspapers, for example, could be used to create a culture that values children's rights.

Official authorities such as the MoE and human rights organisations could provide Arabic and English copies of the UNCRC in every school to raise awareness about it. They can also work closely with schools and parents to support the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education. This cooperation could take the form of workshops and meetings where the cooperating parties have the opportunity to share ideas about ensuring the success of the UNCRC. The MoE and human rights organisations could also monitor how well schools are following the regulations of the UNCRC. These initiatives, if undertaken over time, could ensure that schools work towards meeting their obligations under the UNCRC and help to create a highquality education system in Saudi Arabia.

To sum up, the findings indicate that the change is required but there is no easy solution for the current situation. The findings brought up many questions about these

changes such as who is responsible for driving these changes, and how this change will be done. Knowledge about children's rights in Saudi Arabia comes from two different sources that are the Islamic source and the international source, which create a gap between them that needs to be filled, but what the knowledge that is needed to fill this gap and how that could be done needs to be explored further. In accordance with the rapid changes in Saudi Arabia these days and Saudi vision 2030, which includes its goals to provide a high-quality education for every child in Saudi and every Saudi child - wherever he or she is (Vision 2030, n.d.). Therefore, I can say that there is a glimmer of hope that changes will take place in the future.

9.5 Recommendations for Further Research

My recommendations for further research are based on the literature on children's rights and the findings of my study. My findings revealed that there are many areas that still need to be explored before it is possible to form a complete picture of the state of children's rights in Saudi Arabia and ultimately to develop more effective approaches for implementing the UNCRC.

First, the implementation of the UNCRC in male primary education in Riyadh should be investigated so that it is possible to draw comparisons between the results of a study with boys and men and this study. Second, since children's rights in Saudi Arabia are driven by two approaches (the Islamic approach and the international approach), there is controversy in some areas and agreement in others. This suggests that there is a need to develop an alternative that combines these approaches and creates a compromise position between the UNCRC and children's rights in Islam.

Moreover, research should explore the professional development needs of Saudi educators to improve their UNCRC-related knowledge and practices. Lastly, to implement the UNCRC in education, a rights-based education programme should be designed. Studies should investigate which educational design is most suitable for Saudi society while still meeting the requirements of the UNCRC.

9.6 The Study's Contributions

One of my study's distinct contributions is that it highlights the many problems involved in implementing the UNCRC in primary education in Saudi Arabia. Previous studies about children's rights in Saudi Arabia have focused on children's

rights in Islam and awareness about children's rights; there have been very few studies in the Saudi context (or even in the wider Arabic region) about how the UNCRC is actually implemented in primary education. It is possible that my study's findings would hold true for similar education settings in different parts of the world. In the literature review, my study also looked at the situation of children in traditional societies that are similar to Saudi Arabia.

This study argues that successful implementations of the UNCRC are driven by the culture of the community. How rights are implemented in different societies will thus differ across cultural contexts. The most successful implementation model is determined by the particularities of the cultural context, however. A Saudi-based model may not be right for other cultures.

It is necessary to recognise the roles played by social and cultural contexts in the socialisation of children. A society's social and cultural values should therefore be considered in the discourse surrounding children's rights and when designing international laws that will affect children. These will make the laws more effective, regardless of the context.

9.7 Personal Reflections

Writing this thesis has been a rewarding journey for me and my family. Firstly, I have acquired a great deal of knowledge about children's rights in general and the UNCRC in particular. My research has taught me about the important role that cultural values play in the community's acceptance and implementation of these rights. In addition, I have come to believe that the implementation of the UNCRC should start from within; we must first believe that it can improve our children's lives. In other words, the UNCRC should start at home.

As a mother, I have altered how I treat my children. I have become more respectful of their rights, I tell them frequently about their rights, and I give them opportunities to participate in making decisions about matters that affect them. This kind of upbringing will make them better citizens who know their rights and respect the rights of others. Furthermore, I have tried to raise awareness about children's rights by participating in conferences and engaging in conversations with my friends and relatives.

Second, since I am an international student working in a second language, conducting this research has improved my English skills. Previously, I was not

confident about my ability to understand English articles and books, but now I find it much easier to read works written in English. Furthermore, from working with my supervisor, I have become a more critical reader; I have learned not to simply accept what I read as the truth. My education in the PhD programme has developed my critical thinking skills and I look forward to developing these skills further.

Reading international research articles and learning about different cultures and languages in the field of children's rights improved not only my language skills, but also my research skills. Since Saudi Arabia's research culture prefers quantitative methods, this was my first experience with qualitative methods. In the beginning, I was afraid of using qualitative research, but, with my supervisor's support, I overcame my fears and conducted my research regardless.

My time in the UK has made me a better reader and researcher. It inspired my interest in the field of children's rights, which was not new to me as I was teaching subjects in the University, which have parts about children's rights in Islam. This experience encouraged me to learn about and conduct research regards children's rights and the UNCRC by the use of English language, therefore, making it more likely that my research will be accessible and beneficial in more parts of the world.

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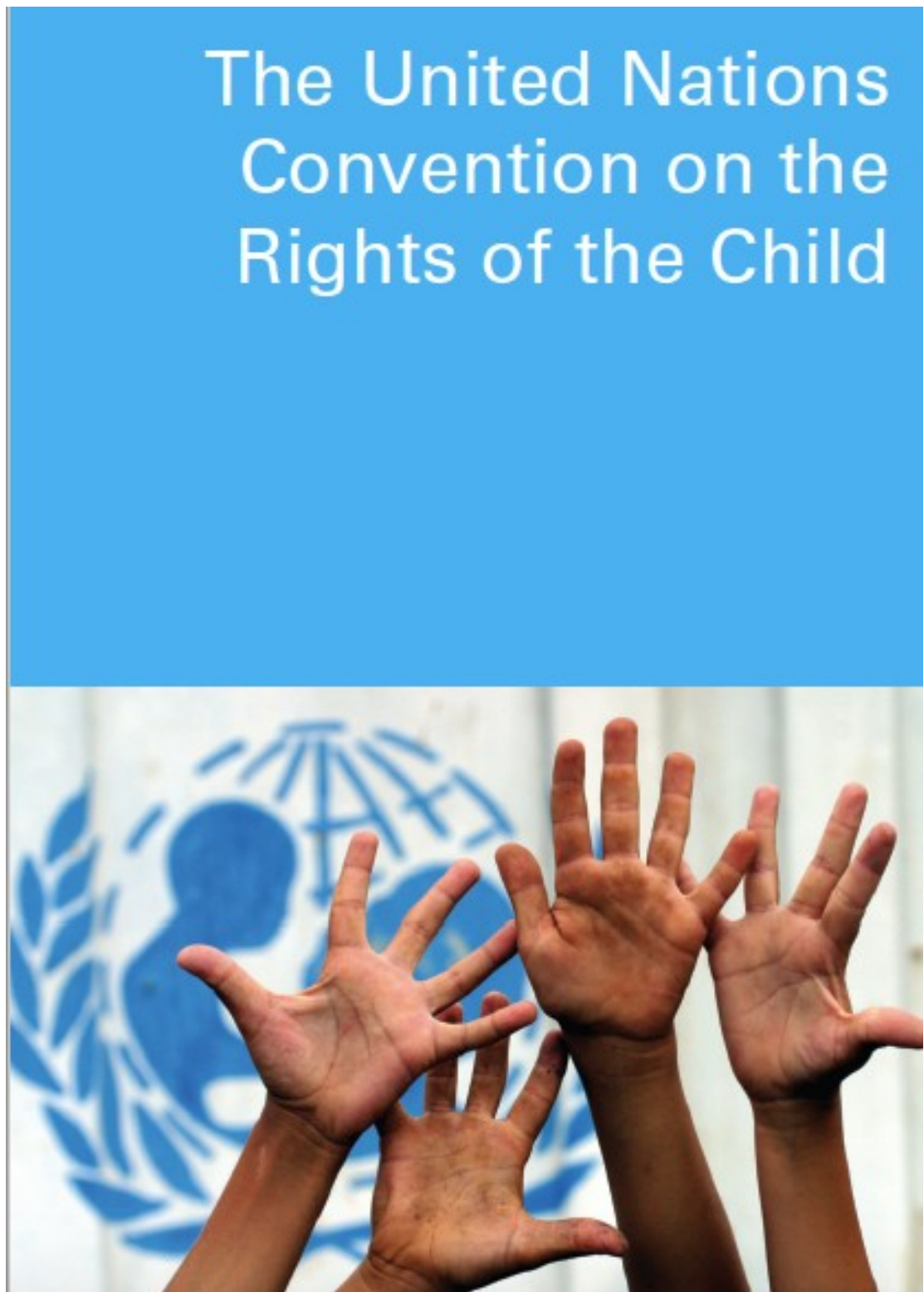
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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Convention on the Rights of the Child



Convention on the Rights of the Child

Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989

entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with Article 49

Preamble

The States Parties to the present Convention,

Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Bearing in mind that the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Recognizing that the United Nations has, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenants on Human Rights, proclaimed and agreed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Recalling that, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance,

Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,

Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,

Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity,

Bearing in mind that the need to extend particular care to the child has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1959 and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in particular in Articles 23 and 24), in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in particular in Article 10) and in the statutes and relevant instruments of specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children,

Bearing in mind that, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth",

Recalling the provisions of the Declaration on Social and Legal Principles relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally; the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules) ; and the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict, Recognizing that, in all countries in the world, there are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, and that such children need special consideration,

Taking due account of the importance of the traditions and cultural values of each people for the protection and harmonious development of the child, Recognizing the importance of international cooperation for improving the living conditions of children in every country, in particular in the developing countries,

Have agreed as follows:

PART I

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Article 2

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

Article 3

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.

3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.

Article 4

States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation.

Article 5

States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

Article 6

1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.

2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

Article 7

1. The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

2. States Parties shall ensure the implementation of these rights in accordance with their national law and their obligations under the relevant international instruments in this field, in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless.

Article 8

1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference.

2. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to re-establishing speedily his or her identity.

Article 9

1. States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. Such determination may be necessary in a particular case such as one involving abuse or neglect of the child by the parents, or one where the parents are living separately and a decision must be made as to the child's place of residence.

2. In any proceedings pursuant to paragraph 1 of the present article, all interested parties shall be given an opportunity to participate in the proceedings and make their views known.

3. States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests.

4. Where such separation results from any action initiated by a State Party, such as the detention, imprisonment, exile, deportation or death (including death arising from any cause while the person is in the custody of the State) of one or both parents or of the child, that State Party shall, upon request, provide the parents, the child or, if appropriate, another member of the family with the essential information concerning the whereabouts of the absent member(s) of the family unless the provision of the information would be detrimental to the well-being of the child. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall of itself entail no adverse consequences for the person(s) concerned.

Article 10

1. In accordance with the obligation of States Parties under Article 9, paragraph 1, applications by a child or his or her parents to enter or leave a State Party for the purpose of family reunification shall be dealt with by States Parties in a positive, humane and expeditious manner. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall entail no adverse consequences for the applicants and for the members of their family.

2. A child whose parents reside in different States shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis, save in exceptional circumstances personal relations and direct contacts with both parents. Towards that end and in accordance with the obligation of States Parties under Article 9, paragraph 1, States Parties shall respect the right of the child and his or her parents to leave any country, including their own, and to enter their own country. The right to leave any country shall be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and which are necessary to protect the national security, public order (*ordre public*), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Convention.

Article 11

1. States Parties shall take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.

2. To this end, States Parties shall promote the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements or accession to existing agreements.

Article 12

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Article 13

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

(a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; or

(b) For the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals.

Article 14

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

Article 15

1. States Parties recognize the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly.
2. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of these rights other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre public*), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Article 16

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.
2. The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 17

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.

To this end, States Parties shall:

- (a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of Article 29;
- (b) Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;
- (c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;
- (d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;
- (e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of Articles 13 and 18.

Article 18

1. States Parties shall use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern.
2. For the purpose of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the present Convention, States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children.
3. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible.

Article 19

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Article 20

1. A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State.
2. States Parties shall in accordance with their national laws ensure alternative care for such a child.
3. Such care could include, inter alia, foster placement, *kafalah* of Islamic law, adoption or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.

Article 21

- States Parties that recognize and/or permit the system of adoption shall ensure that the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration and they shall:
- (a) Ensure that the adoption of a child is authorized only by competent authorities who determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures and on the basis of all pertinent and reliable information, that the adoption is permissible in view of the child's status concerning parents, relatives and legal guardians and that, if required, the persons concerned have given their informed consent to the adoption on the basis of such counselling as may be necessary;
 - (b) Recognize that inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of child's care, if the child cannot be placed in a foster or an adoptive family or cannot in any suitable manner be cared for in the child's country of origin;
 - (c) Ensure that the child concerned by inter-country adoption enjoys safeguards and standards equivalent to those existing in the case of national adoption;
 - (d) Take all appropriate measures to ensure that, in inter-country adoption, the placement does not result in improper financial gain for those involved in it;
 - (e) Promote, where appropriate, the objectives of the present article by concluding bilateral or multilateral arrangements or agreements, and endeavour, within this framework, to ensure that the placement of the child in another country is carried out by competent authorities or organs.

Article 22

1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.
2. For this purpose, States Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate, co-operation in any efforts by the United Nations and other competent intergovernmental organisations or nongovernmental organisations co-operating with the United Nations to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason, as set forth in the present Convention.

Article 23

1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.
2. States Parties recognize the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.
3. Recognizing the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development.
4. States Parties shall promote, in the spirit of international cooperation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of preventive health care and of medical, psychological and functional treatment of disabled children, including dissemination of and access to information concerning methods of rehabilitation, education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling States Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in these areas. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 24

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.
2. States Parties shall pursue full implementation of this right and, in particular, shall take appropriate measures:
 - (a) To diminish infant and child mortality;
 - (b) To ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children with emphasis on the development of primary health care;
 - (c) To combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary health care, through, *inter alia*, the application of readily available technology and through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking-water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution;
 - (d) To ensure appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers;
 - (e) To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents;
 - (f) To develop preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning education and services.
3. States Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.
4. States Parties undertake to promote and encourage international co-operation with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the right recognized in the present article. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 25

States Parties recognize the right of a child who has been placed by the competent authorities for the purposes of care, protection or treatment of his or her physical or mental health, to a periodic review of the treatment provided to the child and all other circumstances relevant to his or her placement.

Article 26

1. States Parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance, and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of this right in accordance with their national law.

8

2. The benefits should, where appropriate, be granted, taking into account the resources and the circumstances of the child and persons having responsibility for the maintenance of the child, as well as any other consideration relevant to an application for benefits made by or on behalf of the child.

Article 27

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

2. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development.

3. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.

4. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to secure the recovery of maintenance for the child from the parents or other persons having financial responsibility for the child, both within the State Party and from abroad. In particular, where the person having financial responsibility for the child lives in a State different from that of the child, States Parties shall promote the accession to international agreements or the conclusion of such agreements, as well as the making of other appropriate arrangements.

Article 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

(a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;

(b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

(c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

(d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

(e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

2. No part of the present article or Article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given

in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

Article 31

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Article 32

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.
2. States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular:
 - (a) Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;
 - (b) Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;
 - (c) Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.

Article 33

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties, and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances.

Article 34

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Article 35

States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

Article 36

States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.

Article 37

States Parties shall ensure that:

- (a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age;
- (b) No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time;
- (c) Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age.

In particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, save in exceptional circumstances;

(d) Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action.

Article 38

1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child.

2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 15 years do not take a direct part in hostilities.

3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of 15 years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of 15 years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, States Parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.

4. In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.

Article 39

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

Article 40

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society.

2. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of international instruments, States Parties shall, in particular, ensure that:

(a) No child shall be alleged as, be accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law by reason of acts or omissions that were not prohibited by national or international law at the time they were committed;

(b) Every child alleged as or accused of having infringed the penal law has at least the following guarantees:

(i) To be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law;

(ii) To be informed promptly and directly of the charges against him or her, and, if appropriate, through his or her parents or legal guardians, and to have legal or other appropriate assistance in the preparation and presentation of his or her defence;

(iii) To have the matter determined without delay by a competent, independent and impartial authority or judicial body in a fair hearing according to law, in the presence of legal or other appropriate assistance and, unless it is considered not to be in the best interest of the child, in particular, taking into account his or her age or situation, his or her parents or legal guardians;

(iv) Not to be compelled to give testimony or to confess guilt; to examine or have examined adverse witnesses and to obtain the participation and examination of witnesses on his or her behalf under conditions of equality;

(v) If considered to have infringed the penal law, to have this decision and any measures imposed in consequence thereof reviewed by a higher competent, independent and impartial authority or judicial body according to law;

(vi) To have the free assistance of an interpreter if the child cannot understand or speak the language used;

(vii) To have his or her privacy fully respected at all stages of the proceedings.

3. States Parties shall seek to promote the establishment of laws, procedures, authorities and institutions specifically applicable to children alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law, and, in particular:

(a) The establishment of a minimum age below which children shall be presumed not to have the capacity to infringe the penal law;

(b) Whenever appropriate and desirable, measures for dealing with such children without resorting to judicial proceedings, providing that human rights and legal safeguards are fully respected.

4. A variety of dispositions, such as care, guidance and supervision orders; counselling; probation; foster care; education and vocational training programmes and other alternatives to institutional care shall be available to ensure that children are dealt with in a manner appropriate to their well-being and proportionate both to their circumstances and the offence.

Article 41

Nothing in the present Convention shall affect any provisions which are more conducive to the realization of the rights of the child and which may be contained in:

(a) The law of a State party; or

(b) International law in force for that State.

PART II

Article 42

States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.

Article 43

1. For the purpose of examining the progress made by States Parties in achieving the realization of the obligations undertaken in the present Convention, there shall be established a Committee on the Rights of the Child, which shall carry out the functions hereinafter provided.

2. The Committee shall consist of ten experts of high moral standing and recognized competence in the field covered by this Convention. The members of the Committee shall be elected by States Parties from among their nationals and shall serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution, as well as to the principal legal systems.

3. The members of the Committee shall be elected by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States Parties. Each State Party may nominate one person from among its own nationals.

4. The initial election to the Committee shall be held no later than six months after the date of the entry into force of the present Convention and thereafter every second year. At least four months before the date of each election, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall address a letter to States Parties inviting them to submit their nominations within two months. The Secretary-General shall subsequently prepare a list in alphabetical order of all persons thus nominated, indicating States Parties which have nominated them, and shall submit it to the States Parties to the present Convention.

5. The elections shall be held at meetings of States Parties convened by the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters. At those meetings, for which two thirds of States Parties shall constitute a quorum, the persons elected to the Committee shall be those who obtain the largest number of votes and an absolute majority of the votes of the representatives of States Parties present and voting.

6. The members of the Committee shall be elected for a term of four years. They shall be eligible for re-election if renominated. The term of five of the members elected at the first election shall expire at the end of two years; immediately after the first election, the names of these five members shall be chosen by lot by the Chairman of the meeting.

7. If a member of the Committee dies or resigns or declares that for any other cause he or she can no longer perform the duties of the Committee, the State Party which nominated the member shall appoint another expert from among its nationals to serve for the remainder of the term, subject to the approval of the Committee.

8. The Committee shall establish its own rules of procedure.

9. The Committee shall elect its officers for a period of two years.

10. The meetings of the Committee shall normally be held at United Nations Headquarters or at any other convenient place as determined by the Committee. The Committee shall normally meet annually. The duration of the meetings of the Committee shall be determined, and reviewed, if necessary, by a meeting of the States Parties to the present Convention, subject to the approval of the General Assembly.

11. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall provide the necessary staff and facilities for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee under the present Convention.

12. With the approval of the General Assembly, the members of the Committee established under the present Convention shall receive emoluments from United Nations resources on such terms and conditions as the Assembly may decide.

Article 44

1. States Parties undertake to submit to the Committee, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, reports on the measures they have adopted which give effect to the rights recognized herein and on the progress made on the enjoyment of those rights

(a) Within two years of the entry into force of the Convention for the State Party concerned;

(b) Thereafter every five years.

2. Reports made under the present article shall indicate factors and difficulties, if any, affecting the degree of fulfilment of the obligations under the present Convention. Reports shall also contain sufficient information to provide the Committee with a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Convention in the country concerned.

3. A State Party which has submitted a comprehensive initial report to the Committee need not, in its subsequent reports submitted in accordance with paragraph 1 (b) of the present article, repeat basic information previously provided.

4. The Committee may request from States Parties further information relevant to the implementation of the Convention.

5. The Committee shall submit to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, every two years, reports on its activities.

6. States Parties shall make their reports widely available to the public in their own countries.

Article 45

In order to foster the effective implementation of the Convention and to encourage international cooperation in the field covered by the Convention:

(a) The specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund, and other United Nations organs shall be entitled to be represented at the consideration of the implementation of such provisions of the present Convention as fall within the scope of their mandate. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund and other competent bodies as it may consider appropriate to provide expert advice on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their respective mandates. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund, and other United Nations organs to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities;

(b) The Committee shall transmit, as it may consider appropriate, to the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund and other competent bodies, any reports from States Parties that contain a request, or indicate a need, for technical advice or assistance, along with the Committee's observations and suggestions, if any, on these requests or indications;

(c) The Committee may recommend to the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to undertake on its behalf studies on specific issues relating to the rights of the child;

(d) The Committee may make suggestions and general recommendations based on information received pursuant to Articles 44 and 45 of the present Convention. Such suggestions and general recommendations shall be transmitted to any State Party concerned and reported to the General Assembly, together with comments, if any, from States Parties.

PART III

Article 46

The present Convention shall be open for signature by all States.

Article 47

The present Convention is subject to ratification. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 48

The present Convention shall remain open for accession by any State. The instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 49

1. The present Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date of deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.

2. For each State ratifying or acceding to the Convention after the deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the deposit by such State of its instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 50

1. Any State Party may propose an amendment and file it with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General shall thereupon communicate the proposed amendment to States Parties, with a request that they indicate whether they favour a conference of States Parties for the purpose of considering and voting upon the proposals. In the event that, within four months from the date of such communication, at least one third of the States Parties favour such a conference, the Secretary-General shall convene the conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Any amendment adopted by a majority of States Parties present and voting at the conference shall be submitted to the General Assembly for approval.

2. An amendment adopted in accordance with paragraph 1 of the present article shall enter into force when it has been approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations and accepted by a two-thirds majority of States Parties.

3. When an amendment enters into force, it shall be binding on those States Parties which have accepted it, other States Parties still being bound by the provisions of the present Convention and any earlier amendments which they have accepted.

Article 51

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made by States at the time of ratification or accession.

2. A reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention shall not be permitted.

3. Reservations may be withdrawn at any time by notification to that effect addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall then inform all States. Such notification shall take effect on the date on which it is received by the Secretary-General.

Article 52

A State Party may denounce the present Convention by written notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Denunciation becomes effective one year after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General.

Article 53

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is designated as the depositary of the present Convention.

Article 54

The original of the present Convention, of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

IN WITNESS THEREOF the undersigned plenipotentiaries, being duly authorized thereto by their respective governments, have signed the present Convention.

Appendix 2: Ethical Approval from the University of Sheffield Ethics System for Implementing the Interviews with Principals, Focus Groups with Children, and Questionnaires with Teachers



Downloaded: 09/12/2018
Approved: 12/08/2016

Ghadah Abahussain
Registration number: 140242102
School of Education
Programme: Education

Dear Ghadah

PROJECT TITLE: the implementation of childrens rights in primary education in saudi arabia: childrens, teachers and principals perspectives
APPLICATION: Reference Number 008077

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 12/08/2016 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 008077 (dated 14/06/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1017137 version 1 (14/04/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1017136 version 1 (14/04/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1017135 version 1 (14/04/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1019507 version 1 (14/06/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1019506 version 1 (14/06/2016).
- Participant consent form 1017138 version 1 (14/04/2016).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

Thank you for this submission, which has many strengths: the clearly defined research aims, and information sheets friendly for young people, in particular. The reviewers generally supported your application, although identified a few small areas where further clarification would be welcome. These are: 1. It was unclear from this application as to who will be selecting the participating children - will it be the principal, teachers in their school, or you as a researcher? Further detail on this process would be welcome. 2. It is important to include the supervisor's contact details on all of the information sheets, so in the unlikely event of participants experiencing an issue they are uncomfortable raising with you, they have the necessary information to take it to someone else. 3. I would encourage you to think of ways to share the findings of your research with all participants: you might want to say on the information sheets that you will automatically send them a copy of the completed thesis, or that they can contact you if they'd like to see it. This is helpful in closing the loop, and ensuring that the information participants have given you, is ultimately returned to them. 4. Within the information sheet for the participating young people, I would encourage you to make it clear to participants that what they say has no bearing on their academic results / progress within the school, and similarly their choice to participate or not does not affect anything within their daily school life. 5. A separate consent form should be developed for parents, so they can record their informed consent on behalf of their children. Thank you again for this submission, and we all wish you the best of luck in your research!

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator
School of Education

Appendix 3: Ethical Approval from the University of Sheffield Ethics System for Implementing the Teachers' Focus Group



Downloaded: 09/12/2018
Approved: 22/05/2017

Ghadah Abahussain
Registration number: 140242102
School of Education
Programme: Education

Dear Ghadah

PROJECT TITLE: the implementation of childrens rights in primary education in saudi arabia: childrens, teachers and principals perspectives
APPLICATION: Reference Number 014239

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 22/05/2017 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 014239 (dated 05/05/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1030381 version 1 (05/05/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1030380 version 1 (05/05/2017).
- Participant consent form 1030382 version 1 (05/05/2017).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

The suggested changes listed by reviewers 2 and 3 should be taken into consideration.

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator
School of Education

Appendix 4: The Interview Questions

1. What do you know about children's rights?
2. As a Muslim, do you think that children's rights have been assured by Islam?
3. Have you heard about the UNCRC?

If yes:

4. From where you have got your information about the UNCRC?
5. What aspects of the UNCRC do you agree or disagree with?
6. Do you think that the UNCRC can be applied in Saudi society?
7. Is there any policy about protecting children's rights in school?
8. There are some laws and organizations that interest in children's rights and working to protect the child, what do you know about them?
9. As a school principal What is your role in ensuring children's rights in your school?
10. If you know that a student from your school faced some problems in or out the school, which is kind of violation of her rights (ex. Child abuse), what strategies are in place helping you deal with that?
11. From your perspective as a school principal what are the factors that enhance the implementation of children's rights in Saudi schools?
12. From your perspective as a school principal what are the factors that hinder the implementation of children's rights in Saudi schools?

Appendix 5: The Questionnaire

1- Teachers' awareness about Children's rights.

A- Please choose the most suitable answer:

No.	Items	Yes	I have no idea	No
1	I studied CR in Islam at university.			
2	I studied CR in the international conventions at university.			
3	I have read the UNCRC before.			
4	I have attended some training classes about CR in Islam while working as a teacher.			
5	I have attended some training classes about the UNCRC before			
6	I have heard about the UNCRC before.			

B- Please choose the most suitable answer:

No.	Items	Agree	I have no idea	Do not agree
1	A child is a person below the age of 18.			
2	CR are for all children with no discrimination.			
3	The best interest of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them.			
4	When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen, and their opinion should be considered.			

5	The government should respect the rights and responsibilities of the families to direct and guide their child.			
6	The government should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.			
7	The government has the responsibility to use available measures to make sure that the CR are respected, protected, and fulfilled.			
8	The law should protect children from attacks against their privacy which contains their way of life, name, families, and homes.			
9	The government should encourage mass media to provide understandable and useful information for children.			
10	Children should be protected by the government from working in any jobs that might harm their health, growth, or education.			
11	The government should protect children from the use of harmful drugs and from being used in the drug trade.			
12	Children should be protected by the government from any kind of exploitation and abuse.			
13	Children who have been neglected, abused, or exploited should receive help to recover and reintegrate into society.			
14	The government should protect and help children who are refugees, who are forced to leave their home, or who are affected by war.			
15	Having a legally registered name and nationality are of the child's rights.			
16	Every child has the right, as possible, to know			

	and be cared for by their parents.			
17	A child whose parents do not live together has the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.			
18	Both parents share the responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child.			
19	There should be a standard of living that is good enough to meet children's physical and mental needs, and families who cannot afford to provide this must be supported by the government.			
20	Children who cannot be looked after by their own families (temporary or permanently) must be looked after properly by adoption or any other ways that must respect the child's ethnic group, religion, culture, and language.			
21	Children have the right to get and share information in any way they choose (e.g., talking or writing) if the information is not damaging to them or others.			
22	The freedom of thought, religion, and conscience is part of CR.			
23	Children have the right to meet and join groups and organisations as long as they respect the rights, freedoms, and reputations of others.			
24	Children have the right to good-quality health care.			
25	A disabled child has the right to additional care and support that he or she needs.			
26	All children have the right to primary education, which should be free.			

27	Children's education should develop their personality, talents, and abilities to the fullest.			
28	Children's education should encourage children to respect others' rights and cultures.			
29	Minority children related to different religions, races, or languages have the right to learn about their own culture, language, and religion.			
30	Children have the right to relax, play, and join in a wide range of activities.			
31	No one should be allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way, even if they are the parents, and this must be by the law.			
32	Children who are accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment in a justice system that respects their rights.			
33	The government should make the UNCRC's articles are known to adults and children, and adults should also help children learn about their rights.			

2- The implementation of children's rights as identified in the UNCRC in primary school in Saudi Arabia.

- Please choose the most suitable answer:

*Agree = This article is implemented in schools.

*Disagree = This article is not implemented at school.

*If you have no idea about the implementation of any article just choose 'I have no idea'.

No.	Items	Agree	I have no idea	Do not agree
1	A copy of the UNCRC has been dispatched to primary schools in Saudi Arabia.			

2	The media contributes well to publicizing and educating people about the CRCs.			
3	There are periodic circulars for educators related to CR.			
4	Adequate legislation and sentences exist to protect CR and punish violators in Saudi Arabia.			
5	The children's protection law has been dispatched to primary schools, and the educators know about it.			
6	There are many organisations that protect children and their rights in Saudi Arabia.			
7	The schools and CR organisations work together to implement the UNCRC.			
8	There is an annually monitoring and evaluating of the schools to examine how well the UNCRC has been implemented by the MoE or the CR organizations.			
9	Primary education is free for all children in Saudi Arabia.			
10	There is a law that includes penalties for parents if their children are absent from school without an acceptable excuse.			
11	My school works hard to implement and protect CR.			
12	The school works to improve children's awareness about their rights.			
13	The school provides its students with the necessary knowledge about hotline 116111.			
14	The use of physical or emotional punishment is prohibited in schools.			

15	The school, or one of its staff, reports any case of violence, neglect, or exploitation, which a child is exposed, to official authorities as soon as it is noticed, even if the violator is one of the child's parents.			
16	All children have the freedom of expression in school, where all students are given the opportunity to speak and express their views and feelings.			
17	Students' problems are resolved carefully and privately by the school staff.			
18	School staff respect all children, regardless of their ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds.			
19	Students receive high-quality health care at their schools.			
20	There is an appropriate place for students to enjoy their free time safely at school.			

3- The barriers to the implementation of the UNCRC in primary education

- Please choose the most suitable answer:

No.	Items	Agree	Have no idea	Do not agree
1	The lack of people's awareness about children's rights.			
2	Society gives priority to the family and its privacy over anything else.			
3	Saudi culture believes that children belong to their parents, so parents may treat children as they want.			
4	Saudi society is a traditional society, so it rejects anything from other cultures, such as the UNCRC.			

5	The UNCRC articles conflict with Islamic teachings.			
6	Schools are not being well prepared to apply the UNCRC.			
7	The financial supports for education are lacking.			
8	Educators are not well qualified to implement the UNCRC.			
9	Undergraduate curriculums focus on the development of teachers' academic skills with no focus on the CR and its implementation in the work field.			
10	The number of students in each school is so high so that it is hard to fully implement the UNCRC.			
11	There are no laws or legislations that protect children and their rights.			

13- If you have any other factors you would like to note, please write them below:

-
-

The end,

I would like to apologize for the length of the questionnaire and I want to thank you for your cooperation, taking part in my research, and for spending a significant amount of time answering the questionnaire. In addition, I want to mention that if you would like to see the results of my research, please send me your contact information, so I can forward the results to you when the research process completed.

Appendix 6: The Video Used in the Focus Group With Children



https://youtu.be/9816Dm_B1Cs

The permission from the head of Graphic Design and Digital Media department in Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University to use the video



Appendix 7: The First Book Used in the Focus Group with Children



Appendix 8: The Second Book Used in the Focus Group with Children



Appendix 9: The Assumed Scenario of the Focus Group With Children

First, give them the book 'My Rights' and ask them to read its title.

- 1- What is the meaning of my rights?
- 2- What do you know about your rights?

Then give them the book 'Children Rights' and ask them to read its title

- 3- What do children's rights mean?

show them the part of the video, which talks about the UNCRC.

- 4- Have you heard these rights before?
- 5- What do you think about these rights.?
- 6- Do these rights implemented in your school?
- 7- What kind of difficulties do you face at your school?
- 8- If you faced any kind of abuse, neglect or violence what will you do?
- 9- Have you heard about the organization that aims to protect you and your rights?
- 10- Have you been told about this organization or the Child Helping Hotline?
- 11- Do you want to tell me anything in regard to your rights that we heard about in the video and read about in the books?

Appendix 10: The Assumed Scenario of the Focus Group With Teachers

First, I want to thank you for your cooperation and participation in my re- search which is about the implementation of children's rights in primary education in Saudi Arabia from children's, teachers' and principals' perspectives. Last year I have done some interview with principals and focus groups with children. Also, I dis- patched a questionnaire to teachers. This gave me some views about the implementa- tion of children's rights at primary education in Saudi Arabia. But I want you as a cur- rent teacher to help me to understand those views through the discussion, please.

1- The Place:

- Some of the principals whose I have met said that the schools in Saudi Arabia are not suitable to implement children's rights. One of them said that:

'Most of our private schools have a better environment, but a lack of the qualified teacher. While the public schools have a lack of an appropriate environment and a large number of qualified teachers who have an amazing capacity and creativity. The availability of projectors or smart boards does not mean that the environment is appropriate. There are many other things that are supposed to be available in educational buildings and schools to help in the learning process. So, I do not think that the schools in its situation these days are a suitable place to implement CRC or CR in general.'

And 58% of the teachers in the questionnaire agreed with that schools are not well prepared for the implementation of children's rights.

In contrast, when I asked Mrs Nora about if the schools in Saudi Arabia are suitable to apply CRC, she said:

'Yes, of course, the school is the most suitable place to apply the CRC.'

- **You are a member of the education system and one of the school staff. So, which views do you agree with regarding the suitability of our schools in these days to apply the CRC?**

- Another issue is that the unsuitable places for children at school. For example, the school facilities such as toilets are not clean to the extent of that

two students said:

'It is not suitable for human use'

- **Is that right?**
- **Do the staff toilets have the same situation? Is it unclean and unhealthy place?**
- **How to deal with these issues?**

- Also, students complained about celebrations at schools such as the national day celebration. They said:

'Last year the school celebrated the national day. When we came to sit, there were no chairs, so we sit on the floor in a small hall with a high number of students. It was hot, and we feel like we could not breath'

- **What are the reasons for that?**
- **Celebrating the national day is important and children's safety also important which one has the priority over the other?**

2- people whose work at school.

- Some principles mentioned that the teachers are one of the factors that hinder the implementation of the UNCRC in education because of many reasons such as that they do not have the awareness about children's rights. For example, one of the principals said:

'I can say that some teachers do not have any awareness about the meaning of the rights of the child.'

Although 63.7% of the female teacher sample whose answer the questionnaire say that they have studied about children's In Islam while there were studying the university. The children's rights in Islam are almost the same with CRC.

- **So, what the numbers shows are different from the principals' point of view. I want to listen to your view in this regards.**

- Some principals said that the teachers' ways to treat children reveal that their awareness about CR is low. In this regard, one of the principals said:

'Teachers do not have any awareness about CR and the proof of that is the bad treatment of some teachers against their students.'

Students' answers support that and these are some of their answers:

'Teachers hit some students especially the neglectful students'

However, 80.9% of the teachers agreed with that the use of physical or emotional punishment is prohibited in schools.

- **Why those teachers treat children in these ways, although it is prohibited in education?**
- **Do you think being neglectful or giving a wrong answer or anything else gave the teacher the permission to hit or punish the child hard?**
- **Have you experienced any kind of bad treatment when you were children by yourself or being an eyewitness of a case like this? And what do you feel?**

- Students afraid of the adults whose work in their school. So, if they faced any problem they do not complain. One student said:

'If I complain they will say that I am a trouble maker.'

- **That means there is no one listen to children, not just this some children said if we complain, the educators do not believe us. Do you think educators do not listen or believe children in school?**
- **If your student talks to you about that another teacher treats them bad what could you do?**
- **Do you think it is of the teachers' responsibility to listen to the child issues and feeling?**

- Another thing about teachers is what mentioned by one of the principals.

She said:

'Some of the teachers themselves do not accept the introduction or application of some things such as CR and consider them as an increase of the burden.'

And

'Also, if one of the teachers, for example, raise her voice at the children and says some bad words or even hit them, then we prevent them they will feel that we interfere in their own work.'

- **Do you think that? I mean, do you think the teachers do not like others to intervene in their works even if they make some mistakes?**
- **Is the implementation of children's rights will increase the teachers' burden?**

- Another issue is about the school bus. A high number of children use the school bus to go and come back from school. Some principals said that there is a teacher who's responsible for the children whose use the bus. The principal said:

'There is a teacher whose responsible about those students whose go with the school bus. She ensures that all students have set on their seat on the bus quietly.'

But this teacher does not company students on their way to home.

- **Do you think that's enough?**

Many students have complained about the bus's driver's behaviour with them. One of them said:

'The school bus driver usually annoys us.'

In addition, one said they have got a traffic accident once. So, they are children in a hard situation need someone to protect them and help them to feel safe.

One student has given a suggestion for that, she said:

'I have told the principal about that it must be an observer with the school bus, but she said we could not afford that'

- **Do you agree with her?**

- The bullying at school. There are some students hit others, there are some stolen cases at school, and some students hurt others. For instance, one said:

'Some students pour water on our books and write some unacceptable words on our disks'.

- **As a teacher, how could you protect children from bullying?**
- **Do you think bullying at school is a phenomenon or just some cases in some schools?**
- **Have you been in this situation before?**

3- Some other cases at school.

- One of the school's aims is to improve children's skills and abilities. For this reason, there are two classes weekly for activity. As what I have got from focus groups with students, these classes are not used effectively. Some students said that they do not do anything in these classes except talking. Another thing is the school broadcast which helps to improve the children's talent of diction. A student said that:

'The students who organize and be one of the school broadcasting group have been determined before by teachers it is not for any students'

- **That means the school has lost one of its responsibilities which is improving children talents and skills. Do you agree with that?**

- It is of the children's rights to have the freedom of expression, thought, choice and talk. As what I mentioned before, some students said they afraid of talking, complaining, or tilling their views to their teachers or educators in school for many reasons, although all the principals that I have met confirmed that their doors are open for their students.

-Although the principals' doors are open to their students, students afraid of going there to tell their views or talking about their problems. What is the reason for that?

- A principal said that:

'For the freedom of choice, we always ask them for their opinion about the activities that they like and we listen to them'

In contrast, students said:

'We do not choose which activity we want.'

It is not just about the activities; students could not choose the leaders or the members of the students' leaders' group. They are chosen by the teachers.

- Children's freedom is one of children's rights. Their right to choose activates and the right to be consulted on things that affect their lives. Is that absence in our schools?

- In my questionnaire, there were %65. 8 chose no for the child's rights of freedom of thought, religion and conscience and %40. 3 do not agree with that the child from a different religion, race, or language has the right to learn about his/her own culture. In addition, I have got many contacts that reject those items and asked me to delete them.

- To what extent do you agree with them?

- Discrimination at school and this is for many reasons such as that the student's mother is working at school or because of that the student is clever so they treat her better than others. It is not just the discrimination at school, student feel the discrimination in their life around them between girls and boys. One student said that:

'I learned about that boys are unique from what I see. From the people and the society that I live in and how they treat the boys'

- How this could affect children and society?

- Do you have any example of discrimination?

4- Society.

Society is one of the most important factors that hinder the implementation of children's rights in primary education as 85% of teachers agreed with that the lack of the society's awareness about the UNCRC hinder its implementation, 84.7% of them mentioned that the society's believes the family privacy is a barrier to the implementation of the UNCRC, and 69.9 % agreed with that the society's belief that the child is belongs to his or her parents. Furthermore, one principal said that:

'Some people are locked so they refuse anything from the international world and they reject any new idea without searching and knowing it because it is a new thing they have never dealt with.'

And in the questionnaire, there was a teacher that supports this view and said:

'Some teachers prefer to not participate in applying children's rights because of they afraid of getting into troubles with children's parents or to protect the child from being punished by the parents, stepparent, brother, or uncle.'

- **As a teacher, if you feel that your students faced a problem or being abused will you help her?**
- **Do you believe that the child belongs to his/her parents?**

Appendix 11: Principals' Information Sheet

My name is Ghadah Abahussain. I am studying to get the PhD in Education from the University of Sheffield in Great Britain. I do this research as a part of my postgraduate study requirement and I would like to invite you to take a part in my research study. This research will find out whether the children's rights as identified through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are being implemented in primary education in Saudi Arabia or not.

Before you decide whether to participate, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully; ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Research Project Title:

The Implementation of Children's Rights in Primary Education in Saudi Arabia: Children's, Teachers', and Principals' Perspectives.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study will examine the implementation of the UNCRC in schools in Saudi Arabia, focusing on children age 9 to 11 years.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen by a non-probability sample. Your name has been nominated by the Educational Department in Riyadh, then you have been chosen to take a part in this study.

Do I have to take a part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form).

What will happen to me if I take part?

As you are one of the principal's sample, the researcher will do an interview with you. The place of the interview depends on your circumstances. The interview will be done in June 2016 and there will be from one to two interviews (if we need to explain more details) and it will take between 30 to 60 minutes for each.

What do I have to do?

You have to decide the best place and time for the interview and I want you to be comfortable to answer the questions and be free to refuse to answer any question if you do not want. In this case we will move to another part.

What are the possible disadvantages and risk of taking part?

The data will be collected in the end of the school year so it may cause some discomfort for participants. In addition, it is about a sensitive subject, that is children's rights.

What are the possible benefits of taking parts?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will examine the situation of the implementation of children's rights in Saudi Arabia and help to improve the children's life there.

What if there is a problem?

If any problems at all occur in relation to your participation in the project, either during the project or after it, please contact Ghadah Abahussain (contact details below).

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield, School of Education's ethics review procedure.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

I promise to you that the data will be used for academic purposes only, and will not be shared with unauthorized people. In regards to anonymity, there are no questions identifying you. For example, there will be no questions about names, contacts, or personal details. Also, your confidentiality will be guaranteed by giving you a pseudonym or code to use throughout the interview so your name will not appear in the interviews (these will be tape-recorded and transcribed). I also promise not to share any information with unauthorized people. Furthermore, all the data gathered will be stored on a password-protected computer, in a locked cupboard and will not be shared with unauthorized people. And all data will be destroyed as soon as the research is completed.

How will the data be used?

All collected data will be kept with me in my laptop and password protected. The data will be analyzed by the researcher Ghadah Abahussain only.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results will be used for the researcher's PhD thesis at the University of Sheffield.

Who is organizing or sponsoring the research?

The research is done through a granted scholarship from Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Agreement to Participate

Please note that if you agreed to participate, I accept this as agreement for the following: Please note that if you agreed to participate, I accept this as agreement for the following:

- For the researcher to access and analyze the collected data.
- For the data to be saved on the researcher's personal password protected laptop.
- For data to be used in the publication of the researcher's PhD thesis.

Contact for further information

Email: gaabahussain1@sheffield.ac.uk

Mobile Saudi: [REDACTED]

Mobile UK: [REDACTED]

My supervisor's contact information:

e.a.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

Professor Elizabeth Wood

School of Education

The University of Sheffield

Appendix 12: Consent Letter for Principals and Teachers.

Title of Research Project:

The Implementation of Children's Rights in Primary Education in Saudi Arabia: Children's, Teachers', and Principals' Perspectives.

Name of Researcher: Ghadah Abahussain

Participant Identification Number for this project:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to Withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for the researcher to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.

- 4-I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research

5. I agree to take part in the above research project.

6. I give my permission to the researcher to record the discussion by using an audio recorder

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

(or legal representative)

Researcher

Date

Signature

Copies:

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

Appendix 13: The Information Sheet for the Participants of the Questionnaire

Research Project Title:

The Implementation of Children's Rights in Primary Education in Saudi Arabia: Children's, Teachers', and Principals' Perspectives.

Dear teacher,

You are kindly invited to complete a questionnaire for 'The Implementation of Children's Rights in Primary Education in Saudi Arabia'. Please take time to carefully read the information provide about this study. Do not hesitate to contact me for any clarification you may require, and do take time decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?

This study will examine the implementation of the UNCRC in schools in Saudi Arabia, focusing on children age 9 to 11 years.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are currently teaching primary school children.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The study is about children's rights and there are some items of the UNCRC that are not compatible with the rules of Islam. However, the Government of Saudi Arabia has signed the UNCRC with reservation to all articles that are inconsistent

with Islam so if we talk about the children rights in Saudi Arabia we just talk about the rights that are consistent with Islam.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will examine the situation of the implementation of children's rights in Saudi Arabia and help to improve the children's lives there.

Will my part in this project be kept confidential?

All information that will be collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and there is no question identifying your personality.

How will the data be used?

All collected data will be kept with me in my laptop and password protected. The data will be analyzed by the researcher Ghadah Abahussain only.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results will be used for the researcher's PhD thesis at the University of Sheffield.

Who is organizing and funding the research?

The research is done through a granted scholarship from Princess Norah Bint Abdulrahman University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

What if something goes wrong?

If any problems at all occur in relation to your participation in the project, either during the project or after it, please contact Ghadah Abahussain (contact details below).

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield, School of Education's ethics review procedure.

Agreement to Participate

Please note that if you agreed to participate, I accept this as agreement for the following: Please note that if you agreed to participate, I accept this as agreement for the following:

- For the researcher to access and analyze the collected data.
- For the data to be saved on the researcher's personal password protected laptop.
- For data to be used in the publication of the researcher's PhD thesis.

Contact for further information

Ghadah Abahussain

Email: Gaabahussain1@sheffield.ac.uk

Mobile Saudi: [REDACTED]

Mobile England: [REDACTED]

My supervisor's contact information:

e.a.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

Professor Elizabeth Wood

School of Education

The University of Sheffield

If you are happy with the information provided and wish to continue with this survey, please tick the box below before you continue answering the questions.

I appreciate that you have taken the time to read this information sheet and many thanks for your cooperation.

Yes, I agree.

No, I do not agree.

Appendix 14: Children's Information Sheet:

أهلاً!
أنا اسمي عادة أباصين
أدرس دكتوراه
بجامعة شيفيلد
في بريطانيا
وأبغى منك تساعدني
عشاه أنج

1
أنا وأنت بنسوي تجربة رهيبه
عشاه نتأكد إذا كانت المدارس
في السعوديه
تطبق كل شروط حقوق
الطفل أو لا

2
وعشاه أنت مميز
أنا اضرتك تشاركك التجربة
وتقدر توافق أو تقول لا
ولو وافقت وما أعجبك المغامرة
تقدر ما تكمل

3
في تجربتنا راج تكون في
فريق من 3 طلاب
بنجلس نتكلم بشوي عن المدرسه
بعدها نقرأ قصص ممتعه
ونشوف مقاطع فيديو
ويكرر هذه التجربة
مرة أو مرتين

4
وقت التجربة بيكون في نفس
وقت مصصك الدراسي
يعني ما راج تضر كل الحصص
مشاركك بتساعدني
اكتشف إذا المدرسه
تطبق حقوق الطفل أو لا
وأساعدك تكون مبسوط في
المدرسه

5
إذا صارت لك مشكله
تقدر على طول تقولي
أو تتصل على رقمي
عشاه أساعدك

جوال بريطانيا: ١
جوال السعوديه:
gaabahussaini@sheffield.ac.uk

سرّ بيننا!
لأنا أصدقاء أنا أوعدك إه كل
اللي تقوله أو تكتبه بيض
سر بيني وبينك

Appendix 15: Parent's Information Sheet

My name is Ghadah Abahussain. I am studying to get the PhD in Education from the University of Sheffield in Great Britain. I do this research as a part of my postgraduate study requirement and I would like to invite your child to take a part in my research study. This research will find out whether the children's rights as identified through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are being implemented in primary education in Saudi Arabia or not.

Before you decide whether to allow your child to participate, you need to understand and explain for your child why the research is being done and what it would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully; ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Research Project Title:

The Implementation of Children's Rights in Primary Education in Saudi Arabia: Children's, Teachers', and Principals' Perspectives.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study will examine the implementation of the UNCRC in schools in Saudi Arabia, focusing on children age 9 to 11 years.

Why has my child been chosen?

Your child has been chosen by using the probability sample. This has been made by using a simple random sample, which means each one of the population members (which includes students that are 9,10, and 11years old) has the same chance of being selected and included in the study sample. This has been done by making a list of the students' numbers, then picking from them randomly.

Does my child have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to let your child take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form).

What will happen to my child if she takes part?

As your child is one of the student's sample, the researcher will do from 1 to 2 (if I need to get more information) research conversations (focus group) with her as a member of a group of 3 students from the same age. The focus group will be done at school in July 2016 and it will take 45 minutes' maximum for each. The research conversation will be tape-recorded and transcribed.

What are the possible disadvantages and risk of taking part?

The focus group will be done in schools at the time of classes so if your child participates in my study she may miss a part of her classes.

What are the possible benefits of taking parts?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will examine the situation of the implementation of children's rights in Saudi Arabia and help to improve the children's life there.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results will be used for the researcher's PhD thesis at the University of Sheffield.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspects of the study, either during the project or after it, please contact Ghadah Abahussain or contact my supervisor (contact details below).

Will my child taking part in the study be kept confidential?

I promise to you that the data will be used for academic purposes only and will not be shared with unauthorized people. In regard to anonymity, there are no questions about identifying participants. For example, there will be no questions about names, contacts, or personal details. Also, participants' confidentiality will be guaranteed by giving them a pseudonym or codes to use throughout the focus group, so your child's name will not appear in the tape-recorded conversation. I also promise not to share any information with unauthorized people. Furthermore, all the data gathered will be stored on a password-protected computer, in a locked cupboard and will not be shared with unauthorized people. And all data will be destroyed as soon as the research is completed.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield, School of Education's ethics review procedure.

Who is organizing or sponsoring the research?

The research is done through a granted scholarship from Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Agreement to Participate

Please note that if you agreed to participate, I accept this as an agreement for the following:

- For the researcher to access and analyze the collected data.
- For the data to be saved on the researcher's personal password-protected laptop.
- For data to be used in the publication of the researcher's PhD thesis.

Contact for further information

Email: gaabahussain1@sheffield.ac.uk

Mobile Saudi: [REDACTED]

Mobile UK: [REDACTED]

My supervisor's contact information:

e.a.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

Professor Elizabeth Wood

School of Education

The University of Sheffield

Appendix 16: Consent Letter for Parents

Title of Research Project:

*The Implementation of Children's Rights in Primary Education in Saudi Arabia: Children's,
Teachers', and Principals' Perspectives.*

Name of Researcher: Ghadah Abahussain

Participant Identification Number for this project:

Please initial box

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 4. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that she is free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should my child not wish to answer any particular question or questions, she is free to decline. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I understand that my child's responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for the researcher to have access to my child's anonymised responses. I understand that my child's name will not be linked with the research materials, and my child will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I agree for the data collected from my child to be used in future research. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I agree for my child to take part in the above research project. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I give my permission to the researcher to record the discussion with my child by using an audio recorder. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name of the child's parent
(or legal representative)

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Copies:

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

Appendix 17: Teacher's Information Sheet

Research Project Title:

The Implementation of Children's Rights in Primary Education in Saudi Arabia: Children's, Teachers', and Principals' Perspectives.

What is the project's purpose?

This study will examine the implementation of the UNCRC in schools in Saudi Arabia, focusing on children age 9 to 11 years.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are currently teaching primary school children.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be one of a focus group that contains 5 teachers and the discussion will be audio recorded.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The study is about children's rights and there are some items of the UNCRC that are not compatible with the rules of Islam. However, the Government of Saudi Arabia has signed the UNCRC with reservation to all articles that are inconsistent with Islam so if we talk about the children rights in Saudi Arabia we just talk about the rights that are consistent with Islam. In addition, I will do the focus group in a public place such as a park, café or any suitable place that the group the group will chose so the transportations and being out of your home may be a disadvantage of taking part in my research. Also, the discussion will be audio recorded so that me be but you under stress.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will examine the situation of the implementation of children's rights in Saudi Arabia and help to improve the children's life there.

Will my part in this project be kept confidential?

All information that will be collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and there is no question identifying your personality.

How will the data be used?

All collected data will be kept with me in my laptop and password protected. The data will be analysed by the researcher Ghadah Abahussain only.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results will be used for the researcher's PhD thesis at the University of Sheffield and if you want to know about the finding of the research you can contact me or send me your contact details to send you the research finding.

Who is organizing and funding the research?

The research is done through a granted scholarship from Princess Norah Bint Abdulrahman University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

What if something goes wrong?

If any problems at all occur in relation to your participation in the project, either during the project or after it, please contact Ghadah Abahussain or contact my supervisor (contact details below).

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield, School of Education's ethics review procedure.

Agreement to Participate

Please note that if you agreed to participate, I accept this as agreement for the following:

- For the researcher to access and analyse the collected data.
- For the data to be saved on the researcher's personal password protected laptop.
- For data to be used in the publication of the researcher's PhD thesis.

Contact for further information

Ghadah Abahussain

Email: Gaabahussain1@sheffield.ac.uk

Mobile Saudi: [REDACTED]

Mobile England: + [REDACTED]

My supervisor's contact information:

e.a.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

Professor Elizabeth Wood

School of Education

The University of Sheffield

Appendix 18: The MoE Permission to Collect Data

ادارة التخطيط و التطوير
الرقم: ٣٧١٤٧٧٣٧٩
التاريخ: ١٤٣٧/٠٨/٢٢
المرفقات:
جهة الاحالة:





وزارة التربية والتعليم
Ministry of Education

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
(١٨-)
الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض



Planning & Development
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

" تسهيل مهمة بحث "

اسم الباحث/ة	غادة بنت عبدالرحمن عبدالله اباحسين
الكلية / الجامعة	جامعة Sheffield - لندن -
الغرض من الدراسة	متطلب دراسة علمية للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه
عنوان الدراسة	تطبيق حقوق الطفل في المدارس الابتدائية في المملكة العربية السعودية
نوع التسهيل	تسهيل مهمة الباحثة في تطبيق أداة البحث (الاستبانة - مقابلة) على عينة البحث ومديرات ومعلمات و طالبات في المرحلة الابتدائية

المكرمة / مديرة المرحلة الابتدائية

حفظها الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد ،،،

بناءً على تعميم معالي وزير التعليم رقم 55/610 وتاريخ 1416/9/17هـ بشأن تفويض الإدارات العامة للتعليم بإصدار خطابات السماح للباحثين بإجراء البحوث والدراسات ، وبناءً على تفويض مدير عام التعليم إدارة التخطيط والتطوير في الخطاب ذي الرقم 11/33674823 والتاريخ 1433/4/14هـ بشأن تسهيل مهام الباحثين والباحثات ، وحيث تقدم إلين الباحثة/ة (الموضحة بياناتها أعلاه) بطلب إجراء الدراسة ، نأمل تسهيل مهمته/ها وتزويده بالإحصائيات المطلوبة ، مع ملاحظة أن الباحثة/ة يتحمل كامل المسؤولية المتعلقة بمختلف جوانب البحث ، ولا يعني سماح الإدارة العامة للتعليم موافقتها بالضرورة على مشكلة البحث أو على الطرق والأساليب المستخدمة في دراستها ومعالجتها.

شاكرين طيب تعاونكم ،،،،،،،،

منيرة لصلح

عنه

مدير إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

بدرية المصيري

سعود بن راشد آل عبداللطيف



ص / قسم الدراسات والبحوث

ن / الصالح

ن 6

رمز العملية ت ط . ع

الإصدار: 1.0

تاريخ الإصدار : 1436/8/5هـ

صفحة 11 من 18

Appendix 19: A Sample of the Interviews With Principals

Me: What do you know about children's rights?

Children's rights are the consciousness in general. I think that right is the synonym of awareness and parents have a great role in the improvement of this awareness. Children's rights are about the awareness of the harassment that the child may suffer. Also, the awareness of the child's rights to freedom of views.

Me: Do you know that there is an international convention for children's rights, which is adopted by Saudi Arabia before 20 years ago?

No.

Me: So, you have not heard about this convention, which called The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child?

No, at all. I've never heard or read about it before. As you know, the parents and the family of the previous generations, such as me, did not improve our awareness about these rights as they were not aware of rights and we did not study it or read about it.

Me: Well, as our culture is driven by Islam, do you think Islam presents the rights of the child and sets a range of guarantees to safeguard these rights?

What I know about children's rights in Islam are the right to inheritance and how to treat the child in some situations as reported by the prophet Mohammed –peace is upon him–, as well as the right to choose a good name, and breastfeeding. These almost the things that are offered by Islam, which is the basic things.

Me: Do you think these rights are enough?

As I said before, these are basic rights of the child that provided by Islam, but I think there should be a law for children's rights, which protect the child and his rights. Also, children should be taught about these rights. These rights, which provided by this law, should be in light of the teachings of Islam and is suitable for the current decade. As you mentioned there is an International Convention on the rights of the child, which ratified by Saudi, and as the Saudi government has signed this convention that means it is consistent with our religion. So, it should be implemented.

Me: Do you think that such a system, which we can draw from international agreements, is applicable in our Saudi society?

God willing, I think it is applicable in our society, but it needs time. Every change needs time. But I hope these rights will be circulated and implemented. These rights are for us

and our children. We should improve our children's ability to show their opinion and the strength in it. The majority of our children are suppressed. If parents are planning to set the destination of travel and everything are done by the parents without taking the child's opinion. Even when we buy things for our children, we choose instead of them. We have reached the stage that some parents intervene even in choosing the class of their children at school without taking the child's opinions. The child might like to stay in the same class with her friends. We are as parents choose everything for our children without listening to their opinion. But we should admit that our society become more conscious and in the last years we can say that most of its members are well educated. Society seemed to be changed, accept the change, and seek to change, but the problem of confusion. I mean what we know, even if want to implement something, we need guidance.

Appendix 20: A Sample of the Focus Group With Children

First, I distributed the book, which title MY Rights, to children. Me: What is this book about?

Child 1: About my right

My: What that means?

Child 1: It means my right.

Me: What do you mean by saying my rights?

Child 1: I mean, my right is the things that I must do.

Child 2: I think it is the things that I should have.

Child 3: My rights are something for me, for example, if someone took my own things, then I should get them back. This is my right. I mean, how to defend myself.

Child 2: My rights mean the things that I supposed to have in my life.

Me: What are these things like?

Child 2: I need to live in a house or in a place where I can rest and grow safely.

Child 3: Also education. The education teaches me and let me understand things around me. It is my right to learn.

Child 1: I've experienced a violation of my rights by my parents. It is something ridiculous. My brother and I love eating cheese and there were only 4 slices of cheese reminded. That means every day each one of us can get one slice and that for two days. But, my brother took in one day two slices of cheese, and I just got one. On the next day, my father told me to share my slice with my brother, although he ate his second slice yesterday. I feel this is unfair.

Me: Why do you think it is unfair?

Child 1: He ate two slices of cheese yesterday and I just ate one and keep another slice for the next day but he shared it with me.

Me: So, he took more cheese than you? Why did that happen?

Child 1: Because he is a boy

Me: Do you mean because he is a boy he has a right to have things more than you as you are a girl?

Child 1: This is normal.

Child 3: The boy is unique.

Me: Is the boy unique?

Child 3: yes

Me: Who did tell you that?

Child 3: The people in the society. I learned this from them. This is what the life around me usually shows me.

Appendix 21: A Sample of the Focus Group With Teachers

Some principals said that our schools are not suitable to implement children's rights, while one said that schools are the most suitable place for children's rights. For you Which of these views do you support?

Teacher 1: I think that the school, which has public buildings that built by MoE are prepared to implement children's rights. While, schools, which has rented buildings, properly are not fully qualified to implement the child's rights. But I expect that from next year all schools or rented buildings will be canceled. Now work is underway to move to MoE's buildings. I think the next few years will be better.

Teacher 2: New school buildings are eligible more than the old buildings. My school has an old building and it still not eligible. We need many things such as laboratories, if any, they are simple and need to be to improve. Also, there is no room for educational resources, which now exist in most schools and there is no room for the art work, there is nothing.

Teacher 3: I am also in an MoE's building, but it is not eligible. There is no room for educational resources. Our school also has an inclusion education, which has children with disabilities. Unfortunately, there is no equipment for those children, even in the design of the building in terms of corridors and toilets, rooms and more. There are no facilities for children with disabilities for their learning and safety. There are no rooms and special laboratories for them. The school is not eligible for inclusion education, but it has been chosen for this purpose. I believe that new buildings are prepared for children with disabilities, but our school is old.

Teacher 4: It is true, the old buildings may be disqualified for those with disabilities. But, my school is integrated and suitable for those children. It has prepared for them, even in the car parking. There is special parking for people with disabilities Also, I think schools are not qualified to implement children's rights because of it is dirty.

Teacher 5: I think cleanliness is due to the children's use of facilities and their neglect of cleanliness

Teacher 1: There are no workers to clean the school.

Teacher 4: We really work to keep the school clean, we clean our room and our toilets.

Me: Ok, you said that new schools are more qualified to apply children's rights and thus the eligibility of the school depends on the building and whether the tenant or the government and new government buildings are more qualified than the old ones.

Teacher 1 and 3: Yes, of course.

Me: What about private schools?

Teacher 1: The private schools are investing, and the investors pay from their own money to improve their investment and competing with others.

Teacher 5: At least in regard to cleanness. Private schools are clean.

Teacher 1: We have a lack of cleaning workers. There are only two Saudi women who do not clean the school.

Teacher 2: We provide the cleaners for our offices by our own money

Teacher 1: Actually, we provide workers by ourselves, but in particular, they just clean our offices, toilets, and our private facilities. But for children, there is no one clean the facilities such as their toilets.