

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

An outstanding principal is the key figure responsible for the success and growth of a school, which is largely assessed in terms of teacher and student performance (Fullan, 2002). This is because the principal is a school leader who can affect and influence teachers and pupils in the process of instruction and learning respectively. The principal is also mainly accountable to the overall performance of the school and to all liabilities that may incur damage to the school and educational agencies. Yet, excellent principals do not emerge naturally, but they arise from training as well as from on-the-job continuous learning in leading and managing schools. Hence, there is an emergent need for principals to undergo professional development upgrading from time to time.

Furthermore, the education landscape today is rapidly changing globally due to many new innovations and ideas in the curriculum and delivery of the education process. New leadership and management concepts keep on emerging from thinkers and researchers continuously, which have affected leadership and management strategies in schools, or affect benchmarks and standards in performance evaluation. Mestry and Grobler (2002) state that the role of principals has become increasingly complex and demanding, requiring improved and sophisticated professional development programs. Principals as instructional leaders are not only expected to restructure and redefine the physical learning environment of schools, but also be concerned with transformational leadership - that is to transform the people they work

with, staff members, students, parents and community members and even their superiors (Villet, 2001). The principals' job also includes forging commitment from the staff, students and parents and to serve as a community leader (Vornberg, 1996). Such complexity also requires school principals to maintain the highest standards of professional practice to perform well. The complexity also highlights the fact that continuous development of school principals is inherently important to achieve effectiveness and high performance of schools in a knowledge-based society and globalized era (Fullan, 2004).

It is not unreasonable to assume that good principalship in turn leads to school effectiveness, and therefore, principals must be reinforced with skills, knowledge and attitudes to cope with the rapid changes in education. Ng (2001) posits that training opportunities or professional development should be provided to principals to enhance their performance. School principals are supposed to be professional leaders in order to be able to lead their schools to be effective in instruction and learning processes, and for this reason a formal and systematic training is very important for them. Raelin (1986) states that professionals have a high degree of specialization within their specific areas and they are trained to work independently and to self-govern their work.

Besides that, principals play the leading role in school change, staff improvement, and student development. The principal's role has changed rapidly in the past thirty years, from a middle manager position in the 1970's to an instructional leader in the 1990's (Daro, 2003). Drucker (1999) predicts that the only truly successful leaders in the next 30 years or so will be "change leaders" - those who can manage and lead change. In other words, the principal's role has changed from influencing the

implementation of specific innovations to leading changes in the school as an organization (Fullan, 1996).

With changes in school management, principalship should not just be about management for stability, but also management for change. Kwang (1997) stated that the continuing demand for development and improvement in education calls for strong and creative leadership in contrast to the requirements of a principal in the past. To attain these changes in schools, principals must possess good leadership skills enabling them to lead teachers and students. In this situation, different leadership styles are required, such as strategic leadership, instructional leadership, transformational leadership, constructivist leadership, and sustainable leadership (Davies, 2002). Instructional leadership is unique because it focuses on teacher professionalism and student development. Instructional leadership focuses primarily on the way in which the educational leadership shown by school administrators and teachers brings about improved educational results (e.g. Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999b).

School principals must be trained to be able to induce their school into a learning organization, and without continuous training, schools cannot improve and also will be unable to meet the needs of educational reform, particularly in Oman. School principals must be able to develop a strategic-view for their schools and they must plan for future needs and strategies in the context of many new changes and challenges. These changes and challenges have the potential to overwhelm principals (Fullan, 1991) and for this reason a school principal should be a continuous knowledge seeker by themselves.

In response to educational reforms, succession planning programs are being closely examined not only to attract high quality aspiring principals, but also to give careful consideration to the initial preparation and ongoing professional development of school leaders (Yan & Ehrich, 2009). According to Fullan (1991), and as previously stated, effective leadership will in turn lead to effective schools and to be effective, school leaders need professional development to improve their skills.

Tomlinson (1997) describes school principalship development as procedures and practices that set out to improve the professional knowledge, skills and attitude of school principals. Villegas and Reimers (2000) note that improving school principals' knowledge and skills through continual professional development is a critical step in improving school effectiveness, educational effectiveness, and students' learning performance.

In the context of contemporary change and reforms, principals need professional development programs as enablers to their knowledge, skills, and disposition (Daresh and Playko, 1995). Principals need professional development, just like teachers, so that they can learn to embrace the role of an instructional leader, be conversant with current educational research, and gain knowledge of strategies that may improve student achievement (Debbie, 2008).

Professional development for school principals is connected to school culture. School principals are supposed to be knowledge seekers and they should have a plan for their ongoing learning. There are various terms used in relation to continuing development such as continuing education, professional development, professional learning, professional growth, in-service education, in-service learning, renewal,

continuing professional development, in-service training, on-going assistance, human resource development, recurrent education, continuous career development, and lifelong learning and professional growth (Meththananda , 2001).

Reviewing the literature it is clear that by the 1980s, professional development focused on three areas of staff development: knowledge, skills and attitudes. Craig (1987) describes professional development as the way individuals develop their understanding, knowledge, skills and abilities to improve their performance in their current position or preparation for a future position.

Duttweiler (1998) defines professional development as any activity designed to promote beneficial changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes. Harris (1989) also defines professional development as a process that improves the job-related knowledge, skills or attitudes of employees. Professional development programs by the 1980s emphasized the performance of employees. During the 1990s professional development programs started to shift to the development of the school as an institution. However, literature review indicates these definitions emphasize the professional development of teachers with little attention paid to school principals.

Hughes (1991) defined professional development as a complex process of incorporating the sum total of all activities, in which teachers improve and develop their instructional skills. Daresh & Playko (1995) described professional development in terms of three clearly identifiable phases in one's career, i.e. pre-service training, induction and continuing in-service training.

According to Guskey (2000), professional development can be thought of as “processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn improve on the learning of students”. Furthermore, Nuefeld (1997) studied the perceptions of 23 urban middle school principals regarding their needs for professional development after participating in a variety of opportunities offered by the Edna McConnel Clark Foundation’s Program for Disadvantaged Youth. These opportunities included formal training, as well as visiting and receiving visits from other participating principals. These experiences helped provide participants with the knowledge and understanding needed to articulate and identify their needs. "Having been exposed to new knowledge and skills, they are in a good position to assess their own learning and provide insight into what assisted them to accomplish their goal” (p. 492). Professionalism of principals includes gaining additional knowledge and skills around the meaning and practice of leadership and the creation of a positive school culture.

Ricciardi (1997) studied the perceptions of 140 principals in South Carolina who had at least two years’ experience as a principal. Participants were surveyed regarding their professional development and training needs. Principals identified important needs for additional training in areas such as motivating others and addressing sensitive issues. However, few of the principals were reported to have received any training in these areas over the previous two years. Ricciardi suggested that low participation rates in training may indicate inconvenient times or locations.

Professional development for principals is a continuous process of learning and of becoming an expert in their area. Hallinger *et al.* (1990) stated that principals need "the opportunity to explore and update skills in leadership, curriculum, supervision,

instruction and management" (p. 9). They present this opportunity through the use of their Visiting Practitioner's Model. Also, Carter and Klotz (1990) viewed universities as institutions that could be of great service to the learning needs of principals by offering "degrees in educational administration that combine academic study and clinical work; and revamp curricula to include a common core of knowledge and skills that all educational administrators must have, this must include a sound understanding of teaching and learning theory" (p37).

Professional development for school principals consists of two significant functions: improvement of performance in the leader's present job, and preparing him or her for future responsibilities, tasks and opportunities. Professional development activities should cater for the needs of principals of various degrees and not only confine to the use of graduate-level university courses. In addition, school leaders may have their own preferred methods of professional development. As for the preferred methods to be used in the planning and carrying out of effective professional development for principals, Daresh and Playko (1995) found that:

- (i) Administrators like to be involved in the planning of in-service professional development such as the selection of learning activities, delivery techniques and evaluation procedures.
- (ii) Administrators prefer professional development activities that make use of active participant involvement rather than one-way communication techniques such as lectures.
- (iii) In-service professional development activities are viewed as much more effective when they are part of coherent staff development programs that are carried out over an extended period of time.

Harrison *et al.* (1998) studied the value of professional development to practicing school leaders in Western Australia. They were particularly interested in finding out the types of professional development practices which school leaders had found most beneficial to their professional growth, and their preferred methods of professional development delivery. The result of study could then be used as a guide when planning the most appropriate type of professional development to meet both the needs and preferences of school leaders.

In order to become the type of leader who can meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, a principal needs professional development (Daresh and Playko, 1995). A principal needs professional development, just like teachers, so that he or she can learn to embrace the role of instructional leader, be conversant with current educational research, and gain knowledge of strategies that may improve student achievement (Debbie, 2008).

What should be the emphasis of school leadership development programs? Fullan (2002) stated that the principal's primary role is to be an instructional leader in order to increase student achievement and learning. A successful instructional leader utilizes the energies and abilities of educators to support the students in whatever they attempt to do that will aid their learning and development. Some research have identified strong, directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction from the principal as a prime characteristic of elementary schools that were effective at teaching children in low-income urban communities (Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Despite its critics (e.g. Cuban, 1984), the research finding has shaped much of the thinking about effective principal leadership internationally in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Fullan (2002) suggests that school leadership development programs should also focus on strategies for handling transformations and reforms in education, in which the whole system must be working together, and he additionally offers the following guidelines for understanding change:

- The aim is not to innovate the most - innovating selectively with reason is more effective;
- Having the best ideas is not enough. Leaders help others assess and find collective meaning and commitment to new ways;
- Appreciate the implementation dip. Leaders cannot avoid the inevitable difficulties of attempting something new

He outlines the key components of sustainability to include:

- Developing the social and moral environment
- Learning in context
- Cultivating leaders at many levels
- Enhancing the teaching profession

Wong (2001) stated that a principal has to demonstrate his/her ability to lead through his/her:

- Professional knowledge
- Organization and administrative competence
- Ability to work out a good school policy and put it into effect
- Skill in the delegation of authority
- ability to understand the professional problems of teachers and to give professional guidance , and
- Ability to establish good working relationships with staff and parents

With the new challenges, Francis (2010) mentions that future principals will face many challenges as a result of advances in technology and higher expectations of education. These changes include:

- The use of information technology to support learning and teaching
- Increasing community expectations for improvement to the education system and the quality of learning processes and outcomes
- A growing awareness of teacher professionalism
- Life-long learning and the notion of the school as a learning organization

Currently, little has been written about the influences of principal professional development on principals' ability to serve as an instructional leader, curriculum leader, cultural leader, or change-oriented leader (Debbie, 2008). Therefore, this research attempts to investigate what are the areas pertaining to professional development needs of school principals in Oman and how serious their needs are. The results of study would help to prioritize the areas in training programs and to supervise school leadership and management methodologically.

1.2 Educational Reforms in Oman

In Oman, the new educational reforms are those planned and implemented in 1998 when the basic education system was introduced in replacement of the general education system. The reforms focus on the following twelve aspects:

- Improved Ministry of Education structure and procedures;
- Adoption of new objectives for the education system;

- Changes in the structure of the school system;
- Changes in curriculum content and textbook development;
- Changes in student assessment;
- Improved teacher training;
- Improved educational infrastructure;
- Improved organization of schools;
- Promoting special education;
- Encouraging the private sector to enter the education field;
- Continuous evaluation and improvement of programs; and
- An additional important reform measure is included —financial effort in favor of education since Oman also aims to increase the education budget (ICET, 1998).

In Oman, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has emphasized changes in the country system, and considered it as an important element by launching educational development programs focusing on adaptation within the national educational systems and the development requirements (MOE, 2002b). This development that accompanies changes in the educational system should be well managed. Additionally, there should be ways of managing changes to balance competing demands since there will be competition and demands from different groups. However, “organizations are constantly changing and if this process is not managed within an organization, the direction of the change will be unproductive and destructive” (Maryam, 2007).

For schools to be reformed, there are some recommendations from the Oman Ministry of Education, based on UNESCO International Conference on the Reform of Secondary Education (2001). The recommendations are as follows:

1. Redefining secondary education for the 21st century: why change?
2. Secondary Education should be given higher priority and that commitment to universal access to Secondary Education as an aspiration should be retained;
3. Change is essential and that the objectives and functions of secondary education need to be redefined, renewed and improved to fit with the new realities of the twenty-first century;
4. Despite the challenges and dilemmas that face secondary education now and in the future, reform must continue and build on current strengths and weaknesses;
5. Continued collaboration is required, both nationally and internationally, including in the provision of evidence-based information and examples of innovative best practice; and,
6. UNESCO undertakes a major review of secondary education.

In order for school reforms to take, there should be a good cooperation and collaboration among the Ministry, principals, and teachers. Although the Ministry has financial responsibility, directors of various divisions oversee the changes and the implementation of reform in schools. In addition, school leaders, including managers, are critical in achieving school effectiveness and improvement and as reforms aimed at increasing the standards are adopted. It is necessary for schools to match the changes with the new challenges (MOE, 2007). As Daresh and Playko (1992) suggest, educational reform means paying attention to discovering how classroom teachers increase the effectiveness of the education process. Linda Darling-Hammond (1996),

executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, in an article entitled, "The Quiet Revolution Rethinking Teacher Development," gives us the imperative for such a reform. She points out that "in this atmosphere of education reform, there is a hunt for ways to improve school performance for our students." This is also what Tirozzi (2000) claims, as echoed in his article that reforming educational practice and realizing student achievement gains will require enlightened leadership. However, Elmore (2002) argued that many school leaders do not have the necessary knowledge and skills to manage standard-based school reform. Hausman *et al.* (2000) concurred with the view of Elmore, by arguing that for education reform efforts to be successfully implemented, educational leadership must be strengthened and professional development for principals must be restructured.

1.3 Conceptual Framework of the Study and Related Theories

Professional development programs usually begins with needs analysis, which is the crucial step for matching systematically the contents of a development program or training program with what are essentially needed by clients for their job. A very relevant research in identifying principals' professional development needs was done by Pamela (2001) and Salazar (2002) in the United States.

In this research, Salazar's work and findings becomes the basis for investigating professional development needs among principals in Muscat, Oman, because Salazar's model is more systematic than other models or approaches that have been used in Oman before. Figure 1.1 shows the conceptual framework of the research which elucidates fifteen domains of professional development needs, namely as follows:

- i. Designing, implementing, and evaluating curriculum

- ii. Understanding measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies
- iii. Creating school as a learning organization
- iv. Understanding students' development and learning
- v. Building team commitment
- vi. Team work skills
- vii. Problem solving
- viii. Building shared decision-making
- ix. Research knowledge skills
- x. ICT utilization
- xi. Defining the core values and beliefs of education
- xii. Communicating effectively
- xiii. Setting goals and determining outcomes
- xiv. Building community and involvement leadership capacity
- xv. Resolving conflicts (Building Consensus and negotiating leadership Capacity)

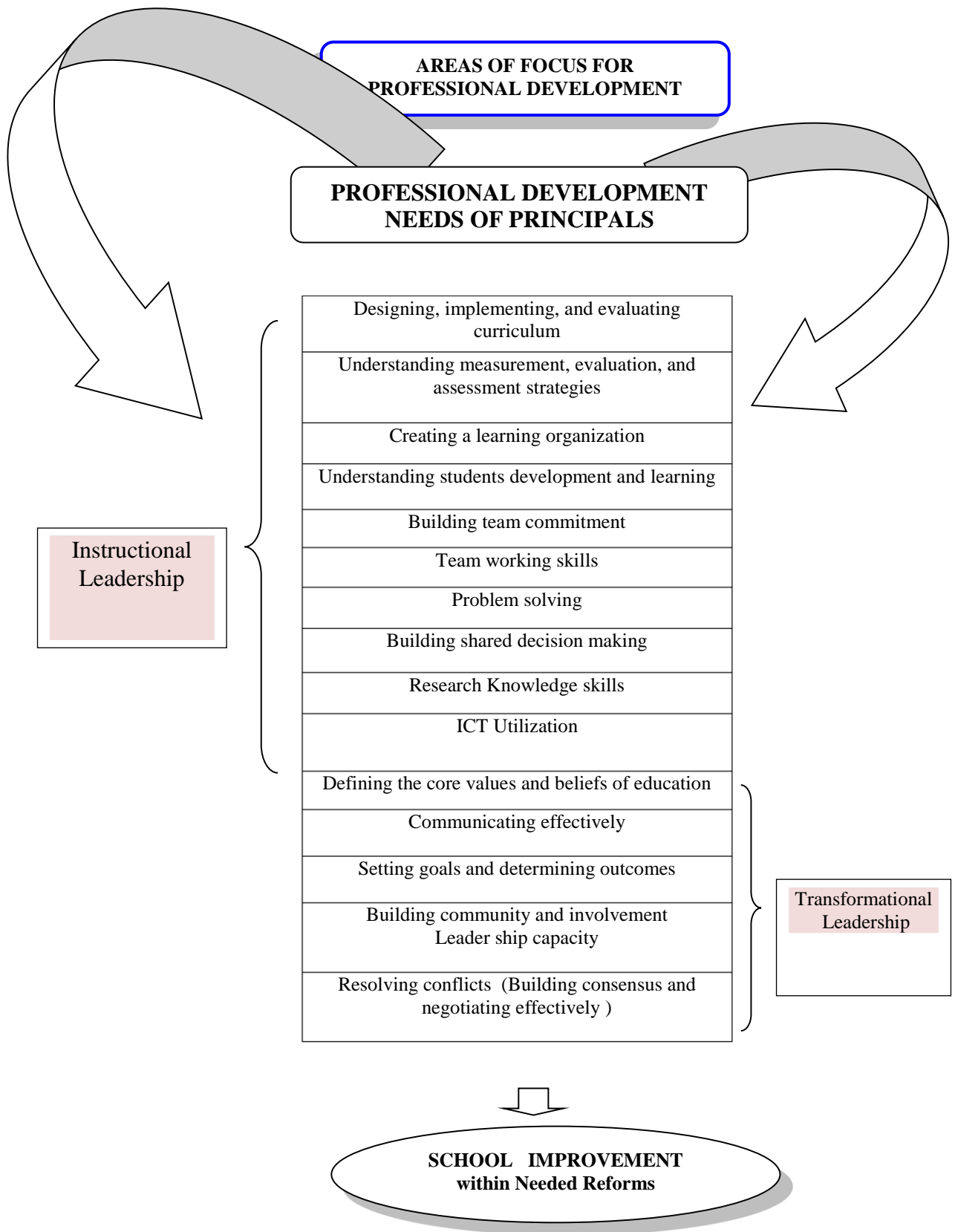


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of the Study [Source: modified from Salazar, 2002)

As in Figure 1.1, the first ten domains are basically concerned with the core functions of the school such as management, curriculum, instruction, learning, and teacher collegiality; thus the ten domains can be said to accentuate on instructional leadership. On the other hand, the last five are mainly concerned with motivating and inspiring people, inside and outside the school, to work together for school change and improvement; thus, the five domains can be grouped as transformational leadership attributes. However, the two types of leadership are not strictly exclusive from each other, i.e. there is some degree of overlapping in the functions and roles of school principals in assuming the two leadership capacities (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003).

Alig-Mielcarek (2003) contends many behaviours of the school principals are largely concerned with instructional leadership and they are in three dimensions, i.e. defining and communicating shared goals with the staff, monitoring and providing feedbacks on teaching and learning and ensuring nothing interrupts with the instructional time, and promoting school-wide professional development by providing professional literatures and resources to teachers and encouraging them to learn more about their students' achievement through data analysis.

The graphical conceptual framework in Figure 1.1 is a modified version of Salazar's (2002) framework, which does not have the two leadership categories. The graphical framework, however, is instrumental in guiding and determining the research design and methodology of the current study, which includes survey instrument construction, interview protocol content, and school observation notes. As a note here,

Oman has not used this conceptual model before in organizing a systematic professional training programs for principals; therefore, the needs domain could be of different order or of different pattern than the needs distribution of school principals in the USA. The interview results and observation data would provide additional inputs to the needs extent and pattern in the Omani context. The two ensuing sub-sections elaborate further the leadership components in Figure 1.1.

1.3.1 Roles and Emphasis of Instructional Leadership

The role of the school principal as instructional leader-means principals need to acquire knowledge to execute the tasks which must be accomplished, and develop the skills needed in carrying out instructional leadership.

Fullan (1991) states that "the role of the principal has become dramatically more complex, overloaded, and unclear over the past decade" (p. 144). Indeed, the role of the principal has been in a state of transition, progressing from the principal as an instructional leader or master teacher, to the principal as a transactional leader and, most recently, to the role of transformational leader. Much has been written in the literature concerning the importance of the instructional leadership responsibilities of the principal. Clearly, improved education for our children requires improved instructional leadership. Berlin, Kavanagh, and Jensen (1988) conclude that, if schools are to progress, "the principal cannot allow daily duties to interfere with the leadership role in curriculum" (p. 49).

Instructional leaders play significant roles in school development and the important roles of principal was inferred from studies that examined change implementation (e.g. Hall & Hord, 1987), school effectiveness (Edmonds, 1979; Rutter *et al.*, 1979), school improvement (e.g. Edmonds, 1979) and program improvement (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). A quick assessment of these most popular conceptualizations of instructional leadership yields the following observations:

- Instructional leadership focuses predominantly on the role of the school principal in coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and instruction in the school (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).
- With its birthplace in the ‘instructional effective elementary school’ (Edmonds, 1979), instructional leadership was generally conceived to be a unitary role of the elementary school principal (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982).
- Similarly, the fact that studies of effective schools focused on poor urban schools in need of substantial change, it is not surprising to note that instructional leaders were subsequently conceived to be ‘strong, directive leaders’ (Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). Instructional leaders lead from a combination of expertise and charisma. They are hands-on principals, ‘hip-deep’ in curriculum and instruction, and unafraid of working with teachers on the improvement of teaching and learning (Cuban, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).

As an instructional leader, the principal is the pivotal point within the school who affects the quality of individual teacher instruction, the height of student achievement, and the degree of efficiency in school functioning. Findley and Findley (1992) state that "if a school is to be an effective one, it will be because of the

instructional leadership of the principal" (p. 102). Flath (1989) concurs: "research on effective schools indicates that the principal is pivotal in bringing about the conditions that characterize effective schools" (p. 20). Ubben and Hughes (cited in Findley & Findley, 1992) claim that "although the principal must address certain managerial tasks to ensure an efficient school, the task of the principal must be to keep focused on activities which pave the way for high student achievement" (p. 102).

Notwithstanding, if the goal is to have effective schools, then it is important to emphasize on instructional leadership. According to K. A. Acheson and S. C. Smith, an instructional leader is an administrator who emphasizes the process of instruction and facilitates the interaction of teacher, student and curriculum. (p. 20). Mendez (cited in Flath, 1989) describes it yet another way. He mentions that there are three major forces that impact on a school - the public, the staff and the students - and that these forces engage and interact through the curriculum. The role of the instructional leader is to manipulate these forces in order to maximize the quality of instruction. (p. 20). In examining instructional leadership qualities, one finds that, here also, the research varies. Duke (cited in Flath, 1989) concluded from his research on instructional leadership qualities that "there is no single leadership skill or set of skills presumed to be appropriate for all schools or all instructional situations" (p. 20). On the other hand, Kroeze (cited in Flath, 1989) found that certain instructional leadership activities could be grouped together and they are presented in the following four categories:

1. Goal emphasis—set instructional goals, high expectations and focus on student achievement.
2. Coordination and organization—work for effectiveness and efficiency.
3. Power and discretionary decision making—secure resources, generate alternatives, assist, and facilitate to improve the instructional program.

4. Human relations—deal effectively with staff, parents, community, and students. (p. 20)

In terms of learning and improvement, instructional leaders in the future will be expected to have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will help them to lead students to greater achievement in classrooms. Resnick (2002) emphatically noted that it is reasonable to expect principals to learn instructional leadership competencies.

Stronge (1988) concludes that "if principals are to heed the call from educational reformers to become instructional leaders it is obvious that they must take on a dramatically different role" (p. 33). Changing an obsolete principal-preparation model begins with developing a shared vision of the knowledge and abilities instructional leaders should have. Jazzar and Algozzine (2006) concede that "it is difficult to define the role of a principal as the instructional leader" (p. 106), but "the educational reform movement of the last two decades has focused a great deal of attention on that role" (p. 104).

Interpersonal or people skills are essential for the success of being a principal. These are skills that maintain trust, spur motivation, give empowerment and enhance collegiality. Besides, relationships are built on trust and tasks are accomplished through motivation and empowerment wherein teachers are involved in planning, designing and evaluating instructional programs. Thus, empowerment leads to ownership and commitment as teachers identify problems and design strategies themselves. Collegiality promotes sharing, cooperation and collaboration, in which both the principal and teachers talk about teaching and learning.

Many theories have been used to explicate the relationship between instructional leadership and principal development. One of them is the instruction-focused

leadership (IFL) theory, which states that through leadership training, school principals learn about high-quality instruction and about actions that they can take to motivate and support their teachers. Principals then organize professional learning for their teachers and otherwise help teachers improve their classroom practices. As per the theory, with better teaching, student attainment will also improve. Janet and Cynthiam (2007) found that there were statistically significant associations connected with each pair of steps in the theory of action. Thus, principals who received more professional development were more actively involved in the professional development of their teachers. Teachers who participated in more professional development delivered lessons that were of a higher quality, and those schools where instructional quality was higher also had students with higher academic attainment (Janet & Cynthiam 2007).

1.3.2 Roles and Emphasis of Transformational Leadership

In conjunction with instructional leadership, transformational leadership involves developing a close relationship between leaders and followers, one based more on trust and commitment than on contractual agreements. Transformational leaders seek to bring major changes to their organization and help followers to see the importance of transcending their own self-interest for the sake of the mission and vision of their group and organization. Gardner and Avolio (1998) state that by building followers' self-confidence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem, leaders are can have a strong, beneficial influence on followers' levels of identification, motivation and goal achievement.

A transformational leader attempts to recognize followers' needs and raise those needs to higher levels of motivation and maturity while striving to fulfill human

potential. Such total engagement (emotional, intellectual and moral) of both leaders and followers encourages followers to develop and perform beyond expectations. This form of leadership ties leaders and followers into a collaborative change process which will positively affect the performance of the whole organization and end up in a responsive and innovative environment (Zaidatol & Habibah, 2002).

Burns (1978) proposed a theory of transformational leadership in his book, "*Leadership*." This book is a piece descriptive research on political leaders. Transformational leadership is a process in which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (1978, p.20). A transformational leader is one who motivates the follower to do more than they would ordinarily not do.

Burns (1978, p.4) contends, "The transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower." The object of transformational leadership is "to turn individuals' attention toward larger causes, thereby converting self-interest into collective concerns" (Keeley, 1998, p113). Transformational leadership's primary characteristic is evidence of a common goal or shared vision. The purpose of leaders and followers "which might have started out as separate but related, as in the case with transactional leadership, become fused" (Burns 1978, p.20).

Transformational leadership comprises four dimensions in its conception, which are idealized influence or charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (the 4 I's) (Bass and Avolio, 1994). In demonstrating inspirational motivation, leaders motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning, context and challenge to their followers' work (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Leaders become the team cheerleaders for team spirit. The leader displays positive praise, enthusiasm, and optimism towards all followers. The leader works collaboratively to establish a long-range shared vision. The leader communicates clear expectations the followers want to meet and also reveals a strong commitment to goals (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders pay special attention to individualized consideration, as they become mentors and coaches for members of their organization. This dimension of transformational leadership incorporates multiple practices, which include, but are not limited to, the leader promoting learning opportunities for individual members.

1.3.3 Transformational and Instructional Leadership For School Development

Helen & Susan (2003) carried out a study and found that transformational leadership was necessary, but by itself, it is an insufficient condition for instructional leadership. When transformational and shared instructional leadership are integrated in all aspects of leadership, the effect on school results, determined by the quality of its pedagogy and the student attainment is major (Helen & Susan, 2003). Two leadership types have dominated the literature in educational administration over the past 25 years. Recently, global attempts at educational reform have refocused the attention of policymakers and practitioners on the school leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Jackson, 2000).

It was suggested by some studies that strong transformational leadership by the principal is essential in supporting the commitment of teachers, because teachers themselves can be barriers to the development of school leadership, and transformational principals are needed to invite teachers to share leadership functions. When teachers perceive principals' instructional leadership behavior to be appropriate,

they develop their commitment, professional involvement, and innovation (Sheppard, 1996). Thus, instructional leadership can overlap to a certain extent with transformational leadership.

1.3.4 Related Theories for the Conceptual Framework of the Study

In relation to the conceptual framework in Figure 1.1, in this study, several theories will be used such as leadership theories and human resource development for principal professional development. For leadership, transformational leadership theory is applied with the aim of transforming a school system (principal, teachers and students), particularly in the context of educational reform in Oman. In addition, instructional leadership is employed in this study which is related to a principal's professional development and school instructional development, while path-goal theory is used, aiming for school principals to work together with teachers to achieve the school's vision, mission and objectives. Moreover, for principal's professional development, theory of action and system theories are employed from a human resource development perspective, in the context of changes in school system and leadership.

In terms of change theory (Fullan, 2002), a learning organization makes changes in the school system such as principals, teachers, academic and non-academic. Thus learning must take place in the whole school system. School improvement and development in all aspects and sectors should be the first priority of every school principal. The following theories are applied in this study.

In this study, the path-goal theory supposes that a leader's behavior affects the satisfaction, motivation and performance of subordinates (House, 1971). Leader behaviors that support and reward teachers for their good performance would enhance

their satisfaction and motivation, and consequently teachers would attempt to improve further their performance. Path-goal theory evolves around a causal relation among the leader's behavior, situation, and subordinate's satisfaction, motivation, and performance. Yukl (1998) illustrated the theory to demonstrate this causal relationship, i.e. the effect of the leader's behavior on subordinate effort and satisfaction, depending upon the intervening and situational variables.

House (1996) revised the path-goal theory in response to research and to keep up with the changing nature of organizations. The propositions of the theory have been broadened to include the effects of the leader on subordinates' abilities to perform effectively and the leader's effect on work-unit performance as well as on dyadic relationships. Leadership behaviors have been increased from four to ten: path goal clarifying, achievement oriented, work facilitation, supportive interaction, group oriented decision process, representation, networking, value based, and shared leadership. Some of these behaviors are embedded in Figure 1.1 shown before. House modernized the conceptions of subordinates' motivation and abilities and task characteristics as situational variables.

A change begins with a vision, and as Buffie (1989) explained: "Vision is the ability to conceptualize and communicate a desired situation ... that induces the commitment and enthusiasm in others" (p. 12). With a vision, set goals and direction are established. Vision could be considered as a process that is to imagine the desired results particularly by establishing collective goals, identification of remaining barriers, identify strategies to overcome them, and finally, identify and work on necessary changes to achieve these objectives (January, 1990).

According to Manasse (1986) vision includes the development, transmission and application of an image of a desirable future. Sergiovanni (1990) stated that school leaders have not only a vision but are also able to communicate that vision to others, to develop a shared one. The process of developing a shared vision promotes collegial relations and collaboration, an intrinsic motivator by itself. For the development of the school under the path-goal theory, principals in Oman may group students, teachers, parents and community residents around the common goals of improving student attainment. The director must be a visionary leader, demonstrating the energy, entrepreneurship, commitment, values required (Francis, 2012). Exemplary leadership that is consistent with school values and goals should be an attribute of all effective leaders. This can motivate staff and others to follow the leader (Francis, 2012). School leaders strengthen the school culture that includes shared values, beliefs and attitudes, providing the setting in which aims are met (Francis, 2012).

Another theory related to the instructional leadership component is the theory of action. According to Claudia Weisburd and Tamara Sniad (2005), the use of a theory of change and a theory of action to help formulate questions about how to develop and evaluate professional development for school principals. A theory of change identifies the process or processes through which a certain type of social change is expected. A theory of action maps a specific pathway for that change to occur.

Action theory provides the framework for meeting the goals outlined above and provides a basis for further educational reform at all levels. Theory captures the action, excitement, vision and commitment that all the actors have collected to address needs of students and directors of professional development (FWISD, 2006). Moreover, according to FWISD (2006), the theory of action is aligned with key objectives, with

the support of professional learning communities, and strengthened by the effort in learning beliefs-base that supports the idea that all students can learn to high levels. At a minimum, the professional development of principals should address the preparation of the reform, effective teaching techniques to improve teaching and learning, especially in reading, writing, math and science, and use data and student work reforms to promote and support continuous improvement. Figure 1.2 describes the important aspects of professional development of principals in instructional leadership.

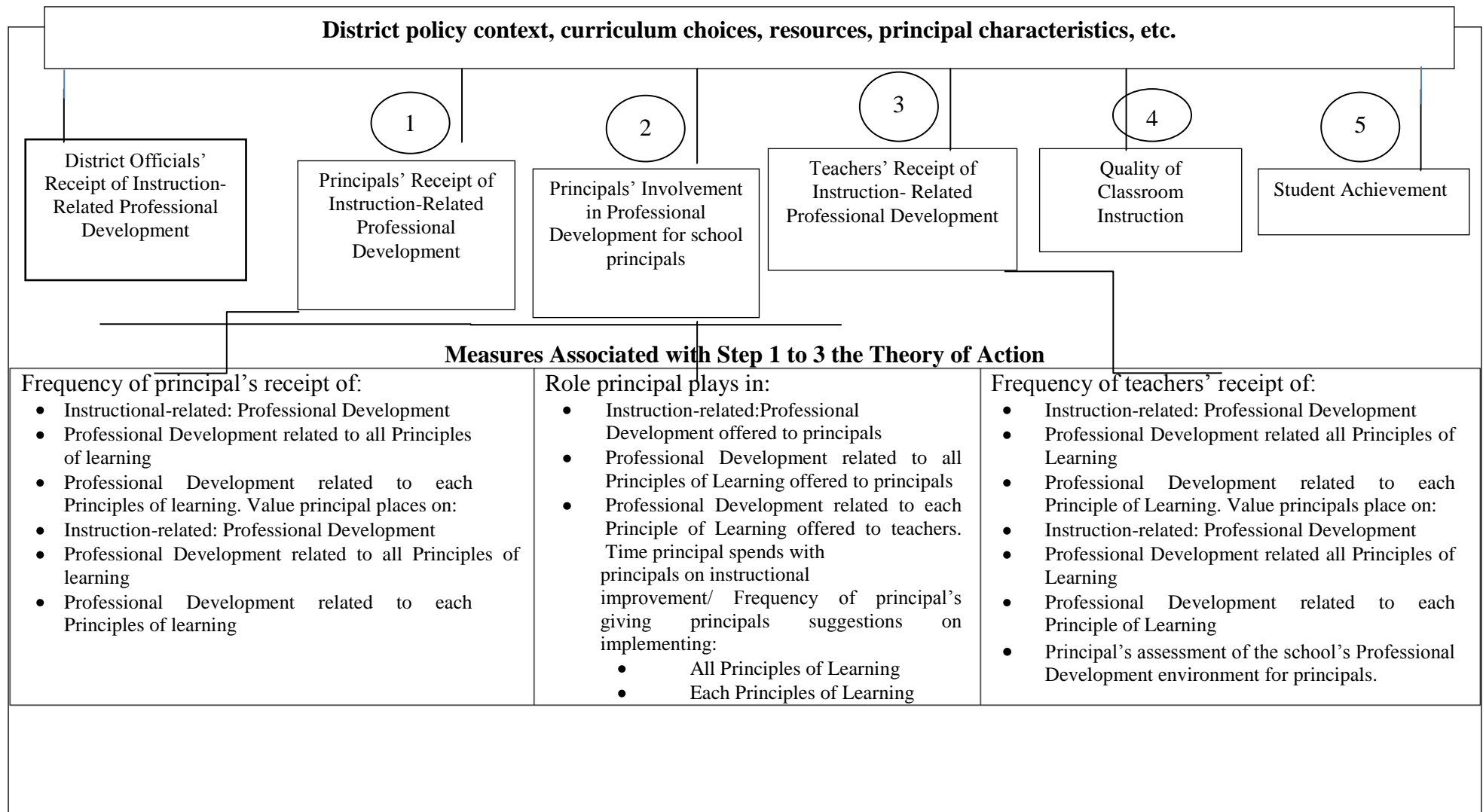


Figure 1.2 The Theory of Action and its relationship with principal's professional development and instructional leadership [Source: Blasé, J. (1999)]

Referring to Figure 1.2 above, the policy context for reform has a very significant bearing on district education officers, but even more so on principals, teachers, and students, who are the main implementers and beneficiaries of policy changes. The inputs received by principals in Component 1 would directly influence the inputs to be received by teachers in Component 3. In this regard, the government or state government can enforce policy implementation by organizing training programs related to principal's and teachers' professional development.

Moreover, Figure 1.2 explains the relationship between professional development and learning. Thus, principals' professional development is related to lifelong learning concept in which principals should continue learning, increasing skills, acquiring knowledge and development for the sake of school development. Furthermore, Figure 1.2 elucidates the role of principals with professional development and the theory of action, i.e. what affects the principals can affect teachers in instruction, students in learning, and management of physical resources in schools.

Another relevant theory for this study is systems theory, which describes organizations as living systems constantly interacting and making adaptations with the environment. This theory is suitable in the context of reforms and changes in Oman. The theory is about learning organizations where learning and improvement is continuous. With regards to the concept of system, it is where leaders, every staff and workers are learning and upgrading their skills in order to face the new challenges.

Much of the literature speaks of the importance of a systems view of an organization and the processes within (Dixon 1992; Jacobs 1989; Knowles 1985; Passmore 1997; Rummler and Brache 1995; Senge 1990; Sleezer 1993; Swanson 1994;

Vaill 1996). However, both theories of learning as a part of psychology and performance improvement can also be viewed from a systems perspective. Learning does not occur by itself, it is instead a part of the learning resources in an organizational system (Knowles 1985). Learning has inputs, processes and outputs. Consequently, with the acceptance of the systems approach, a professional needs to be less concerned with planning, scheduling and instructing and more concerned with managing the system as a whole (Knowles 1985). Von Bertalanffy (1968) studied general systems theory and applied it in many different contexts, and Berrien (1968) and Katz and Kahn (1966) used systems theory as applied to organizations. Jacobs (1989) proposes that systems theory be the unifying theory for HRD in his chapter on 'Systems theory applied to human resource development'.

Additionally, Jacobs (1988) proposes a domain of human performance technology (HPT) and defined the theory: 'HPT is the development of human performance systems and the management of the resulting systems, using a systems approach to achieve organizational and individual goals'. This is considered as an example of another link to performance improvement within the systems concept. Jacobs (1989) provided additional research on system theory and applies seven of the eight of Patterson's (1986) criteria for assessing a theory.

1.4 Statement of the Research Problem

Currently, there is a profound paucity of research looking into principal's professional development as a mechanism for school development and educational reforms in Oman. Also, research linking professional development with instructional leadership in the context of reform in Muscat, Oman, is relatively small. In addition, studies

investigating the core principal professional development needs for school improvement and the education system in Oman are alarmingly scant. As a result, many professional development programs for teachers and principals have been done haphazardly, without a systematic approach or strategy, based on actual needs. Salazar's model of training needs analysis has not been used in Oman before, and also theories such as action theory, systems theory, and path-goal theory, have not been well utilized in understanding the goals and objectives of programs and activities done in training workshops. This is a major problem.

Importantly, there is insufficient research in Muscat, Oman, explicating extensively the essential components of instructional leadership or transformational leadership styles among principals. Even more so, leadership styles have not been understood in theoretical context, such as in juxtaposition with action theory or system theory. As a result, the conduct of school leadership and management has been without meanings and rationales.

In the context of technological changes, Barth (1995) asserts that school principals require a 'whole new set of skills' to be able to sustain the work of successful school leader while immersed in the diverse responsibilities of the position. Asschon (1987) indicated that school principals are expected to manage school administration while responding to the increasingly higher standards of education. This poses a major problem to principals in Oman. School principals have been compelled to strive for more knowledge, attend rigorous trainings to increase their competency, effectiveness and efficiency in handling and managing school administration. The reactions and attitudes are varied, from apathy to proactive stance.

In terms of professionalism, today's school principals need to grow and learn throughout their careers to adapt to the changing and varying needs of students and schools (Educational Research Service Report, 1999). The technical, conceptual and people skills demanded of educational leaders have increased dramatically over the last decade. With the widespread acceptance of the need for schools to improve, it is impossible to ignore the critical needs of school leaders to be more effective at their work. In this regard, the professional development programs for school principals must emphasize on understanding student needs, teacher needs, and school development needs, all which seem not included in training programs for school principals in Oman. Without needs analysis, in-house training programs either for teachers or principals become irrelevant and ineffective for professional development of those school personnel. For the betterment of schools, school principals in Oman must receive professional development aimed at helping them become more effective, knowledgeable and qualified to facilitate continuous improvement. According to the Blue Ribbon Consortium on Renewing Education (1998), "the way of building school capacity is to develop a cadre of leaders who understand the challenges of school improvement (p. 35)."

Wu Yan and Lisa Catherine (2009) stated that the fact that leadership preparation and development for school leaders has emerged as a key issue is unsurprising for two main reasons. This is a relevant issue for Oman. First, research over the last couple of decades has consistently shown that school principals are powerful players who can affect school improvement and bring about change and for this reason, their development is a critical factor in school effectiveness. Second, given the complex socio-cultural environment in which school principals' work, new set of skills and competencies to enable them to thrive in these new environments are

required. In this regard workshops and training sessions in Oman must incorporate issues and practices about school effectiveness.

Scholars conducting research on organizational development of schools have consistently found that the skillful leadership of school principals was a key contributing factor when it came to explaining successful development, school improvement, or school effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b). This has to do with leadership skills where school principals must apply various skills to resolve the situations and challenges facing the school entity. Good school leadership is believed to drive schools to the pinnacle of success. With the success of schools and the development of teachers and students being determined by the good leadership, skills of principals in instructional leadership can improve situation and should be applied to uplift the standards of school systems.

As a matter of fact, instructional leadership influences the quality of school outcomes through the coordination of school structures (e.g., academic standards, time allocation, and curriculum) with the school's aim (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b). These are the assumptions of all the research that has been done on effective schooling and on the role of preparation for, and training in, the important qualities of school leadership (Fullan, 2002).

Moreover, contemporary models of school reform acknowledge the principal as the passport to school success. Strong collaboration and instructional skills have replaced bureaucratic skills as important characteristics of effective principals (Drake and Roe, 2003; Neufeld, 1997). Principals need continuous professional development opportunities to support their efforts toward school improvement and revitalize their

commitment to creating and sustaining positive learning communities (Foster, Loving and Shumate, 2000; Evans and Mohr, 1999; Neufeld, 1997).

A principal's professional development is critical to school improvement and increased student learning. As the leader of a learning organization, the principal must motivate teachers to continue to grow professionally throughout their careers. Professional development helps teacher in terms of developing knowledge and skills that are required for effective professional practice as circumstances change and as new responsibilities are accepted throughout the teacher's career.

Barth (1990) stipulates, "the principal is the key to a good school. The quality of the educational program depends on the school principal. The principal is the most important reason why teachers grow or are stifled on the job. The principal is the most potent factor in determining school climate. Show me a good school, and I'll show you a good principal" (p.64). It is imperative that educational leadership preparation programs prepare candidates to enter the field of administration with appropriate knowledge, skills, and habits of the mind to be successful instructional leaders.

With the challenging responsibilities of today's school principals they are expected to be up to speed regarding educational trends and understand how to impart that knowledge to their staff. They are expected to embrace change while supporting staff and students in the process. In addition, they are expected to reflect upon their practice to determine how to improve upon their work as they guide and support staff, students and community towards a better future.

Empirically, principals' professional development is crucial in leading schools. Principals should be knowledge seekers, seeking knowledge to improve themselves, updating themselves on current issues and attending training for both personal and school development. With professional development, principals are enabled to improve the school system such as teachers, students, curriculum, and management eventually leading to a good standard of education in the country.

Secondary school principals should consider professional development and embracing instructional leadership to acquire marketable skills that enable them to secure employment in the job market. Nowadays, different stakeholders have various expectations and requirements from schools. Sometimes their expectations are too high for schools to meet, putting more challenges on principals. Indeed, one of the challenges facing schools in the 21st century is the inability of the principals to lead and manage those schools according to external expectations and requirements.

Additionally, it has been suggested by researchers that there is a strong relationship between principal professional development, instructional leadership and educational reform. According to Marshal (1992), there should be a strong recommendation for principal training to extend beyond the managerial aspects of their jobs, "Beyond this [managerial skills], principals' need to be prepared to fill roles and functions of administrators and to face the fundamental dilemmas in administration" (p. 89). A focus on management tasks seems to mitigate opportunities for principals to acquire the needed skills associated with becoming instructional leaders (Farkas et al., 2001).

Moreover, Brown and Irby (1997) found that, "Professional growth enables the principal to refine leadership practices and to increase school effectiveness" (p. 4). Thus, when a principal gains professional development or growth, the professional development that he/she has will be a light and guidance for him/her to lead the school and upgrade the teachers by giving instructions for them to progress and this will transform him as transformational and instructional leader.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

This study is triggered by an extreme need to improve school principalship in Oman, a developing country in the Middle East which has been undergoing a major school reform for the sake of making its education system of world class quality. However, in Oman, there is a serious problem with principals complaining of lacking professional development to upgrade the school system and to accelerate student's learning. The development and performance of the schools is at stake when school principals are not equipped with new skills and knowledge and when changes do not occur in the system as well as learning. The application of theory of action for schools to change must exist and the implementation of system theory for organizational learning must take place. However, if the school system fails to change and adopt a new system to face the challenges, the performance of teachers and students would be less than expected. Thus, system theory is needed for school development and continuous improvement. Eventually, for educational reform to take place, professional development needs, changes and continuous learning must be provided for principals and for the whole school system.

In light of this, it is very important for principals in Oman to upgrade themselves, increase their knowledge and uplift their skills and attitudes. In addition, with the different challenges of ICT and globalization in education, principals are obligated to diversify their leadership skills not only for themselves but helping teachers to improve their skills and knowledge as well as providing better learning environment for students.

In the Omani context, the government does not provide enough research activities where the school principals can explore more and seek skills and knowledge. In addition, there is not much proper training given to school principals to develop themselves in readiness to face the new challenges in schools and skills to cope with ICT changes as well as globalization. Therefore, this research covers the areas of principal's professional development issues, concerns, and needs in order to inform better the planning and organization of training programs and workshops for principals or teachers in Oman.

1.6 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

Oman is embarking on education reforms to improve on the quality of her education system and human resources produced by the system. The reforms require structural changes and new kinds of school management, school leadership, and teacher professionalism. In this context, the purpose of this study is to analyze and identify various professional development needs and leadership issues of school principals in Muscat, Oman.

In relation to the purpose, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze and identify the important domains of professional development needs for school principals of Muscat, Oman, in the context of the ongoing educational reform.
2. To examine the highly important needs and abilities for instructional leadership and transformational leadership of school principals in Muscat city.
3. To analyze and categorize the challenges faced by school principals in their professional development in the context of educational reforms in Muscat, Oman.
4. To draw up a list of recommendations regarding school improvement and school principals development in the context of educational reforms in Muscat, Oman.

1.7 Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

1. In the context of educational reform in Oman, what are the major professional development needs among school principals particularly in Muscat?
2. In the context of reform, what are the specific needs perceived by school principals to be of high importance for instructional leadership and transformational leadership of school principals in Muscat?
3. What is the extent of correlations among the identified domains or factors of professional development needs of school principals in Muscat?

4. What are the abilities of instructional leadership and transformational leadership of some school principals in Muscat, Oman?
5. What are the major challenges facing school principals in Muscat in their professional development within the context of educational reforms in Oman?
6. What are the recommendations for school improvement and principals' professional development by school principals in Muscat within the context of educational reforms in Oman?

1.8 Significance of the Study

In this study, it was expected a priori that all the fifteen areas of professional development needs, as proposed by Salazar (2002), would be highly ranked by principals in Muscat. This could be due to the fact that principals actually needed the fifteen areas to upgrade their professional skills in school leadership and management. All their training sessions done before were not organized systematically using an appropriate model of needs analysis. Thus, from this study, Salazar's model of needs analysis could be applicable for organizing a systematic training workshops for all school principals Muscat as well as for Oman entirely.

It is hoped that the findings of this research would help in understanding professional development from the perspective of secondary school principals in the Sultanate of Oman. In addition, it will help in providing information to secondary school principals when planning professional development for teachers and the areas that need to be focused on when developing staff ability. These are pertinent to

instructional leadership. Moreover, the study will shed light on the issue of what areas should be included in professional development for principals as well as recognizing individual differences in terms of needs and desires; individualizing the leader's behaviors to demonstrate acceptance of individuals; and delegating tasks to develop followers (Bass & Avolio, 1994). These are aspects related to intrinsic motivation in the path-goal theory, i.e. giving responsibility and giving recognition to teachers and students. The aspects are also related to transformational leadership in making school improvement, in tandem with the goals of educational reform in Oman. Besides that, education officers and principals should realize that systems theory and learning organization theory are in operation within an educational reform, and thus all practices in leadership and management should be understood in their theoretical underpinnings in order to have meanings. Practices without meanings are viewed to be just mechanical and technical, which is common in the bureaucratic culture.

Furthermore, principal preparation is not the only area in which there is concern surrounding training and development of principals. There are also concerns that ongoing professional development does not meet the needs of today's principals in facing the new era's challenges. While the roles and responsibilities of school leaders have changed noticeably, neither organized professional development programs, nor formal training programs are sufficiently preparing principals to respond to such changes (Hale and Moorman, 2003).

However, research is also needed in the use of communities of practice for developing supportive educational environments. "In future research there is a need for examining the advantages and shortcomings of using community of practice as a tool for designing and developing educational environments" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2001, p.8).

With regards to this, this research strives to provide meaningful knowledge into the type of needs for fostering the principals' professional development for school leadership effectiveness, as well as a medium for principal support. This research sought to contribute to the literature by investigating the different forms of principal involvement in a professional development program with the sense of helping teacher's development.

It is hoped that the findings of this research would help in understanding principal's professional development and its significance on school development and change the educational reform from the perspective of school principals in the Sultanate of Oman to accommodate teachers' professional development. In addition, it will help in providing information to secondary school principals when planning their professional development for teachers and the areas that are related to the development staff ability.

As` an in-depth case analysis, this study also examined how principals in one school district provide support and instructional leadership to teachers with the goal of increasing student achievement. There is little research in Oman about district support for effective instructional leadership and student outcomes. There is also little research about principals' approaches and actions in the implementation of in-house professional development programs for teachers and school development for reform. Therefore, this study would provide an insight into some principals' perceptions and views regarding professional development needs and the impact on school improvement.

The results of this study may be of practical use to school districts, principals, and researchers in educational reform process of Oman. There is a potential use of the

results of this study for state policymakers, state department of education, and district officers and leaders responsible in organizing principal's professional development programs for the sake of school development in Oman. The results of this study may also have implications for those who assess and design principal preparation programs for colleges. And, school district offices may gain insight from this study in developing instructional leadership programs

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Professional: It refers to the engagement in a specified activity as a person's main occupation. Being professional requires the possession of distinctive qualifications, expertise and competencies, ethical values, and appropriate dispositions to perform a specific job effectively and efficiently. For example, in this study, a school principal is conceptualized as a qualified and trained professional in leading the education process in classrooms effectively, as well as in managing resources efficiently to support and enhance the quality of the education process.

Professional Development: It refers to the upgrading of knowledge, competencies, values, and dispositions of a professional. In this study, professional development of school principals pertains to the acquisition of new knowledge, competencies, values, and dispositions which would enable principals to perform effectively their duties and responsibilities in school leadership and management. The acquisition process can be in the form of seminars, workshops, courses, and case studies organized the relevant education authority at the national or local level. The delivery of the professional development programs can be performed by university experts and educational consultants.

Principal's Professional Development: In this study, it refers to the principals' professional attribute and capacity to upgrade continuously their knowledge, expertise, competencies, values and dispositions through various methods, such as post-graduate study, travel and visitations to relevant institutions, research projects, workshops or courses, sabbatical leave, internships, apprenticeships, residencies or work with a mentor or master. The upgrading of professionalism is assumed to be vital for the improvement of job performance, personal development, and career advancement. It is also vital for the successful implementation of policies related to educational reforms in Oman.

Professional Development Needs: It refers to what are essentially needed by school principals as professionals in leading and managing their schools. As identified by Salazar (2002) and illustrated by Figure 1.1. before (the conceptual framework), the essential and fundamental professional needs of school principals are categorized into fifteen areas, namely as follows:

- i. Designing, implementing, and evaluating curriculum
- ii. Understanding measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies
- iii. Creating school as a learning organization
- iv. Understanding students' development and learning
- v. Building team commitment
- vi. Team work skills
- vii. Problem solving

- viii. Building shared decision-making
- ix. Research knowledge skills
- x. ICT utilization
- xi. Defining the core values and beliefs of education
- xii. Communicating effectively
- xiii. Setting goals and determining outcomes
- xiv. Building community involvement
- xv. Resolving conflicts (Building consensus and negotiating leadership capacity)

Instructional Leadership: Scholars and researchers have identified many leadership styles that exist in schools, such as political leadership, cultural leadership, learning-centered leadership, strategic leadership, and sustainable leadership. Of the many styles, the most pertinent to school performance as an educational institution is instructional leadership, which deals with the core business of schools in instruction, learning and literacy, curriculum, and co-curriculum. High job performance of teachers and high academic achievement of students are indicators effective instructional leadership. In this study, there are ten essential areas of instructional leadership as enumerated in the first ten of the list of professional needs above—also as illustrated in Figure 1.1 before.

Transformational Leadership: In the context of educational reforms in Oman, transformational leadership refers to a leadership style among school principals that

seek to implement and materialize educational policies outlined by the Ministry of Education, in juxtaposition of issues and challenges faced by school principals. In this study, transformational leadership can be seen in five areas of professional development needs analysis—the last five needs in the conceptual framework illustrated by Figure 1.1 before. This leadership can also be observed in case study interview sessions with six principals regarding issues and challenges they faced and strategic initiatives they made in implementing education reforms in Oman. A transformational leader usually focuses on transforming others to help each other, to look out for each other, to be encouraging and harmonious, and to look out for the organization as a whole.

Education Reforms: Education reforms are a composition of education policies in a master plan developed in 1995 by the Ministry of Education of Oman in the effort to modernize schools and upgrade the education standard of Oman on par with global trends and benchmarks. Education reforms involve changes to school structure, curriculum content, teacher professionalism, school leadership and management, ICT utilization, and learning assessment. Training and development programs for officers, principals, and teachers are deemed necessary for implementing the education policies successfully. In this study, the interview sessions during case study visits would reveal recommendations by principals for improving the state of reform initiatives.

Basic Education: As of 1995, the Ministry of Education revamped the general education structure and curriculum which traditionally segregated education into two levels, namely primary education and secondary education, and consequently adopted the basic education structure and curriculum. Basic education has two Cycles, namely Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. Cycle 1 education structure and curriculum is for pupils in the

age-group of 6-9 years old, while Cycle 2 is for the age-group 10-15 years old. Students then after pursue their pro-basic education (matriculation level) for another two years before entering the university. As a note, school principals for Cycle 1 are predominantly women, while for Cycle 2 the principals are of two genders, i.e. male principals for boy schools and female principals for girl schools.

1.10 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the studies done in the area of professional development needs of school leaders, especially in the context reforms and changes in education. Educational reforms in Oman require principals to play the roles of an instructional leader, transformational leader, curriculum innovator, professional evaluator, and student developer. Thus, these place new needs in the professional development of principals. Salazar's model (2002) of professional development needs of school principals seem to be the most appropriate and pertinent model for conducting this study in Oman. The model is supported by studies on educational change and by relevant theories, such as systems theory, path-goal theory, and action theory of school change. In addition, the chapter has also explained the conceptual framework, statement of the problem, and the purpose of the research.

Apart from needs analysis, part of this study attempts to expose the initiatives done by school principals in implementing reformative policies at the school level. This study will highlight the issue and challenges faced by principals in school leadership and management in the context of reform in Oman, and also it will forward some tangible recommendations by principals for improving the effectiveness of reformative policy implementation and the quality of education in Oman.

