UNDERSTANDING SAUDI ARABIA PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PRACTICES OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT THROUGH THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

MAMDOUH MOUSA ALANAZI

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

2017

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by

MAMDOUH MOUSA ALANAZI

Thesis submitted in fullfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

May 2017

DEDICATION

To

My Late Father:

Mousa Jeribia' Alanazi, who had raised me up and provide me with education,

May Allah have mercy on him.

My Mother:

Rafeah Khalaf, who had never missed making *dua* for my continued success in this

life.

My Brothers:

Soltan, Mosaad, Saud and Majed

My Wife:

Hissah, for her patience and always giving moral support in my work and study, and

for taking care of the family while I am away from home.

My Children:

Emad, Leen, and Mousa, for their understanding and pray that I will finally complete

the study. I hope this success will motivate them in future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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MEMAHAMI AMALAN PENTAKSIRAN PORTFOLIO GURU SEKOLAH RENDAH SAUDI ARABIA MELALUI TEORI TINGKAH LAKU TERANCANG

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini adalah bertujuan untuk memahami hasrat guru sekolah rendah di Arab Saudi menggunakan pentaksiran portfolio (PA – Portfolio Assessment) sebagai pentaksiran formatif dalam pengajaran mereka, menerusi Teori Tingkah laku Dirancang (TPB – Theory of Planned Behavior). Dalam kajian, keupayaan konstruk-konstruk dalam model TPB (sikap afektif [AA- Affective Attitude], sikap istrumental [IA – Instrumental Attitude], norma subjektif [SN – Subjective Norm], keupayaan kawalan [CA - Controllability] dan efikasi kendiri [SE – Self-Efficacy] untuk meramalkan hasrat guru menggunakan PA. Kajian ini juga melihat kepentingan ciri-ciri demografi dan peribadi guru - umur, pengalaman kerja, mata pelajaran yang diajar dan tahap gred yang (grade level) diajar – ke atas penggunaan sebenar dan hasrat untuk menggunakan PA sebagai sebahagian daripada pengajaran mereka. Kajian ini melibatkan sampel bertujuan seramai 291 guru yang mengajar di sepuluh buah sekolah rendah di Al-Qurayaat, ibu negeri Wilayah Qurayaat, Arab Saudi. Satu tinjauan menggunakan "Soaalselidik Konsepsi dan Amalan Penilaian Portfolio Guru" telah ditadbirkan kepada guru berkenaan, diikuti dengan temuduga dengan 29 orang daripada mereka, tentang isu dan masalah yang mereka hadapi dalam mengamalkan penaksiaran portfolio. Secara umum, penggunaan PA tidak berada pada tahap yang tinggi dalam kalangan guru-guru sekolah rendah yang dikaji, dan tidak terdapat perbezaan penggunaan PA berdasarkan umur, pengalaman mengajar, dan tahap gred

yang diajar guru. Walau bagaimanapun, guru-guru Bahasa didapati menggunakan PA pada tahap yang lebih tinggi berbanding dengan guru-guru mata pelajaran lain. Tetapi, apa yang menarik ialah guru Sains/ Matematik dan guru Sains Sosial mempunyai hasrat yang lebih tinggi untuk menggunakan PA berbanding guru Bahasa. Penggunaan PA didapati kurang korelasi dengan hasrat guru menggunakan PA, ini menunjukkan bahawa guru-guru mempunyai hasrat yang besar untuk menggunakan PA tetapi sederhana dari segi tahap penggunaan PA. Guru-guru yang lebih muda, dan guru-guru yang mengajar di tahap gred yang lebih rendah mempunyai hasrat yang lebih tinggi untuk menggunakan PA. Umumnya, didapati guru memilikki hasrat untuk menggunakan PA apabila mereka rasa memerlukan, mempunyai sikap afektif ke arah menggalakkan penggunaan PA, agak dipengaruhi oleh norma-norma sosial, dan melihat diri mereka mempunyai efikasi kendiri untuk menggunakan PA. Mengenai konstruk-konstruk TPB, didapati AA, AI, SN, dan SE adalah peramal hasrat untuk menggunakan PA yang signifikan. Model ini menjelaskan 71 peratus daripada varians dalam hasrat. Sikap afektif adalah peramal TPB yang paling kukuh dalam model ini, diikuti oleh SE, SN dan IA. Walau bagaimanapun, pembolehubah CA tidak menyumbang secara ketara kepada model TPB ini. Hasil temu bual dengan guru-guru menunjukkan bahawa guru mempunyai sikap negatif terhadap penggunaan PA, dan membangkitkan isu-isu berkaitan kesukaran yang dihadapi dan masa terhad dalam penggunaan PA. Mereka juga melahirkan kebimbangan tentang manfaat sebenar PA serta mereka tidak mempunyai pengetahuan dan kemahiran untuk menggunakan PA. Bagi sesetengah guru di Arab Saudi, PA dianggap sebagai pendekatan pentaksiran yang berunsur asing yang diperkenalkan kepada sistem pendidikan, sebagai alasan

tentangan mereka. Kesimpulannya, didapati guru-guru sekolah rendah di Arab Saudi mempunyai hasrat untuk menggunakan PA, walaupun masa kini penggunaan PA masih pada tahap sederhana. Hasrat mereka menggunakan PA sebahagian besar dipengaruhi khususnya oleh sikap afektif, efikasi kendiri, dan norma subjektif berkaitan penggunaan PA.

UNDERSTANDING SAUDI ARABIA PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PRACTICES OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT THROUGH THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

ABSTRACT

The main focus of this study was on Saudi Arabia primary school teachers' use of portfolio assessment and to employ the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to understand Saudi Arabia primary school teachers' intention to use portfolio assessment (PA) as a formative assessment in their teaching. The study first investigated the significance of teachers' demographic and personal and work characteristics—age, work experience, subject matter taught and grade level taught—as they relate to the actual use and intention to use PA as part of their teaching. Then the study explored the capability of the constructs within TPB model (affective attitude [AA], instrumental attitude [IA], subjective norm [SN], controllability [CA] and self-efficacy [SE]) to predict teachers' intention to utilize PA. A convergent parallel mixed methods design was employed, and this study involves a purposive sample of 291 teachers teaching in ten primary schools in Al-Qurayaat, the capital city of Qurayaat Region, Saudi Arabia. A questionnaire on "Teacher's Conceptions and Practices of Portfolio Assessment Questionnaires" was administered to the teachers, followed by interviews with 29 selected teachers on issues and problems they had in practicing PA. In general, use of PA was not at a high level among the primary school teachers being studied, and there was no difference in teachers' use of PA based on age, teaching experience, and grade level taught. However, Language teachers were found to use PA to a higher extent compared to teachers of other subjects. Interestingly, Science/Mathematics and

Social science teachers have higher intention to use PA compared to Language teachers. Teachers' use of PA was less correlated to teachers' intention to use PA, indicating that teachers have a larger intent to use PA but a moderate level of PA use. Younger teachers and teachers teaching at lower grades have higher intention to use PA. Teachers generally have intention to use PA when they need, have favorable affective and instrumental attitudes toward the use of PA, were somewhat influenced by social norms, and perceived themselves to have efficacy for using PA. For measures of TPB, AA, AI, SN, and SE were significant predictors of intention to use PA. The model explained 71 percent of the variance in intention. Affective attitude was the strongest TPB predictor for the model, followed by SE, SN and IA. However, the CA variable did not significantly contribute to the TPB model. Interviews with the teachers show that teachers have negative attitude toward use of PA, and they raised the issues of having difficulties and facing time limitation in using PA. They were also concern with the actual benefits of PA and not having knowledge and skills to use PA. To some teachers in Saudi Arabia, PA is considered a foreign new approach toward assessment introduced to the education system, as a reason of resistance. In conclusion, primary school teachers in Saudi Arabia hve the intention to use PA, although they use PA moderately. Their intention to use PA was due to their attitude, self-efficacy and subjective norms.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study is looking into the practice of assessment among primary school teachers in Saudi Arabia. The focus of the research is on examining varying school teacher practices of formative assessment within the "assessment for learning" change efforts introduced by the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia back in 2007. Specifically, this study seeks to understand differences in intensity of teacher practices with regard to the use of portfolio assessment in their teaching as a form of formative assessment, and looking into the possible reasons for their actions, in terms of internal and external factors, and from within and without. It is hoped that this study will help further improve quality of education through formative assessment practices by school teachers in the country.

In this chapter, the researcher will introduce the readers to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its system of education, before stating the research problem, purpose, questions and hypotheses.

1.2 Background of the Study

1.2.1 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is located in the center of Arabian Peninsula (see the map of Saudi Arabia in Appendix A). Compared to the other countries, Saudi Arabia is relatively a big country in the peninsular with a total land area of 868,730 square miles with a population of 27 million people. A major part of its land is

desert, thus most of the population (77 %) lives in urban areas, while only 23 percent

of the citizens inhabit the rural areas. The kingdom shares borders with neighboring

countries on the north - Kuwait, Iraq, and Jordan; on the east are Persian Gulf, Qatar,

and the United Arab Emirates; and Oman and Yemen are on the south side; while the

Red Sea run on the West separating the country from the African continent. The

country has been ruled by the Saud family since the year 1500, before the Ottomans

Empire took control of the region in the same century. In 1891, after the Ottomans

empire left, the area later became the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 (Al-

Abdulkareem, nd).

Previously, the country was administratively divided into five major

'*wilayah*'s, named as the Wilayah of Eastern, Western, Northern, Southern, and

Central. At present, Saudi Arabia has 14 smaller administrative regions, each with its

own capital:

Table 1-1   Regions and Capitals in Saudi Arabia

No.	Region	Capital
1.	Al-Baha	Albaha
2.	Al-Jouf	Sikaka
3.	Asir	Abha
4.	Eastern	Dammam
5.	Al-Qurayyat,	Al-Qurayyat
6.	Jizan,	Jizan
7.	Madinah	Madinah*
8.	Makkah	Makkah*
9.	Najran	Najran
10.	Northern Border	Ara'ar
11.	Qasim	Buraidah
12.	Qirayyat	Qirayyat
13.	Riyadh	Riyadh**
14.	Tabouk	Tabouk

*Holy City   **Main Capital

The Eastern Region, which includes a wide expanse of empty desert, is the

largest region, with a population of more than three million. But, this region holds

important economic status for its oil fields and seaports, as well as the industrial city of Jubail. The major cities in the Eastern Province are Al-Dhahran, Al-Hoffuf, Al-Khobar, and Al-Dammam.

Prior to the discovery of oil in 1938, Saudi citizens were poor and illiterate (Mansour, 1988). But within forty years after the oil discovery, the country developed fast in most areas of life, especially through providing education to the people. Today, Saudi Arabia is one of the richest and most industrialized countries in the Gulf country region. Using oil revenues, they were able to establish schools and colleges in every *wilayah*. Through a series of five-year plans, the country is striving hard to meet challenges to become a developing country. One way is by reducing illiteracy, but more importantly is by improving education at all levels in all fields (Mansour, 1988).

Saudi Arabia spend about 17% of public expenditure on education, which is the highest percentage of its total spending every year – the country has been ranked seventh in the world for its high public spending on education (http://thelearningcurve.pearson.com/country-profiles/saudi-arabia). For the year 2016, the government allocated a sum of 191 billion Saudi Riyals for education. The Saudi government had placed the trust that through education it can guarantee economic and social well-being of the people in the future, especially when its revenues from non-renewable oil can no longer sustain as the sole national wealth for the country.

1.2.2   Education Development in Saudi Arabia

The Saudi Arabia educational policy are aimed to make provision of education to people more efficient and able to meet religious, economic and social

needs of the country, as well as to eradicate illiteracy among Saudi adults. The implementation of formal and well-structured education system in the Saudi Arabia started in 1925, when King Abdul Aziz established the Directorate of Education in charge of the development of education of the country (Ministry of Education, 1992). But during those times in 1920s through 1940s the responsibilities of the directorate were only to register and to monitor very few schools that were run by private entities, as there were still no public school in the country. In 1947, there were only 65 schools in the country, attended by nearly 10,000 registered students. During those years schools were attended only by male students. In 1951, the Ministry of Education was formed to replace the Directorate General of Education (Al-Salloom and Al-Makky, 1994). Following the establishment the Ministry, the country had opened up more schools and consequently had opened up greater educational opportunities to more people (Al-Zarah, 2008).
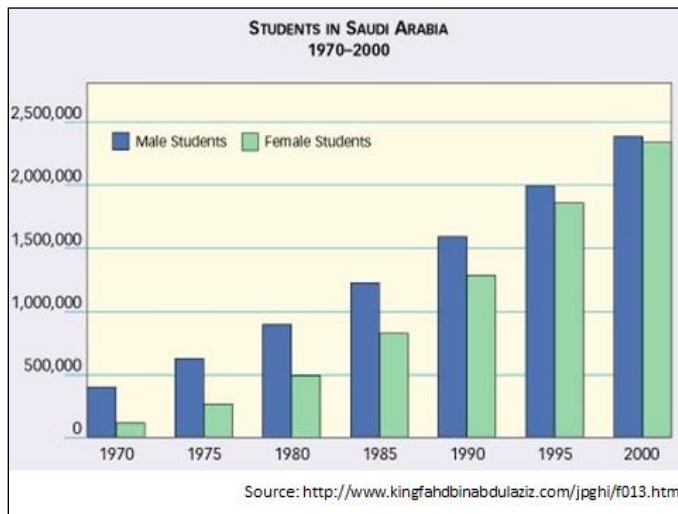
Figure 1.1   Male and Female Students Enrolment in Schools

Saudi Arabia practices segregation of education for male and female students in all levels of school education, until today. Since in the early years its education policy in was designed to be a dual system of based on gender, where male and

female students went to separate schools (El-Sanabary, 1994). Education opportunity for female students only started in 1960. Since then, the number of female students in schools increased every year, and today the number almost match the male students, as shown in Figure 1.1 below. Although the policy of separated schools for male and female is maintained, the students study almost the same curriculum.

The governing of education in Saudi is a centralized national system. All the policies regarding the educational in the counry were discussed and decided by the rulers of the King Saud family in the Council of Ministers (Elyas, 2008). Under the council, several government agencies are involved in planning, administrating and implementing the overall educational policy at all levels in Saudi Arabia. At the top level is the Ministry of Education, which sets the overall standards for the country's educational system covering both public and private education, including special education, preschool education and education for girls. Next is the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVT), a government agency which plans, coordinates and implements manpower development for the country. The agency also supervises all related training centers and institutes for technical and vocational skills. Third is the Ministry of Higher Education (established in 1975) which is responsible to implement higher education policies in the country. There are nearly 34 universities and colleges throughout the nation (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2006).

Public school in Saudi Arabia consists of four stages or cycles of general education: a 1-year preschool, a 6-year elementary or primary, a 3-year intermediate, and a 3-year secondary cycle. Excluding preschool, the 6-3-3 system had been practiced in agreement with other member countries of the Arab League since 1958. There are several grades in each stage. Elementary education (Grade 1 to Grade 6) is

for children of age level 6 to 12 years old, which leads to the General Elementary Education Certificate. The Intermediate Education (Grade 7 to Grade 9) is for those aged 12 to15 and it leads to the Intermediate School Certificate, which is a prerequisite for entering secondary school. General Secondary School Education (Grade 10 to Grade 12) is for those at age level of 15 to18 and which leads to high school diploma called *Tawjihiyah*. The examination for the high school diploma is a centralized examination controlled by the Ministry of Education.

After finishing the intermediate level, students have a choice of whether to go to the general secondary schools, or to the technical and vocational schools. In general secondary schools, students learn a common curriculum during the first year. In the second and third year, based on their first year performance, students are divided into one of the three tracks: (a) Natural Science, (b) Administration & Social Science, and (c) Shariah & Arabic Studies. Only students who perform with a score of 60% and above in their first year may choose to go to Natural Science track. Those who score less than 60% must choose either Administration & Social Science or Shariah & Arabic Studies tracks (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2006).

For students who opt for technical and vocational education after earning Intermediate School Certificate, they will enter either industrial schools, commercial schools, or agricultural schools. In these type of schools, they will follow three-year programs that lead to the Secondary Industrial School Diploma, the Secondary Commercial School Diploma or the Secondary Agricultural School Diploma. On the other hand, vocational education are offered by Technical Assistant Institutes, whereby students will attend two-year vocational programs such as architectural drawing, construction supervision, health supervision, road supervision, surveying and water supervision, which lead to Certificate of Technical Assistant Institute.

There are also Health Institutes and Nursing Schools that offer three-year programs that lead to the Health Institute Diploma or the Certificate of Technical Nursing (http://www.sacm.org/Educat-ion.aspx).

Generally for the public school system, the academic year is divided into two semesters at all primary, intermediate and secondary school levels. At each grade level, the curriculum is spread out between the two semesters and there are two summative internal examinations at the end of each semester. The examinations at all levels are set internally by the school, except for the second semester in the final year of secondary school, whereby the examination is designed by Ministry of Education for all schools throughout the kingdom (Al-Hakel, 1994). Students' performance and grades are decided by the results of the end-of-semester examinations.

1.2.3   Educational Reform in Saudi Arabia

International comparisons of student performance in schools draw attention of Saudi government to improve its quality of education. In 2003, Saudi Arabia participated for the first time in the Third International Mathematics & Science Study (TIMSS), a study which run a comprehensive test that evaluate and compare the math and science skills of students internationally. The results of the 2003 TIMMS reported that the Kingdom's national average in Mathematics was below than that of many countries in the Arab region, and other participation nations (Mullis et al., 2004). This results which signal its education quality in comparison to other countries, prompt Saudi educational policy makers to initiate on reforms for improvement of the state of education in the country (Wiseman, Sadaawi & Alromi, 2008).

In 2007, the Saudi government implemented the USD293 million "King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Public Education Development Project", focusing on developing public education in the country. Under this project, the Ministry of Education formulated more than 30 initiatives to improve education in the country, which involves curriculum development, teacher professional development, and enhancing education environment and emphasis on school extra-curricular activities (Ministry of Education, 2007). Under this project, existing curriculum are being reviewed at all levels (kindergarten to secondary levels) and standards are integrated into the renewed curriculum, which necessitate new curricular materials to be developed, in print and digital electronic forms.

These reform initiatives call for change of practices by school administrators and teachers in their teaching approach and methods, including assessment of student learning. In many countries, existing practices became the stumbling block for teachers to change, especially in relation to learning assessment. For many decades, public school education in Saudi Arabia had been described as examination-oriented, whereby at each grade level, students have to pass the examinations in order to move to the next grade. Assessment of learning in the forms of written examinations has been and still as a major assessment tool in schools (AlSadan, 2000:150).

Acknowledging the problem, the Ministry of Education had been searching for alternative methods of assessment that would enhance the quality of learning and education, and wanted schools to less relying on written examinations as a form of assessment of learning. In 1998, the Ministry of Education began reforming assessment practices in schools, replacing traditional practices with alternative assessment practices, which was implemented in two phases. The first phase involved lower primary schools (Grade 1, 2 and 3). By 1999, all lower primary

schools have implemented continuous assessment. In phase two which started in 2007, CA was extended to upper primary schools from Grade 4 to Grade 6 in 2009 (Alsadawi, 2007). In 1998 the Ministry of Education introduced a new form of assessment into its primary education, called formative assessment or continuous assessment. By the year 1999, the traditional assessment approach was replaced by continuous assessment for the first three grades (Grade 1, 2 and 3) of the primary schools.

A bylaw was introduced by the Higher Committee/Council for Education Policy to push for the integration of continuous assessment into the education system. As a top-down approach, the new assessment was introduced to the teachers after a short trial period involving certain selected schools. When it started in 1998, the implementation involved only the mastery subjects (Arabic Language and Islamic Knowledge). After almost 10 years, the ministry managed to complete the efforts to implement continuous assessment to the whole cycle of primary school levels.

1.3   Statement of the Problem

However, since its introduction in 1998, teachers' receptivity to the practice of as a formative assessment has not been totally positive. Although not many researches have looked into the extent teachers in Saudi Arabia practice portfolio assessment as part of FA in their teaching, few studies had raised issues of teachers' reluctance to the portfolio assessment practice. Not all primary teachers were clear about the policy of the new assessment, or have a complete knowledge of the aim of assessment and the purpose behind its implementation. Teachers mention about difficulty in following the new assessment system, and many teachers rely on tests as the main tool to assess their students (Alafaleq, M. and Fan, L. 2014). It was also

mentioned by Alsadawi (2007) in his study on the effects of the performance-based assessment training, that implementation of formative assessment was attempted without proper teacher training on the principles behind the new form of assessment, and without clear instructions on its applications. Although guidelines on how to conduct formative assessment in each subject were provided, it was not able to shift the teachers' focus away from the use of traditional tests, and teachers face difficulties in assessing students as directed in the guidelines.

Shifting from summative assessment to formative assessment was also being practiced in other countries, particularly in the UK after 1998, following two reports by Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam: *Inside the Black Box* in 1998 and *Beyond the Black Box* in 1999, when the concept of "assessment for learning" started to appear (DfES, 2003). This was followed by other countries like Australia, Hong Kong in 2001 (Curriculum Development Council, 2001), and Singapore in 2009 (PERI Report, 2009), to name a few. In fact many countries in Europe and Asia have follow implementing formative assessment under different names, such as school-based assessment, teacher-based assessment, holistic assessment, continuous assessment, etc. As an example, Malaysia started to implement its school-based assessment in 2011 (Website of Ministry of Education, Malaysia, 2016).

Implementation of FA was also met with challenges in other countries like in Hong Kong, Singapore and even in the UK, especially in early stage of implementation. In Hong Kong, the new approaches to assessment at the start showed substantial resistance from teachers, whom had a tendency to have difficulty in conforming to the new way of assessment in practice (Berry & Adamson, 2012). Despite many resources have been deployed, the Hong Kong government has not

seen many changes in the assessment practices, and learning in many schools is still driven by examination (Berry, 2011).

In Singapore, in its nationwide shift to adopt formative assessment, various contextual factors in its educational social system, such as the pressure imposed by the tradition of exam-oriented demands and lack of teacher training and support from school administrators make it difficult for teachers to actualize formative assessment (Ratnam-Lim & Tan, 2015). Even in the UK, specifically England where formative assessment had been seriously considered for practice, it remains at the periphery of practice in schools due to the dominance of tests and examinations, and the standard program introduced by the government.

At present, few studies, if any, have provided insights on the enactment of portfolio assessment practices in Saudi Arabia. Although there are several writings published and presented about formative assessment, there are not many researches that address implementation of formative assessment in Saudi Arabia, and much less about portfolio assessment. Almost all information that addresses the subject matter is located in many university theses. For example, a Masters' thesis by Altarif (2010) focus on teachers concerns and practices of continuous assessment implementation in Saudi Arabia which is a study related closely with the present study, and found that teachers have concern at the lowest level (Information) of concern, and at the lowest level of practices with regard to the use of continuous assessment. Another Masters' thesis is by Alsehri (2008), is a qualitative study teachers' attitudes toward formative assessment and feedback in teaching English. A Phd thesis by AbdelWahab (2002) was on teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of self-assessment portfolio, within English classes in Saudi Arabia, which saw that teachers endorse the use of formative assessment in their teaching. Another Phd thesis by Al-Sadaawi (2007)

investigates on the use of performance-based assessment in teaching science in primary school Saudi, in which he found that teachers highlighted the issues of time consuming, amount of extra work needed, difficulties in assessing student, and that the new assessment did not fit into the current Saudi school environment. The most influential and widely cited writing about formative assessment in Saudi Arabia was by Alsadan (2000), in which he describes the status of assessment in Primary Schools. According to Alsadan, even in continuous assessment practices, written test becomes the most commonly favored tool among teachers, as teachers are already accustomed to the type of assessment, which are written based on textbooks.

Abdelwahab (2007) called the formative assessment introduced in Saudi education as a "non-indigenous (Westernized) assessment methodology", which poses difficulties for teachers to conceptualize its philosophy and adopt the approach in their teaching. According to Brown (2004), without addressing teachers' conceptions, implementation of formative assessment might not necessarily reach its objectives. Therefore there is a need to understand the cognitive factors that promote or inhibit primary school teachers in Saudi Arabia to employ portfolio assessment in their teaching. Do teachers in Saudi have a positive inclination toward formative/portfolio assessment? These factors involve their beliefs and attitudes about their action or behavior with regard to portfolio assessment, based on the theory of planned behavior by Azjen (1991).

The TPB is a social psychological theory that has been widely accepted to explain educational problems, with regard to the question why individuals as a group use or perform certain practice or behave in a certain way, for example use of ICT in teaching. With regard to formative assessment, Yan & Cheng (2015) and Yan (2014) had used the Theory of Planned Behavior as the framework to understand teachers'

practices with regard to formative assessment in the context of Hong Kong. According to Azjen (1991), a central factor that influences behavior is people's intention to perform the behavior. Intention is assumed representing the motivation to execute the behavior, and their plans and hopes that they will do again in future. The stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the more likely the behavior would be, providing that the behavior is under the person's volition control – the person is willing and have a choice of performing or not performing the behavior. When a person has intention to perform a certain behavior, the only factors that will stop him/her is the opportunities and resources available to perform the behavior, such as money, time, encouragement from surrounding people etc.

The theory of planned behavior also acknowledge the role of background factors that may influence people's behavioral, normative and control beliefs, the beliefs that determine their attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. Intentions and behaviors influence indirectly on intentions and behavior through the proximal factors. These factors involved are of personal nature and demographic variables such as age, gender, education level, subjects taught, qualifications, urban or rural; some are internal factors, others are external to the persons involved. However, these factors are not included as part of TPB model. The purpose is just to understand demographic differences in portfolio assessment practices, for future planning and interventions.

In this study, the main purpose in to understand teachers' practices of portfolio assessment among SAUDI ARABIA primary school teachers, looking into factors that contribute to teachers' intention to use portfolio assessment in their teaching, from the perspective of theory of planned behavior. But, before looking into the issue, this study will first look into the level of portfolio assessment being

practiced, and the intention to practice PA, to see if the background factors explained by Azjen (1991) indirectly influence teachers intentions and behavior with regard to portfolio assessment practices.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The research objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the extent of use, and intention to use portfolio assessment by teachers in primary schools in Saudi Arabia context, and to seek explanations on them.

2. To examine whether the intention to use portfolio assessment is influenced by the factors of teachers' attitudes and beliefs related to portfolio assessment practice among Saudi Arabia primary school teachers.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions are designed to guide the study:

Research Question 1. To what extent does teachers' use of Portfolio Assessment (PA) differ across the following groups?

a.   Age.

b.   Academic qualifications.

c.   Teaching experience.

d.   Main subject taught.

e.   Grades taught.

Research Question 2. To what extent does teachers' intention to use portfolio assessment differ across the following groups?

a.   Age.

b.   Academic qualifications.

> c.   Teaching experience.

> d.   Main subject taught.

> e.   Grades taught.

Research Question 3. To what extent does teachers' use of portfolio assessment correlate with teachers' intent to use portfolio assessment?

Research Question 4. To what extent the following factors predict teachers' intention to use portfolio assessment?

> a.   teachers' affective attitude toward portfolio assessment

> b.   teachers' instrumental attitude toward portfolio assessment

> c.   teachers' subjective norm about using portfolio assessment

> d.   teachers' controllability of using portfolio assessment

> e.   teachers' affective self-efficacy of using portfolio assessment

Research Question 5. What are the possible issues, problems faced by teachers in their use of PA, and their suggestions for future improvements?

1.6   Significance of the Study

Student learning involves evaluation and assessment, particularly formative assessment. This idea provides a rationale for the primary focus of the present inquiry on the use of portfolios as an evaluation and formative assessment practice in Saudi primary school contexts. Therefore, this study aims to comprehend the use of portfolios in primary school classes, which could provide a significant contribution to our understanding of teaching and learning processes in schools.

The study approach will allow the researcher to investigate the reactions of the primary school teachers to the introduction of an innovative type of assessment in the curriculum. The Saudi educational system has a tradition of rote learning and

standardized testing, which leads to negative effects on student learning. Thus, there is a need to explore alternative approaches in the primary school assessment system in Saudi Arabian context. The results of this study will be relevant in determining whether learning via portfolio assessment will be a valuable alternative in formal testing in Saudi Arabia.

1.7   Assumption of the Study

To carry out this study, it is assumed that teachers in Saudi Arabia primary schools have been using portfolio assessment as part of teaching and learning process, as a tool to enhance student learning. This type of assessment is under the reform effort by the Ministry of Education, introduced in 1998 and completed in 2007 for all grade levels (Grade 1 to Grade 6) in Primary schools in efforts to employ formative assessment to replace the traditional year-end examinations. Therefore, teachers involved as participants in this study are assumed to have experience in portfolio assessment practices in schools, and understood the concept of PA, which is the main focus of this study.

1.8   Limitations

The study was conducted in public primary schools in the city of Al-Qurayyat during the 2014−2015 academic year. The schools are under the governance of the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia, which agrees to the context of this study with regard to the use of portfolio assessment by teachers in the participating primary schools. However, the choice of schools and teachers were made through purposive sampling, by ensuring that the schools and the respondents involved met the purpose of the study. The design of the study did not include students as samples of the study,

because the intention is to examine teachers on their use of portfolio, who are teaching at the time of study being carried out.

1.9   Delimitation

The researcher selected teachers from 10 primary schools in the city of Al-Qurayyat; thus, the findings cannot be generalized to other primary schools in Saudi Arabia or schools in other regions. However, the study will permit the application of the findings to other primary schools in the country that share the same contexts with the schools under study.

1.10   Definition of Terms

The following terms are operationally defined to provide the reader the necessary background to comprehend their use in the present study:

Portfolio Assessment. Portfolio assessment refers to a formative and continuous assessment activities undertaken by teachers in their daily teaching and learning process, of a collection of student work as evidence of learning, which is measured against predetermined scoring criteria, in the form of scoring guides, rubrics, check lists, or rating scales (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996). In Saudi Arabia primary schools, a student portfolio shall contain work performed by student such as laboratory reports demonstrating an understanding of science or any reports for other subjects, writing samples that illustrate abilities in writing in Arabic and English, exercise showing solutions to mathematic problems, homework, tests/quizzes/examination papers (with scores) taken by students, or teacher observations of students performance and participation in class, such as oral scores on Arabic language.

Portfolio assessment is carried out continuously throughout the year. Feedbacks are given to student after each cycle of assessment. Student scores are updated, and teachers will oversee student progress from the beginning to the end of year.

Primary school, refers to the compulsory elementary level schools for students from age six to twelve, from Grade 1 to Grade 6. There are separate schools for boys and girls in Saudi Arabia. In this study, primary schools refer only to the boys schools. This is due to the researcher's gender being a male, which allow him more conveniently to go to boys' school, compared to girls' schools.

1.11   Summary

This chapter discussed the background and the introduction of the study, i.e. on the use of portfolio assessment by primary school teachers in KSA, as after formative and continuous assessment was introduced as part of education reform by its Ministry of Education to replace the traditional type of assessment. The chapter also presented the introduction to Saudi Arabia, which comprised the history of Saudi Arabia with particular reference to the educational system and the development of education. Other topics were also discussed in this chapter, including the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, purpose and significance of the study, basic assumptions, limitations, delimitation, and definition of terms.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1   Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the practice of portfolios assessment by primary school's teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The researcher investigates the extent to which teachers' use of portfolio assessment (PA) and teacher's intention to use portfolio assessment differ across the teacher's age, academic qualifications, teaching experience, and the main subject and grade level taught by the teachers, and the relationship between teachers PA practices and their intentions to use PA. Further, based on the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1991), the researcher investigates the extent to which teachers' affective attitude toward PA, teachers' instrumental attitude toward PA, teachers' subjective norm about using PA, teachers' controllability of using PA, and teachers' affective self-efficacy of using portfolio assessment predict their intention to use PA. This chapter contains a review of literature related to the variables involved in the study. It begin by discussing about assessment in relation to learning, the types of formative and summative assessment, portfolio assessment as a formative assessment. The theoretical framework of Theory of Planned Behavior is also discussed before proposing the conceptual framework of the study.

2.2   Role of Assessment in Learning

The word 'assessment' denotes those activities carry out by teachers and by the students in assessing student learning, and to gather information on student