School Leaders' Practice of the Ethics of Educational Leadership to Make Decisions

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions. A mixed-methods research design was used in this study. The quantitative data of this study were obtained from the participation of 260 teachers, and the qualitative data of this study were collected from nine school leaders. The questionnaire and the semi-structured interview were used to collect the data. The study was conducted during the school year of 2017-2018. The study found that the overall extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions was classified as "always occurs". The findings showed that there were statistically significant differences between participants with different gender and school levels on the overall and all dimensions of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions, while there were not statistically significant differences between the groups of the participants with different teaching experience. The qualitative findings provided some common factors that influence school leaders' practice to making ethical decisions. These factors were explained based on two concepts including management knowledge and leadership skills as well as the context of school's culture.

Key words: Ethics, Ethical Leadership, and Decision Making.

1. Introduction

The school leaders are required to provide and foster an environment that must be an adequate place for the learning process to be successful. The role of school principals as ethical leaders has been taken under consideration in contemporary time. Cherkowski, Walker, & Kutsyuruba (2015), as well as Holte (2014) claimed that over the past three decades, the research and empirical studies on the ethics of educational leadership have increased. The study of ethics in school leadership is the best way to assist school leaders to act as ethical leaders (Beckner, 2003; Starratt, 2004). Rebore (2014) stated that "in the practice of educational leadership, the question of ethics must be considered in relation to power" (p. 74). This indicates the importance of ethical leadership for school administrators in order to be successful and effective.

The ethics of educational leadership have been recognized in the professional standards, which provide good guidance for school leaders. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) presented eight professional standards for educational leaders. These standards have been validated by academics and educational practitioners. Standard eight emphasizes the "values and ethics of leadership" (American Association of School Administrators, 1994, p. 11). In 1996, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) developed the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for school leaders. Standard five states that "a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity and fairness, and in an ethical manner" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, p. 18). Additionally, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration adopted the Professional Standards (PSEL) for Educational Leaders as guidelines for the hiring,

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training, evaluation, certification, and supervision of school leaders. Standard two of ethics and professional norms states that "effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015, p. 10).

Ethical leadership is very important for school principals in order to provide an adequate learning environment. Northouse (2010) believed that "ethics play a central role in the leadership process" (p. 404). Also, Starratt (1991) suggested that "educational leaders have a moral responsibility to be proactive about creating an ethical environment for the conduct of education" (p. 187). In the school setting, ethics should always be considered. Certainly, understanding and adapting ethical leadership will encourage school principals to improve the school environment. Therefore, school leaders should be continually active in providing ethical leadership within schools (Glanz, 2007).

School leaders always play an important role in making decisions. They practice their responsibilities to make decisions. Hoy and Miskel (2008) stated that "decision making is a major responsibility of all administrators" (p. 325). Decision making is one of the most significant actions which school leaders can practice (Agor, 1992; Cuban, 2001). "All decisions have some influence, whether large or small, on the performance of both faculty and students" (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004, p. 182). Thus, making decisions is a complex process with several factors and indicators that must be taken under consideration.

Thomas and Davis (1998) pointed out that decision making in ethical leadership is guided by obligations which indude shared values, empowerment, trust, fairness, honesty, equity, dignity, rule of law, doing the right thing, and beneficence. More specifically, Ozan, Ozdemir, and Yirci (2017) concluded that "establishing written ethical codes for school administrators may help them to make decisions with integrity, fairness, and in a more ethical manner" (p. 161). These ethics have been considered as requirements to meet the needs of students and others school members. The literature of ethics of leadership emphasizes that "educational leaders must develop and articulate a much greater awareness of the ethical significance of their actions and decisions" (Campbell, 1999, 152). Consequently, ethical leaders need to involve school members in the decision-making process, as well as consider their views, values, and attitudes.

2. Statement of the Problem

There are needs for making ethical decisions, because it has an influence on all school members, students, teachers, staff, as well as, the school's community (Sergiovanni, 1992; Hawley & Rollie, 2002). The school leaders need to realize that "the school as a cultural space and social space must be considered, and every decision of a moral kind must be weighed regarding its effect upon the rules and the people" (Maxcy, 2002, p. 70). Thus, each ethical decision is so important that it may change the lives of school members.

Educational leaders face various complex ethical issues and dilemmas every day (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Glanz, 2007). Therefore, school leaders are required to make ethical decisions more than any time in the past. The study of Chikeleze and Baehrend (2017) showed that knowing the ethical leadership style is very important to make decisions when presented with difficult and different choices. Also, Ozan, Ozdemir, and Yirci (2017) found that school leaders are often faced with problems to make ethical decisions especially upon personnel issues. According to Rebore and Walmsey (2007), "ethical decision making can help educational leaders confront complex issues facing contemporary education" (p. 272). Clearly, making an ethical decision is one of the most important responsibilities of school leaders. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions.

3. Research Questions

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following questions will be answered:

1. To what extent do school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions?
2. Do participants with different gender, teaching experience, and school levels differ in their perceptions regarding the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions?
3. What are the perceptions of school leaders about the factors that influence their practices to make ethical decisions?

4. Literature Review

This section presents a review of a related literature that was organized into three major subsections. The first subsection presents a theoretical framework of ethics. The second subsection discusses practicing of the ethics of educational leadership. The last subsection reviews the decision making process in school. Each of these subsections includes several relevant themes that are reviewed.

4.1. Theoretical Framework of Ethics

Ethics is one of the most issues that has been most studied and discussed by scholars and practitioners in serval fields. According to Dewey (1902), ethics is considered as the science that focuses in conduct and discusses what is right or wrong and good or bad. In fact, "ethics has its roots in the Greek word ethos, which translates to customs, conduct, or character" (Northouse, 2010, 387). Guy (1990) stated that "ethics refers to standards by which individuals evaluate their own conduct and the conduct of others" (p. 6). Stader (2007) wrote that "ethics is the study of conduct and considers how individuals ought to act" (p. 8). Ethics focuses on approving appropriate ways of acting and provides a basis to understand human conduct.

To study and understand ethics, there are some approaches that must be followed. These approaches were developed by many philosophers and scholars. According to Rebore (2014), "there are two traditional approaches to the study of ethics: the deontological approach and teleological approach" (p. 6). More specifically, "the deontological approach is concerned with the rightness and wrongness of a given action" (Rebore & Walmsley, 2007, p. 262). On the other hand, "the teleological approach is concerned with the goal of action in terms of goodness and badness" (Rebore & Walmsley, 2007, p. 262). Thus, the right action in the deontological approach relates to the good in the teleological approach. Whereas, the wrong deontological approach can produce bad consequences. Additionally, for more understanding of ethics, other approaches are provided, which include the normative ethics approach and meta-ethics approach (Johnson & Reath, 2012). "The normative ethics addresses substantive issues about value and about how to act. The meta-ethics is about normative discourse and normative thought" (p. 10).

Based on the pervious approaches to study ethics, there are certain theories that provide the greatest views and insights about ethics. These theories are traditionalism, realism, utilitarianism, subjectivism, existentialism, emotivism, egoism, naturalism, and altruism (Maxcy, 2002; Northouse, 2010). This article will focus on four theories including, realism, utilitarianism, altruism, and egoism.

The Theory of Realism was considered by ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and Socrates. In ethics, the Theory of Realism refers to that "people ought to strive to do what is ethical" (Maxcy, 2002, p. 52). In fact, realists under score that ethics is about searching for truth and the nature of human beings. The Theory of Realism addresses the right action of leaders toward themselves and others (Wagner & Simpson, 2009). The main concept of this theory is that the educational leaders should be ethical leaders in their actions and their decisions.

The Theory of Utilitarianism was attributed to philosophers Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill in the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Theory of Utilitarianism states that the greatest good provides the greatest happiness for the greatest number of individuals who are affected by the actions of leaders (Maxcy, 2002; Northouse, 2010; Johnson & Reath, 2012). Based on this theory, the school leaders are required to choose the actions and decisions that will bring the greatest good and happiness for the majority of school members. Ethical actions and decisions will have the best results for followers.

The Theory of Altruism concerns the best interests of others. Altruism is defined as behavior "that renders help to another person" (Worchel, Cooper, & Goethals, 1988, p. 394). Altruism has been seen as the virtue of selflessness, reducing self-interests for the sake of another person's interests (Margolis, 1982). "Altruism has a much broader scope, which covers both intentions and actions. The actions take many forms of prosocial behavior such as charity, helping, cooperation, and empowering, which benefit others"(Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996, 37). From this concept, a school leader acts and makes decisions while considering the interests of others first before his or her own interests.

The Theory of egoism is the opposite of the utilitarianism and the altruism theories. The roots of egoism principles are embedded in the writing of the economist Adam Smith. Egoism means that "a person acts to create the greatest good for herself or himself" (Northouse, 2010, 379). According to this perspective, school leaders act to reach their goals and strive to increase their benefits so that they are not concerned with their followers' interests and goals.

4.2. Practicing of the Ethics of Educational Leadership

Ethical leadership enables school principals to act as influential leaders. Brown, Trevino, and Harrison (2005) defined ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions, interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision making" (p. 120). Additionally, Brierton, Graham, Tomal, and Wilhite (2016) defined ethical school leadership as "rules of conduct or character that govern human behavior in schools" (p. 4). Stader (2007) defined ethics in the context of educational leadership as "the theoretical study and consideration of how school leaders ought to connect a knowledge of law and an understanding of ethical principles to make a decision" (p. 8). Thus, ethical leadership includes these components, ethical principles, ability to make ethical d ecisions, leaders' behaviors and actions, and influencing all followers.

Northouse (2010) stated that "in regard to leadership, ethics has to do with what leaders do and who leaders are. It is concerned with the nature of leaders' behavior, and with their virtuousness" (p. 378). It is clear that principals' behaviors demonstrate their ethical leadership and in turn reinforce their impact. According to Brown et al. (2005), ethical leadership contains various concepts that are divided into main aspects. The moral person component, such as, integrity, concern for others, and trustworthiness. The moral manager component including, communicating, rewarding, punishing, and emphasizing. Rebore (2014) determined the dimensions of ethical educational leadership into three aspects: "knowledge, disposition, and performance"

(pp. 4-5). According to Leithwood (1999), the personal ethics of school leaders is developed from their professional experience and their personal values. Also, Bush (2011) stated that "leadership is increasingly linked with values. Leaders are expected to ground their actions in clear personal and professional values" (p. 6). Brierton et al. (2016) identified three dimensions fo r ethical school leadership: (1) situational ethics that relates to the conditions affecting process for making an ethical decision, (2) professional ethics is about using the knowledge to work with all individuals in school and community, and (3) descriptive ethics is to understand the reasons that cause the actions and behaviors of school leaders. The ethical leadership dimensions and behaviors are reflected in daily work.

The principles of ethical leadership have been discussed in many different disciplines. One of these disciplines is educational leadership (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). These principles include, respecting others, serving others, showing justice, being honest, building community (Northouse, 2010), chastity, kindness, courage, modesty, toleration, will and performance (Maxcy, 2002), empathy, trust, congruency, positive regard, warmth, empowerment (Rebore 2014), prudence, fortitude, and temperance (Rebore (2007). In addition, the principles of ethical educational leadership can contain effective communication, understanding, integrity, collaboration, equality, sincerity, forgiveness, initiation, commitment, and engagement. These principles are necessary to provide guidance for school leaders to practice ethical leadership in their actions and behaviors.

The ethics of leadership is very important for educational leaders. Rebore (2014) underscored the importance of ethical educational leadership for these reasons: 1) "ethics explores important issues that act as a framework for decision making based on core values; 2) ethics utilizes a disciplined way of thinking; and 3) ethics provides a unique kind of response to leadership issues" (p. 15). Certainly, understanding and adapting ethical leadership influence school leaders' behaviors and actions on a daily basis at work. Maxcy (2002) stated that ethical leadership enables school leaders to "share decision making, and improve the school morally and ethically" (p. 38). Fullan (2003) noted that moral leadership is linked to school improvement. School leaders practice their roles and responsibilities and make decisions that affect students, teachers, staff, parents and the entire community (Stader, 2007; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). However, there are some factors that influence school leaders practice of the ethics of educational leadership including: (a) culture such as member identity, group emphasis, people focus, unity integration, control, risk tolerance, conflict tolerance, and open system focus; (b) practicing the power; (c) charisma of leadership; (d) milieu; and (e) duty of school leaders (Rebore, 2014). Ethics provides school leaders with the opportunity to make a greater good for all individuals who are affected by their decisions and actions.

4.3. Decision Making Process in School

Decision-making pervades the entire school and relates to all administrative functions of school leaders. Lipham and Fruth (1976) defined decision making as "a process influenced by information and values, whereby a perceived problem is explicitly defined, alternative solutions are posed and weighted, and a choice made that subsequently is implemented and evaluated" (p. 2). Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) stated that "decision making, universally defined as the process of choosing from among alternatives" (p. 182). Furthermore, decision making can be defined as "the process of choosing a course of action for solving a problem or sizing up an opportunity" (French et al., 2008, p. 485). Clearly, these definitions of decision making include these elements: decision making is a process, decision making involve choosing an alternative, decision making includes several steps, and decision making occurs to solve problems. In fact, it is imperative to distinguish the decision from making decision. The decision refers to a choice that has been made from generated alternatives, and decision making refers to sequential steps that are required to provide a solution for identified problem.

School leaders are required to follow logical and sequential steps to make decisions on a daily basis at work. According to Mintzberg, Raisinghani, and Theoret (1976), the decision-making process include three phases: first, the identification phase to define and determine the problem clearly; second, the development phase to seek solution or develop a new one; and finally, the selection phase to choose an adequate solution. Similarly, Simon (1997) identified three stages for the decision-making process: first, intelligence activity to provide a proper condition for the decision making; second, design activity to develop and analyze a possible action to be taken; and finally, choice activity to select the solution. In essence, the decision making process is practiced through consistent and sequential steps.

Scholars and theorists mentioned that there are various models to decision making including the classical model, administrative model, incremental model, mixed-scanning model, and normative model (Braybrook & Lindblom, 1963; Lindblom, 1965; Lindblom & Cohen, 1979; Etzioni, 1967, Vroom & Yetton, 1974; Simon, 1993). These models can be classified as classical model and behavioral model (French et al., 2008; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). The decision making models "attempt to describe theoretically and practically how school administrators make decisions" (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004, p. 183). More specifically, the classical model of decision making "views the managers as acting in a world of complete certainty" (French et al., 2008, p. 488). Additionally, the classical model "is based on the concept of complete rationality and assumes that the decision maker has perfect information" (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004, pp. 184-187). On the other hand, the behavioral model of decision making refers to the fact that "the decision maker is seen as acting under uncertainty and with limited information" (French et al., 2008, p. 488).

The classical model of decision making was employed in this study for these reasons. First, the classical model is a rational and logical process. Second, the classical model provides school leaders with a great opportunity to explore all desirable solutions among alternatives. Third, the classical model maximizes the chances to achieve the intended goals and objective for decision making. Finally, this model of decision making includes six sequential steps: (1) recognizing and identifying the problem and situation, (2) generating and analyzing the alternative solutions, (3) evaluating the alternatives, (4) selecting the best alternatives, (5) implementing the decision, and (6) evaluating the effectiveness of the decision (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004; Gorton, Alston, & Snowden, 2007; French et al., 2008; Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

In the school setting, it is important to see ethical principles as tied to decision making. To make ethical decisions, school leaders must combine the ethical principles and values with decision making steps. Making ethical decisions refers to how people should be treated with right, fair, and just (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1998). "Individual thoughtfulness is the key to ethical decision making" (Guy, 1990, 6). Rebore (2007) stated that "conscience is that human capacity that allows an administrator to make ethical decisions" (p. 269). This indicates that the conscience enables school leaders to combine ethical principles to decision making. More specifically, to combine the ethical principles with decision making, school leaders need to determine, which principles are accurate for each step of the decision-making process. Combining ethical principles provides a framework and guide for making ethical decisions.

5. Methodology

This section provides the methodology of the study. It describes the research design, the participants of the study, the instrumentation, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis.

5.1. Research Design

This study is a mixed methods research design. Mixed methods design "mixes and combines quantitative and qualitative research approaches and techniques into a single research study" (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 441). More specifically, this mixed methods study fell under the type of parallel research design in which "data are collected and analyzed separately and each data set leads to its own set of inferences" (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010, p. 563). The purpose for using this mixed methods design is to expand and widen, the breadth and depth of this study by using two different research methods to investigate different inquiry components (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Gray, 2009; Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2012). This mixed -method research design allows the researcher to collect, analyze, and interpret both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the questions of this study.

5.2. Study Participants

This study was conducted in the southern region of Saudi Arabia. This region includes nine school districts. All teachers in these nine school districts are the target population of this study "to whom the study results are to be generalized" (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 266), whereas the accessible population is "the group of research participants who are available to the researcher for participation in research" (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 267). The researcher selected three school districts randomly. Thus, the accessible population for this study includes all teachers of public schools in these three school districts: Assir School District, Muhayil School District, and Rijal Alma School District. The sample of this study was drawn from the accessible population. To determine the sample, a random sampling technique was used following these steps. First, the researcher developed a list for all public schools in the three selected school districts. Second, thirty schools were selected randomly. Third, all teachers at these selected schools were the sample of this study. Finally, the quantitative data of this study were obtained from the participation of 260 teachers as described in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of Study Participants in the Quantitative Phase (N = 260)

Variables	Type	n	%
Gender	Male	129	49.6
	Female	131	50.4
School level	Elementary	166	63.8
	Middle	35	13.5
	Secondary	59	22.7
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years	17	6.5
	5-10 years	66	25.4
	More than 10 years	177	68.1
Total of Participants		260	100

On the other hand, in the qualitative phase the sample is different and includes some school leaders in the three selected school districts: Assir School District, Muhayil School District, and Rijal Alma School District. To determine the sample, nonrandom sampling technique was employed. More specifically, the purposeful sampling technique was used to select the sample. The reason to purposefully select the sample is to get the best answers and responses. Thus, the researcher asked 30 school leaders to provide information about their educational background and experience. Then the participants were selected based on their various educational background and experience. Finally, the qualitative data of this study were collected from nine school leaders who were selected to participate in this study.

5.3. Study Instrumentation

This study includes two instruments to collect the data. In the first phase of the study, the quantitative phase, a questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. To develop the questionnaire, related literature and empirical studies were reviewed. For the purpose of this study, the researcher developed the questionnaire to investigate the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section includes the demographic information of the study participants. The second section contains 35 items that focus on practicing the ethics of leadership to make ethical decisions. This section was divided into six dimensions: (a) identifying the problem (6 items), (b) generating the alternatives (5 items), (c) evaluating the alternatives (6 items), (d) selecting the best alternatives (5 items), (e) implementing the decision (6 items), and (f) evaluating the effectiveness of the decision (7 items). A 3-point Likert-type scale was used. The respondents rated each item by using one of these three points: (1) rarely occurs, (2) sometimes occurs, or (3) always occurs. In order to get the content validity of the questionnaire, some experts in the field of educational leadership were asked to review the items of the instrument and determine the degree to which the items relate and represent the dimensions. After receiving suggestions and recommendations of experts, modifications and corrections were made and the final draft of the questionnaire was developed. Finally, the internal validity was calculated using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The correlation coefficient scores were significant at the 0.01 level for all items and dimensions as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Dimensions of the Questionnaire (N = 260)

Dimensions	Number of items	The Correlation Coefficient
Identifying the problem	6	.885**
Generating the alternatives	5	.933**
Evaluating the alternatives	6	.948**
Selecting the best alternatives	5	.931**
Implementing the decision	6	.935**
Evaluating the effectiveness of the decision	7	.943**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Items of the Questionnaire (N = 260)

Identifying the problem		Generating the alternatives		Evaluating the alternatives		Selecting the best alternatives		Implementing the decision		Evaluating the effectiveness of the decision	
Item No.	The Correlation Coefficient	Item No.	The Correlation Coefficient	Item No.	The Correlation Coefficient	Item No.	The Correlation Coefficient	Item No.	The Correlation Coefficient	Item No.	The Correlation Coefficient
1	.759**	7	.800**	12	.829**	18	.797**	23	.826**	29	.552**
2	.785**	8	.835**	13	.823**	19	.824**	24	.785**	30	.587**
3	.838**	9	.853**	14	.864**	20	.862**	25	.787**	31	.653**
4	.796**	10	.836**	15	.852**	21	.851**	26	.829**	32	.573**
5	.860**	11	.874**	16	.848**	22	.870**	27	.847**	33	.609**
6	.781**			17	.854**			28	.813**	34	.635**
										35	.774**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha score for all dimensions and overall score for the questionnaire were high as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha Scores for the Reliability of the Questionnaire (N = 260)

Dimensions	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Identifying the problem	6	.888
Generating the alternatives	5	.896
Evaluating the alternatives	6	.920
Selecting the best alternatives	5	.896
Implementing the decision	6	.898
Evaluating the effectiveness of the decision	7	.934
All Items	35	.905

In the second phase, the qualitative phase, the data collection technique was the interview that provides more in-depth understanding about the topic of this study. The researcher used the interview to answer the third question of this study. The interviews focused on school leaders. The type of interview was based on a semi-structured format. The semi-structured interview includes open-ended questions with a list of issues to obtain additional information about the topic of the study (Gray, 2009; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The semi-structured interview also "allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 2009, p. 90). The qualitative data collected from the interviews will answer the third question of the study: What are the perceptions of school leaders about the factors that influence

their practices to make ethical decisions? More specifically, the interview consists of six questions that focus on the factors that influence school leaders' practice in each step of the decision-making process.

To ensure the content validity of this semi-structured interview, the content of questions directly related to the purpose and third questions of this study. The interview questions were developed by reviewing the related literature and previous empirical studies. To strengthen the validity, the following tasks were considered: (1) establishing rapport and trust with the interviewees, (2) encouraging the interviewees to explain and illustrate their initial responses, and (3) ensuring that each interviewee has sufficient time to present their ideas and opinions that expand their responses in depth.

Another type of validity to be considered in this study is the external validity of the semi-structured interview. In order to ensure the external validity, the sample selected non-randomly to be interviewed was nine school leaders. These interviewees have different educational backgrounds and experience, which aid in obtaining in-depth information about their thoughts and perspectives about the topic of the study.

Finally, the reliability of the semi-structured interview was checked to ensure the consistency and accuracy of this data collection method. To ensure the reliability, several steps were followed: (1) the interview questions were written in English and translated into Arabic to help interviewees better understand the interview questions, (2) the researcher conducted the interview in order to follow the same interview protocol with all respondents, and (3) the researcher ensured that the data is accurately represented, recorded and transcribed.

5.4. Data Collection Procedures

The researcher collected data of the study during the school year of 2017-2018. Data collection procedures included two phases. In the first phase, the quantitative data were collected. To collect the quantitative data, an official permission was obtained from the School Districts to distribute the questionnaires to the sample of the study. The online questionnaire technique was used. The researcher sent the online link of the questionnaire to the selected sample. When participants clicked on the online link, they were directed to the questionnaire with its recruitment statement. The participants had access to the questionnaire for 35 days. The majority of the participants (N = 184) completed the questionnaire within three weeks. Two weeks later, 76 participants completed the questionnaire. After 35 days, the researcher closed the link of the questionnaire.

In the second phase, the qualitative data were collected. To collect the qualitative data, the interview technique was used. The interviewees were identified. Then, consent forms were obtained from interviewees to participate in this study. The language of the interview was Arabic, because it is the native language of the interviewees and researcher. The purpose of the interview was identified for the interviewees. To assure the confidentiality of the respondents, the researcher informed that the responses and data obtained for the interviews will be used for a scientific purpose of this study only. The researcher contacted every participant in order to identify a quiet and comfortable place for conducting each interview. The interviewees were informed that the interviews will be recorded using a tape recorder. Each interview was completed within the time specified with an average time of 25 minutes. The researcher completed the interviews by thanking the participants in this study, and asking them if they have any final comments or explanations. The interviews were conducted over a three-week period during the school year of 2017-2018.

5.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis process in this study includes two phases. In the first phase, the quantitative data were analyzed. To analyze the quantitative data of this study, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was employed. The statistical techniques that were used in this study include the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, which was computed to measure the internal validity of study instrument. The Cronbach' Alpha was also employed to measure the reliability of study instrument. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the participants of this study.

To answer the first question in this study, descriptive statistics were used. The mean scores and standard deviation scores were calculated. To determine the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions, the rating scale was designed by using this formula (3-1)/3+1. The maximum score was 3 – the minimum score of the scale was 1, and were divided by 3, the number of categories of the scale, then added 1 to the result. The rating scale is presented in Table 5. To answer the second question of the study inferential statistics were used. The researcher used the two-independent sample *t*-test in order to explore the differences between two groups based on gender (male-female). In addition, the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to investigate the differences between three groups based on teaching experience (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, more than 10 years), and school levels (elementary, middle school, secondary school).

Table 5: Rating Scale

Score range	**Classifications**
1.0 -1.66	Rarely occurs
1.67- 2.33	Sometimes occurs
2.34- 3.0	Always occurs

In the second phase, the qualitative data were analyzed. The data were recorded in the interviews then transcribed into Arabic. The transcripts were organized into type files. The researcher analyzed data by hand. Analyzing the qualitative data of this study includes these steps: (1) reading the transcripts several times and writing the notes, (2) dividing the data into text segments, (3) coding the data using a highlighter and making a list of all codes, (4) organizing the codes into categories, (5) using the similar codes aggregated to develop and generate themes, (6) organizing the themes into major themes and subthemes, (7) subsuming several subthemes under one major theme, and (8) interrelating and connecting the themes.

6. Findings

This section presents the findings of the study. The data of this study were analyzed and reported to answer the research questions. The presenting of findings includes two phases: the quantitative findings phase, and the qualitative findings phase.

In the first phase, quantitative findings were presented that included two sections. The first section provides quantitative findings to answer the first research question: To what extent do school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions? In order to answer this question, the means and standard deviations scores for all items and dimensions were calculated and presented in Tables 6-12.

Table 6: The Means, Classification, and Rank for the Dimensions of Practicing the Ethics of Educational Leadership to Make Decisions (N = 260)

Dimensions	Items	Mean	Classification	Rank
Identifying the problem	6	2.56	Always occurs	1
Generating the alternatives	5	2.52	Always occurs	3
Evaluating the alternatives	6	2.28	Sometimes occurs	5
Selecting the best alternative	5	2.53	Always occurs	2
Implementing the decision	6	2.51	Always occurs	4
Evaluating the effectiveness of the decision	7	2.27	Sometimes occurs	6
Overall of the school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions	35	2.44	Always occurs	

Table 6 presents the mean scores, classification, and rank for the dimensions of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions, as well as, the overall score. These six dimensions were arranged respectively from the highest mean score to the lowest mean score as follows: identifying the problem (*M* = 2.56), selecting the best alternative (*M* = 2.53); generating the alternatives (*M* = 2.52), implementing the decision (*M* = 2.51), evaluating the alternatives (*M* = 2.28), and evaluating the effectiveness of the decision (*M* = 2.27). Finally, the findings revealed that the overall of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions was classified as "always occurs" with mean score (*M* = 2.44).

Table 7: The Means, Standard Deviations, Classification, and Rank for the Items of Identifying the Problem Dimension (N = 260)

Item No.	Identifying the problem	Mean	Std. Deviation	Classification	Rank
1	The school leader initiates to identify the problem clearly.	2.64	.569	Always occurs	2
2	The school leader listens to school members to identify the problem.	2.57	.602	Always occurs	3
3	The school leader attempts to understand the background of the problem.	2.65	.559	Always occurs	1
4	The school leader respects the perspectives of school members about the problem.	2.53	.617	Always occurs	4
5	The school leader honesty pays attention to identify the problem.	2.65	.601	Always occurs	1

6	The school leader collaborate with school members to divide the major problem into sub-problems.	2.37	.698	Always occurs	5

Table 7 shows the means, standard deviations, classification, and rank of items on identifying the problem dimension. The respondents scored highest on two items numbers 3 and 5 with a mean score of 2.65, and scored lowest on the item number 6 with a mean score of 2.37. The six items of the dimension were classified as "always occurs".

Table 8: The Means, Standard Deviations, Classification, and Rank for the Items of Generating the Alternatives Dimension (N =260)

Item No.	**Generating the alternatives**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Classification**	**Rank**
1	The school leader pays attention to determine the objectives of the decisions.	2.57	.614	Always occurs	2
2	The school leader engages school members to develop a list of possible alternatives.	2.59	.593	Always occurs	1
3	The school leader coordinates with school members to collect data and for each alternative.	2.47	.654	Always occurs	4
4	The school leader is concerned to identify the effective alternatives.	2.46	.635	Always occurs	5
5	The school leader truthfully explains each alternative.	2.55	.652	Always occurs	3

Table 8 illustrates the means, standard deviations, classification, and rank of items on generating the alternative dimension. The respondents scored highest on the item number 2 with a mean score of 2.59, while scored lowest on the item number 4 with a mean score of 2.46. All items of this dimension were classified as "always occurs".

Table 9: The Means, Standard Deviations, Classification, and Rank for the Items of Evaluating the Alternatives Dimension (N =260)

Item No.	**Evaluating the alternatives**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Classification**	**Rank**
1	The school leader carful analyzes the data used to evaluate alternatives.	2.29	.666	Sometimes occurs	4
2	The school leader objectively predicts the effect of each alternative on all school members.	2.32	.644	Sometimes occurs	2
3	The school leader sincerely seeks if the alternatives are possible and reasonable.	2.36	.636	Always occurs	1
4	The school leader asks school members if the alternatives are satisfactory.	2.25	.685	Sometimes occurs	5

5	The school leader is concerned to predict the possible consequences of each alternative.	2.18	.624	Sometimes occurs	6
6	The school leader sets criteria to evaluate the resources needed for each alternative.	2.31	.687	Sometimes occurs	3

Table 9 illustrates the means, standard deviations, classification, and rank of items on evaluating the alternatives dimension. The participants scored highest in the item numbers 3 with a mean score of 2.36, while lowest score on the item number 5 with a mean score of 2.18. Five items on this dimension were classified as "sometimes occurs", while one item was classified as "always occurs".

Table 10: The Means, Standard Deviations, Classification, and Rank for the Items of Selecting the Best Alternative Dimension (N =260)

Item No.	Selecting the best alternative	Mean	Std. Deviation	Classification	Rank
1	The school leader is committed to select the best alternative to achieve the decision objectives.	2.61	.575	Always occurs	1
2	The school leader respects the opinions of school members for selecting the best alternative.	2.56	.640	Always occurs	3
3	The school leader is concerned to determine the second choice of the alternative.	2.42	.684	Always occurs	5
4	The school leader efficiently communicates with all school members for selecting the best alternative.	2.50	.661	Always occurs	4
5	The school leader practices prudence to selects the best alternative.	2.58	.587	Always occurs	2

Table 10 shows the means, standard deviations, classification, and rank of items on selecting the best alternative dimension. The respondents scored highest on the item numbers 1 with a mean score of 2.61, and scored lowest on the item number 3 with a mean score of 2.42. The five items of this dimension were classified as "always occurs".

Table 11: The Means, Standard Deviations, Classification, and Rank for the Items of Implementing the Decision Dimension (N =260)

Item No.	Implementing the decision	Mean	Std. Deviation	Classification	Rank
1	The school leader truthfully ensures that the selected alternative is clearly understood.	2.54	.591	Always occurs	2

2	The school leader ensures that school members understand the authority of decision maker.	2.58	.626	Always occurs	1
3	The school leader persists to achieve the support of school members to implement the decision.	2.50	.643	Always occurs	5
4	The school leader is committed to offer resources for implementing the decision.	2.51	.660	Always occurs	4
5	The school leader fairly determines the role and responsibility of each person for implementing the decision.	2.52	.666	Always occurs	3
6	The school leader takes time to set up timelines for implementing the decision.	2.46	.671	Always occurs	6

Table 11 displays the means, standard deviations, classification, and rank of items on implementing the decision dimension. The highest score was the item number 2 with a mean score of 2.58, while the lowest score was the item number 6 with a mean score of 2.46. All items of this dimension were classified as "always occurs".

Table 12: The Means, Standard Deviations, Classification, and Rank for the Items of Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Decision Dimension (N = 260)

Item No.	Evaluating the effectiveness of the decision	Mean	Std. Deviation	Classification	Rank
1	The school leader objectively evaluates the extent to which decision goals were achieved.	2.31	.631	Sometimes occurs	3
2	The school leader cares to identify the causes that produced unexpected results.	2.34	.654	Always occurs	1
3	The school leader objectively evaluates the processes followed through decision making.	2.24	.666	Sometimes occurs	5
4	The school leader is concerned to evaluate whether the adequate resources provided for decision making.	2.21	.654	Sometimes occurs	6
5	The school leader evaluates the participation of school members in decision making.	2.19	.686	Sometimes occurs	7
6	The school leader presents the evaluation results to school members	2.28	.698	Sometimes occurs	4
7	The school leader fulfills his responsibility to determine whether a new decision must be made.	2.32	.618	Sometimes occurs	2

Table 12 illustrates the means, standard deviations, classification, and rank of items on evaluating the effectiveness of the decision dimension. The respondents scored highest on the item number 2 with a mean score of 2.34, while scored lowest on the item number 5 with a mean score of 2.19. Six items of this dimension were classified as "sometimes occurs", while one item was classified as "always occurs".

The second section provides quantitative findings to answer the second research question: do participants differ in their perceptions based on gender, teaching experience and school levels regarding the extent to which school leaders practice the

ethics of educational leadership to make decisions? In order to answer this question, inferential analysis of the data using the two-independent sample *t*-test, and the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were presented in tables (13-15).

Table 13: T-test for Two-independent Sample to Compare the Responses of Male and Female Regarding to the Extent to Which School Leaders Practice the Ethics of Educational Leadership to Make Decisions (N = 260)

Dimensions	**Gender**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	***t*-Value**	**df**	**Sig.(2-Tailed)**
Identifying the problem	Male	129	14.90	3.031	2.818	258	.005*
	Female	131	15.91	2.738			
Generating the alternatives	Male	129	12.15	2.710	3.065	258	.002*
	Female	131	13.14	2.495			
Evaluating the alternatives	Male	129	14.04	3.433	3.528	258	.000*
	Female	131	15.47	3.082			
Selecting the best alternative	Male	129	12.33	2.635	2.064	258	.040*
	Female	131	13.01	2.633			
Implementing the decision	Male	129	14.57	3.247	2.794	258	.006*
	Female	131	15.64	2.954			
Evaluating the effectiveness of the decision	Male	129	16.69	4.027	2.904	258	.004*
	Female	131	18.08	3.664			
Overall of the school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decision	Male	129	84.67	17.402	3.108	258	.002*
	Female	131	91.24	16.639			

*. Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 13 presents the *t*-test findings that investigate the difference between two groups based on gender. The findings showed that the difference on the overall of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions between male participants (N = 129, M = 84.67, SD = 17.402) and females (N = 131, M = 91.24, SD = 16.639) was statistically significant, t (258) = 3.108, p = .002. This finding revealed that the male and female participants had different perceptions regarding the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions, because female participants scored significantly higher than males.

Additionally, the *t*-test findings showed that there was statistically significant difference between males and females on all dimensions of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions including the dimensions: identifying the problem, males (N = 129, M = 14.90, SD = 3.031) and females (N = 131, M = 15.91, SD = 2.738), t (258) = 2.818, p = .005; generating the alternatives, males (N = 129, M = 12.15, SD = 2.710) and females (N = 131, M = 13.14, SD = 2.495), t (258) = 3.065, p = .002; evaluating the alternatives, males (N = 129, M = 14.04, SD = 3.433) and females (N = 131, M = 15.47, SD = 3.082), t (258) = 3.528, p = .000; selecting the best alternative, males (N = 129, M = 12.33, SD = 2.635) and females (N = 131, M = 13.01, SD = 2.633), t (258) = 2.064, p = .040; implementing the decision, males (N = 129, M = 14.57, SD = 3.247) and

females (N = 131, M = 15.64, SD = 2.954), *t* (258) = 2.794, *p* = .006; and evaluating the effectiveness of the decision, males (N = 129, M = 16.69, SD = 4.027) and females (N = 131, M = 18.08, SD = 3.664), *t* (258) = 2.904, *p* = .004. These findings indicated that the male and female participants differ in their perceptions regarding all dimensions of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions, because female participants scored significantly higher than males.

Table 14: One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Comparison of Groups Responses Based on Teaching Experience Regarding to the Extent to Which School Leaders Practice the Ethics of Educational Leadership to Make Decisions (N = 260)

Dimensions	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Identifying the problem	Between Groups	2.21	2	1.109	.129	.879
	Within Groups	2214.56	257	8.617		
Generating the alternatives	Between Groups	8.643	2	4.321	.615	.541
	Within Groups	1804.80	257	7.023		
Evaluating the alternatives	Between Groups	2.78	2	1.391	.124	.883
	Within Groups	2872.95	257	11.179		
Selecting the best alternative	Between Groups	10.25	2	5.129	.729	.484
	Within Groups	1808.95	257	7.039		
Implementing the decision	Between Groups	2.53	2	1.267	.127	.880
	Within Groups	2556.45.	257	9.947		
Evaluating the effectiveness of the decision	Between Groups	.180	2	.090	.006	.994
	Within Groups	3945.58	257	15.352		
Overall of the school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decision	Between Groups	89.10	2	44.554	.148	.863
	Within Groups	77465.79	257	301.423		

Table 14 presents the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) findings that reveal the differences between groups of participants with different teaching experience (less than 5 years, 5-0 years, and more than 10 years). The researcher found that there were not statistically significant differences among groups with different teaching experience on the overall of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions *F* (2, 257) = .148, *p* = .863. This finding indicated that the groups of participants with different teaching experience did not differ on their perceptions regarding the overall of the extent to which the school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions.

Furthermore, the ANOVA findings revealed that there were not statistically significant differences between groups of participants with different teaching experience (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, and more than 10 years) on all dimensions of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions including identifying the problem *F* (2, 257) = .129, *p* = .879, generating the alternatives *F* (2, 257) = .615, *p* = .541, evaluating the alternatives *F* (2, 257) = .124, *p* = .883, selecting the best alternative *F* (2, 257) = .729, *p* = .484, implementing the decision *F* (2, 257) = .127, *p* = .880, and evaluating the effectiveness of the decision *F* (2, 257) = .006, *p* = .994. These findings indicated that the groups of participants with different

teaching experience did not differ in their perceptions on all dimensions of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions

Table 15: One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Comparison of Groups Responses Based on School Level Regarding to the Extent to Which School Leaders Practice the Ethics of Educational Leadership to Make Decisions (N = 260)

Dimensions	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Identifying the problem	Between Groups	139.59	2	69.799	8.636	.000*
	Within Groups	2077.18	257	8.082		
Generating the alternatives	Between Groups	146.64	2	73.324	11.306	.000*
	Within Groups	1666.79	257	6.486		
Evaluating the alternatives	Between Groups	206.12	2	103.062	9.922	.000*
	Within Groups	2669.61	257	10.388		
Selecting the best alternative	Between Groups	151.23	2	75.616	11.651	.000*
	Within Groups	1667.98	257	6.490		
Implementing the decision	Between Groups	175.84	2	87.922	9.482	.000*
	Within Groups	2383.14	257	9.273		
Evaluating the effectiveness of the decision	Between Groups	188.22	2	94.111	6.437	.002*
	Within Groups	3757.54	257	14.621		
Overall of the school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decision	Between Groups	5969.59	2	2984.79	10.71	.000*
	Within Groups	71585.31	257	278.54		

*. Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 15 presents the One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) findings that reveal the differences between groups of participants with different school levels (elementary school, middle school, and secondary school). The findings showed that there were statistically significant differences among groups with different school levels on the overall of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions $F(2, 257) = 10.71$, $p = .000$. This finding concluded that the groups of participants with varying school levels differed in their perceptions regarding the overall of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions.

In addition, the One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) findings revealed that there were statistically significant differences between groups of participants with different school levels (elementary school, middle school, and secondary school) on all dimensions of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decision induding identifying the problem $F(2, 257) = 8.636$, $p = .000$, generating the alternatives $F(2, 257) = 11.306$, $p = .000$, evaluating the alternatives $F(2, 257) = 9.922$, $p = .000$, selecting the best alternative $F(2, 257) = 11.651$, $p = .000$, implementing the decision $F(2, 257) = 9.482$, $p = .000$, and evaluating the effectiveness of the decision $F(2, 257) = 6.437$, $p = .002$. These findings conduded that the groups of participants with varying school levels differed in their perceptions on all dimensions of the extent to which

school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions. Therefore, to determine which group or groups significantly differ from each other, and to control the type I error, the investigator conducted multiple comparisons using post hoc tests. The findings of post hoc analysis were presented in Table 16.

Table 16: Post Hoc Comparisons of Participants Groups with Different School Levels

Dimensions	I School level	J School level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Identifying the problem	Elementary	Middle	1.415*	.029
		Secondary	1.585*	.001
	Middle	Elementary	-1.415*	.029
		Secondary	.170	.962
	Secondary	Elementary	-1.585*	.001
		Middle	-.170	.962
Generating the alternatives	Elementary	Middle	1.497*	.007
		Secondary	1.601*	.000
	Middle	Elementary	-1.497*	.007
		Secondary	.104	.982
	Secondary	Elementary	-1.601*	.000
		Middle	-.140	.982
Evaluating the alternatives	Elementary	Middle	1.856*	.009
		Secondary	1.851*	.001
	Middle	Elementary	-1.856*	.009
		Secondary	-.005	1.000
	Secondary	Elementary	-1.851*	.001
		Middle	.005	1.000
Selecting the best alternative	Elementary	Middle	1.590*	.004
		Secondary	1.586	.000
	Middle	Elementary	-1590*	.004
		Secondary	-.004	1.000
	Secondary	Elementary	-1.586*	.000
		Middle	.004	1.000
Implementing the decision	Elementary	Middle	1.894*	.004
		Secondary	1.587*	.003
	Middle	Elementary	-1.894*	.004
		Secondary	-.307	.894
	Secondary	Elementary	-1.587*	.003
		Middle	.307	.894
Evaluating the effectiveness of the decision	Elementary	Middle	2.075*	.015
		Secondary	1.543*	.030
	Middle	Elementary	-2.075*	.015.
		Secondary	-.532	.809
	Secondary	Elementary	-1.543*	.030
		Middle	.532	.809
Overall of the school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decision	Elementary	Middle	10.327*	.004
		Secondary	9.754*	.001
	Middle	Elementary	-10.327*	.004
		Secondary	-.573	.987
	Secondary	Elementary	-9.754*	.001
		Middle	.573	.987

*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 16 presents the post hoc analysis findings that determine which group or groups significantly differ from each other. The post hoc analysis showed that the groups of participants from elementary schools scored school leaders significantly higher

than those groups of participants from middle schools ($p = .004$), and groups of participants from secondary schools ($p = .001$), on the overall of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions.

Furthermore, Table 16 presents additional post hoc analysis. The findings showed that the groups of participants from elementary schools scored significantly higher more than those groups of participants from middle schools and groups of participants from secondary schools ($p = 0.05$) level, on all dimensions of the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions.

In the second phase, qualitative findings were presented to answer the third research question: what are the perceptions of school leaders about the factors that influence their practices to making ethical decisions? In order to answer this question, open-ended responses were analyzed. Coding matrices were developed to assist researcher analysis and reporting of the qualitative findings. Then, the qualitative findings were organized into six parts. The major and sub-themes emerged and presented in the following paragraphs.

First, the responses obtained from the interviewees were about the factors that influence the first step of decision making: identify the problem. The majority of the respondents provided some factors including, school leaders experience, using some techniques such as a focus group and brainstorming, a school leaders' ability to describe the background of the problem and analyze the current situation. It is important to notice that the respondents emphasized the role of school leaders in identifying the problem clearly.

Second, the themes that emerged from the data describing the factors that influence generating alternatives as a second step of decision making. Most responses suggested these factors: good data bases and available information are necessary, skills and abilities of school leaders to employ the data, consulting the experts. In addition, a few respondents reported that it is important for school leaders to comprehend the system and policy of school, as well as, understand the socio-economic status of school members. In short, it was clear that the impact of appropriate data needed, and the capability of school leaders have been noted as generating the desirable alternatives.

Third, respondents provided more details to explain the factors that influence evaluating alternatives as a third step of decision making. Many respondents reported that school leaders must understand that the types and approach of the evaluation process, the steps and processes of conducting the evaluation, the purpose of evaluating the alternatives, and the abilities and skills required to conduct the evaluation. Without exception the respondents emphasized that school leaders need to be professional to evaluate the alternatives.

Fourth, the findings describe the factors that influence selecting the best alternative as a fourth step of decision making. Most respondents stated these factors including, clear criteria and standards, analyzing the internal and external environment of school, and available resources and materials necessary for the alternative. Furthermore, one respondent reported that the context of school must be taken into consideration to assist school leaders in selecting the best alternative. The findings condude that the school environment and context play an important role in selecting adequate alternatives.

Fifth, responses described the factors that influence implementing the decision as a fifth step of decision making. The majority of respondents stated that personality and charisma of school leaders is a vital key to succeed in implementing the decision. Also, many responses emphasized that establishing team work and follow up to the decision as important factors. It is notable that the supportive and empowered leadership and management provide a pleasant situation to implement the decision.

Finally, the themes that emerged from the data explaining the factors that influence evaluating the effectiveness of the decision as a last step of decision making. Many respondents reported that they acknowledge the consequences of the decisions; understand the types, approaches and procedures of evaluation process; and know how to conduct the evaluation. Two respondents stated that the problem should be resolved. It is important to emphasize that the findings suggested that the most successful decisions made, must be evaluated.

7. Discussion of Findings

This section presents the discussion of findings of the study. It includes two sub-sections: the discussion of the quantitative findings and the qualitative findings. In the first sub-section, the study found that the overall perceptions regarding the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions was classified as "always occurs". This finding may conclude that the school leaders realize the importance of ethical leadership on the decision-making process to confront critical issues and dilemmas facing schools. This finding is compatible with the finding of Chikeleze & Baehrend (2017), who found that the leaders prefer a particular ethical leadership behavior, when they intend to make decisions on ethical issues. Also, this finding is consistent with the finding of Ozan, Ozdemir and Yirci (2017), who reported that the class teachers' opinions were positive regarding the ethical leadership practices of school leaders to make decisions.

According to the findings of the study, four dimensions were classified as "always occurs" identifying the problem, generating the alternatives, selecting the alternatives, and implementing the decision. These findings could indicate that making an ethical decision is seen as one of the most critical and vital role and responsibility of school leaders today. This explanation is supported by the finding of Campbell (1999), who pointed out that school leaders are required to consider the importance of their roles and responsibilities in order to make ethical decisions.

The findings of the study showed that two dimensions were classified as "sometimes occurs" including evaluating the alternatives and evaluating the effectiveness of the decision. These findings may conclude that school leaders face some challenges in evaluating the alternatives and the decision as a whole. Also, these findings may relate to insufficient knowledge and competencies of school leaders in the evaluation process. These findings are not consistent with previous literature that underscored the complete rationality and certainty of decision making using the classical model that was applied in this study (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004; French et al., 2008).

The study revealed that there was statistically significant difference between participants based on gender. These findings could indicate that the female teachers who participated in this study were satisfied with their school leaders' practices for making ethical decisions. In this case, female school leaders tend to be more concerned and diligent on their actions to make ethical decisions. These findings are consistent with Wood and Hilton (2012), who found that the female leaders have a tendency toward ethical leadership. However, these findings are inconsistent with the finding of Ozan, Ozdemir and Yirci (2017), who found that no significant difference between males and females regarding the ethical leadership practices of school leaders to make decisions. In Saudi Arabia, the Education Policy strictly sets forth that education is separated by gender. Thus, all female school buildings are separate (Al-Salloom, 1995). This gives a unique status and culture to female schools.

Interestingly, the findings of the study revealed that there were not statistically significant differences among groups based on teaching experience. These findings could conclude that the years of teaching experience did not affect teacher perceptions about ethical practice of school leaders. Therefore, all teachers with different teaching experience similarly see school leaders

acting and practicing according to ethical principles to make decisions in order to solve problems and issues facing schools. These findings are inconsistent with Ozan, Ozdemir and Yirci (2017), who found significant differences between groups based on teaching experience regarding the ethical leadership practices of school leaders to make decisions.

The study found that the elementary school teachers differed in their perceptions from middle and secondary schools' teachers. These findings may relate to how elementary school culture is slightly different from middle and secondary schools. Also, the elementary schools are usually smaller in size and the problems and issues are not as critical and complex. Thus, the elementary school leaders could be able to act ethically when making decisions.

In the second sub-section, it is important to discuss the qualitative findings of the study in light of the related literature and the empirical studies. The discussion focuses on various concepts that determine the factors that influence the school leaders' practice of the ethics of leadership to make decisions. Also, the interactions between these concepts are essential for a deeper understanding of the study topic. The investigator identified two concepts to label the common factors that exist across the schools and influence the school leaders' practice to make ethical decisions.

First, management knowledge and leadership skills. This concept is related to the efficiency and professionalism of school leaders. Many procedures and stages in the decision making process require school leaders to have knowledge in management as well as skills and competencies in leadership to function as ethical leaders. Relevant literature and research studies emphasized that the management knowledge and leadership skills are essential for school leaders to be successful in their practices (Chikeleze & Baehrend, 2017; French et al., 2008; Starratt, 1991). It is important to conclude that actions and practices of schools in making decisions have been influenced by their professionalism in management knowledge and leadership skills.

Finally, the context of school's culture. This concept refers to the pattern that includes values, norms, beliefs, assumptions and attitudes, which determine the identity of school. The nature of the context of the school's culture is connected to all school members: leaders, teachers, staff and students. Additionally, the relevant literature states that the school culture relates to trust, academic optimism, and control (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Without a doubt, the context of the school's culture influences school leaders' actions and behaviors. Therefore, it is important for school leaders to describe and understand school culture in terms of making ethical decisions.

8. Conclusion

This study investigated the extent to which school leaders practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions in selected school districts in Saudi Arabia. The study found that the school leaders always practice the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions. Based on the findings and limitations of this study some implications were provided in this section.

The professional development programs for school leaders are recommended to increase their management knowledge and leadership skills. This will help school leaders to be able to make ethical decisions. Additionally, policymakers are required to establish written ethical codes for school leaders that will assist practice of the norms, values, and principles of ethical leadership for making decisions.

Further studies need to be conducted using observation and case study to investigate ethical practice of school leaders to make decisions. These studies could provide researchers with valuable opportunities to get in-depth understanding for the ethics of educational leadership and decision making. Furthermore, it could be useful to conduct further studies about the impact of

professional development programs on school leaders' practice of the ethics of educational leadership to make decisions. Studies such as these will explore the weaknesses and strengths of these professional development programs.

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