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To cite this article: Sue L. T. McGregor & Amani K. Hamdan Alghamdi (2022) Women's role in nation building: socialising Saudi female preservice teachers into leadership roles, School Leadership & Management, 42:5, 520-542, DOI: [10.1080/13632434.2022.2137125](https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2022.2137125)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2022.2137125>



Published online: 28 Oct 2022.



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Women's role in nation building: socialising Saudi female preservice teachers into leadership roles

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about socialising Saudi female preservice teachers (PSTs) while they are attending university into the role of educational leadership. This leadership role should be broadened to include nation building per the tenets of Saudi Arabia's national development plan, *Vision 2030*. After discussing nation building and profiling the Saudi educational context (including educational reform initiatives), and after explaining Islamic understandings of educational leadership (values and traditions), an overview of the intentionally planned professional socialisation process is presented. The paper culminates in ideas around what an aligned curriculum might contain so Saudi female PSTs are exposed to educational leadership for nation building while at university. With intentional socialisation into this role, upon graduation, they should be more inclined to assume a role in nation building by (a) influencing the educational sector, players, and policies to benefit the nation and (b) convincing other sectors of the value of women and the education sector in ensuring an ambitious nation. Insights apply to other nations engaged in nation building including Arab nations.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 22 March 2022
Accepted 12 October 2022

KEYWORDS

Nation building; educational leadership; professional socialisation process; teacher education curriculum; Saudi female preservice teachers

Introduction

Educational leadership (also called school leadership) usually concerns leadership within a private or public school. It pertains to training people to be principals and administrators who then lead teachers to ensure high student academic achievement. It often involves teaching leaders how to be effective and efficient managers, including leaders in higher education (Bush 2020). This paper pushes this idea even further by taking a broad perspective of leadership. It links educational leadership in higher education with *nation building*.

As a caveat, this paper is about educational leadership and not leadership education. The latter pertain to education about how to be a leader in *any* context. It 'builds on students' experiences by adding theoretical, conceptual,

application, and experiential knowledge [so they can] learn what leadership is about, how leaders lead, and how to become a leader regardless of the context' (Lumpkin and Achen 2019, 95–96).

Educational leadership is focused on leading *specifically* in educational contexts whether in schools or higher education institutions, the political arena, the educational corporate sector, or nongovernment agencies. Human development (a key focus of educational leadership) entails instilling leadership traits so educators can lead the education system at the micro, meso, and macro levels (Starratt 2011). Educational leadership is thus about 'getting the most out of people, getting them to rise above self-serving behaviours to embrace collective ... goals' (Starratt 2011, vii) such as nation building.

In that spirit, this paper is about intentionally socialising Saudi female preservice teachers (PSTs) attending university into the role of educational leadership. More important, this leadership role is broadened to include nation building per the tenets of Saudi Arabia's recent national development plan (*Vision 2030*) (KSA 2016). KSA is of interest because it is undergoing unprecedented rapid educational reform to become a knowledge-based economy (Al-Abdullatif 2019; al-Soudeir 2020). Women educators' leadership in KSA's nation building agenda is key to this process, but their readiness cannot be taken for granted. It must be cultivated. The second author is an Islamic educator who teaches Saudi female PSTs within the monarchy and the Islamic religion. She can personally affirm that, although one of the ultimate goals of Islam is that all citizens contribute to nation building, women teachers in training do not see themselves in this role; hence, we argue herein that they must be intentionally socialised into this role.

For clarification, this paper is not empirical in nature but instead develops a position on this issue in the form of an argumentative essay, which is deemed to be a 'legitimate and important form of [scholarly] discourse' (Kennedy 2007, 39). Compared to evidence-based quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research papers, position papers enable authors to assert a personal statement about an issue and then use a well-reasoned *argument* to convince others that the idea has merit and is worth being pursued. To that end, position papers 'contain background information in the form of data, a literature review, or both, integrated with the authors' opinions and their reasoned arguments' (McGregor 2018, 471).

The rigour of a position paper is thus judged by the strength of and support for the argument rather than by validity, reliability, or trustworthiness per conventional research methodologies (McGregor 2018). Arguments within position papers are judged on their (a) validity and soundness for deductive logic; (b) strength and cogency for inductive logic; and (c) lack of fallaciousness (i.e. must use solid, unflawed reasoning) (McLean 2011; Morrow and Weston 2016). Readers are either convinced and swayed to the researchers' *position*, or they are not.

Because this position paper is about Saudi female PSTs' future involvement in KSA's nation building, the argument begins with a generic discussion of (a) women's role in nation building, (b) educational leadership and nation building and (c) teacher education and nation building. Next comes a nuanced overview of KSA's educational context including Saudi educational reforms around teacher education, and the Islamic concept of educational leadership. After addressing the topics of intentional professional socialisation and identity development, a curriculum that orients Saudi female PSTs to nation building is proposed. This position paper strived to convince readers of the merit of socialising Saudi female PSTs into assuming the role of nation building when they graduate as licensed educators.

Women's role in nation building

In democratic societies, nation building involves the state (elected and bureaucratic) using its power to make changes pursuant to the nation being politically and economically stable and viable in the long term. Efforts can focus on social harmony, economic growth, the provision of public goods (including education), effective communication, and other infrastructures (Deutsch and Folt 1996; Mylonas 2012). Successful nation building culminates in (a) a viable and buoyant national economy; (b) a stable political system; (c) less poverty and more equitable wealth distribution; (d) higher quality education and literacy levels; and (e) improved housing, social welfare, employment opportunities, and health and food security (Eduwen and Osagie-Obazee 2016; McGregor 2019).

Women have a key role to play in nation building as they tend to spearhead improvements bettering families and communities. They urge and facilitate children and young adults to get an education. They help others adjust to new challenges, changes, and realities as nation building unfolds. And their involvement in the workforce can transform a nation's economy and contribute to societal resilience (Gran 2019). Although not well defined, societal resilience 'encompasses the capacities of societies to (1) prepare, prevent and protect before disruption; (2) mitigate, absorb and adapt during disruptions; and (3) restore, recover and transform after disruption' (Wernli et al. 2021, 2).

Unfortunately, women's role in nation building 'often goes unacknowledged' (Gbowee 2016, para. 1). When it is acknowledged, their role tends to be restricted 'by virtue of society's interpretation of power along gender lines. For long, society viewed power, authority and decision-making rites as connoting masculinity and maleness. ... Particularly prevalent was the direct and indirect restriction (fencing-in) of women in matters of ... nation building agendas' (Abioye and Nyawo 2020, 45). Pushing back against this suppression and oppression, Jedy-Agba (2015) asserted that 'given their enormous contributions to [nation building], there can be no meaningful advancement when women

are excluded' (para. 1). Opportunities must afford women the chance 'to contribute their quota in critical sectors of national life' (para. 5). To that end, they need avenues to 'claim their pride of place [to] make invaluable contributions [to nation building]' (para. 7).

Thus, 'nation builders should work to reconcile traditional values with progressive ideas involving women's participation' (RAND Corporation 2008, para. 5). Although focused on post conflict nation building, Benard et al.'s (2008) insights are also valuable. They deduced that women's leadership and involvement (inclusion) in nation building contribute to the stability of the polity, strength of the economy, resilience of society, balancing of traditional and progressive roles, and gender parity. This paper is about preparing female Saudi PSTs for involvement in nation building after graduating. As a caveat, although an Islamic nation, Williamson (2019) maintained that Saudi 'women's involvement in ... nation building does not violate Shari'a and thus women cannot be excluded from making a contribution on Islamic justifications' (85).

Educational leadership and nation building

Educational leadership plays a pivotal role in economic development for nation building opportunities (Smith, Francis, and Harper 2015). By implication, Saudi educators have a leadership key role to play in KSA's nation building process (KSA 2016). There are nearly half a million teachers/education administrators in Saudi Arabia (al-Soudeir 2020; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] 2020). And with a 16.5% increase in the number of schools in KSA since 2015 (Knight Frank 2021), an estimated 183,600 new teachers will be needed within the next eight years (by 2030) (Strategic Gears Management Consultancy 2018).

Supplying this market demand represents a valuable opportunity to train and develop Saudi female PSTs for educational leadership roles upon graduation. There is power in numbers with nearly half of all Saudi teachers being women (al-Soudeir 2020; OECD 2017). KSA's (2016) national development plan portrayed women as a 'great asset' (37) to the nation's future. Furthermore, 'Saudi women's growing access to universities ... is creating a foundation for women to assume future leadership roles' (Al-Lail 2017, para. 2). Nearly three quarters (70%) of Saudi university students are women (Kattan et al. 2016). Although progressive women in Saudi Arabia are still a minority, their engagement in leadership roles is a real possibility in the context of *Vision 2030*, which has been interpreted as supporting women and 'preserving [their] rights to demonstrate [their] success in leadership' (Kattan et al. 2016, 94).

As noted, the approach advanced in this position paper broadens the scope of teachers' leadership work beyond leading a particular school or school board (Bush 2020) to include leading educational development and innovation for the

good of the nation. Arab educators recently affirmed that educational leadership belongs “anywhere” and “everywhere,” in contrast to it being limited to educational settings’ (Sellami et al. 2022, 12). We argue that this educational leadership pertains to nation building.

KSA (2016) is intentionally strengthening the education sector so the nation can transition to a knowledge-based economy, which will require educational leadership. The training of Saudi ‘women leaders should not be isolated from overall development strategies but rather should be integrated into strategic planning efforts [pursuant to nation building]’ (Al-Ahmadi 2011, 164). Fortunately, ‘Saudi women are gradually being empowered in order to fully participate and contribute to the progression and modernisation of the country’ (Alotaibi, Cutting, and Morgan 2017, 35).

The position developed herein is that nation building is a powerful lens through which to view educational leadership. Uljens and Nyman (2013) talked about nation building particularly through educational leadership referring to the ‘simultaneous and continuing professionalisation of education leadership’ (46). They tied educational leadership to the philosophical concept of *Bildung* (German for *education*). *Bildung* ‘emphasises a process of holistic growth, self-realisation of the individual as an entirety, freedom, and self-understanding as well as a sense of social responsibility’ (Hu 2015, 17). The *Bildung* concept is akin to the human development perspective of educational leadership required for nation building (Starratt 2011).

From a national perspective, Sawalhi and Chaaban (2022, 1) affirmed the ‘importance of teachers’ role in educational reform.’ ‘Unique features of national and state policies require [educational] leadership practices beyond the basics’ (Leithwood 2005, 15). Teachers must thus assume greater leadership roles beyond their classroom (Sellami et al. 2022). To that end, PSTs working in a continuously changing educational context (as in KSA) must receive an orientation to and foundation in (a) educational leadership, (b) the vision of their country and (c) the political context within which they will be leading and working (Sawalhi and Chaaban 2022).

Saudi female preservice teachers ‘have to play a central role in the economy of the country, regardless of the existing social constraints. Therefore, they need to be equipped with leadership skills to ensure they are capable of making authentic changes in society [and the nation]’ (Alghamdi and Al-Hattami 2018, 253). Fortunately, the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) is making concerted efforts to engage with and empower women educators (Oxford Business Group 2020).

Teacher education and nation building

‘Teacher education is an indispensable key to national development’ (Eduwen and Osagie-Obazee 2016, 108). That said, aside from the obvious role of teaching children to be responsible adult citizens with the character and mores to

contribute to a nation's strength and viability (Eduwen and Osagie-Obazee 2016; Mamza 2007; Saharan and Sethi 2009), the literature is thin on how to use teacher education programmes to socialise PSTs to influence nation building in general or on what that curriculum might encompass. 'Without the teacher ... the nation cannot be built' (Mamza 2007, 1). But without socialisation into the role of nation building, educators may struggle to contribute.

Thus, a well-designed, functional teacher education programme must provide PSTs with the 'intellectual and professional background [and orientation required to adapt] to any changing situation in the life of [their] country' (Mamza 2007, 2). A good teacher education programme therefore must [help teachers] ... become an effective ... leader [so] national objectives [can be achieved] (Mamza 2007, 2). Obi (2004) concurred that teacher education and nation building go hand in hand. 'The exclusive responsibility of teacher education becomes the cultivation and preparation of teachers for rapid and directed social and economic change in a nation' (112).

Saudi Arabian educational context

Vision 2030 views education as paramount to a thriving economy and an ambitious nation (KSA 2016). It commits Saudi Arabia to (a) unlocking women's talent and potential, (b) investing in their education and training so they can succeed in future employment, (c) providing equal opportunities so women can contribute to the Saudi economy to the best of their abilities and (d) increasing women's labour force participation to 30%. As noted, women are portrayed as a great asset to the nation. Everyone is expected to contribute to Saudi Arabia's future with women in an enviable and powerful position to do so, provided they are ensured opportunities for achievement, advancement, and preparedness in leadership positions.

Three challenges present themselves, however. First, 'very little is known about educational leadership in the Arab world' (Sellami et al. 2022, 2). Second, women are underrepresented in educational leadership research worldwide creating a gap in current and best practices (Sperandio 2010). Third, although Saudi Arabia is one of 18 Middle Eastern countries, 'the Middle East is not a unified entity but rather is composed of countries that differ from each other in terms of culture, society, organisation, and educational arrangements' (Arar et al. 2017, 367).

That said, Arar et al. (2017) shared several overarching common characteristics of Middle Eastern countries that affect educational leadership: highly centralised governments with a strict hierarchy of control; inadequate infrastructures; high gender inequality; unequal access to education; low standards of teacher preparation; and the imposition of neoliberal-informed school reforms (i.e. effectiveness, standardisation, and accountability) that

have little relevance to Middle Eastern culture and context (see also Sawalhi and Chaaban 2022; Strategic Gears Management Consultancy 2018).

Some of these characteristics apply to Saudi Arabia. It too is susceptible to the neoliberal influence and pressure of teaching for efficiency and the pressure of international tests for science and mathematics. And 'religion plays an important role in education [with] the inculcation of the Islamic faith ... one of the central aims of Saudi education [at all levels]' (Allahmorad and Zreik 2020, In Brief section). But KSA is ahead of the curve on other factors including access to education. Literacy rates are very high (95%) as is university attendance. Close to two thirds (57%) of Saudi citizens (excludes expatriates) attend higher education with over half of all university students women albeit mostly in segregated colleges due to gender inequality (Kattan et al. 2016).

Appreciating its inadequate educational infrastructure, 'the Saudi government is pursuing far-reaching education reforms, including the rollout of modernised school curricula that emphasise critical thinking, the re-training of teachers, and the construction of new schools, as well as the decentralisation of Saudi Arabia's rigid, centrally steered school system' (Allahmorad and Zreik 2020, para. 3). Since the discovery of oil nearly 100 years ago, KSA has actively been constructing (a) schools (32,000 + so far), (b) government-funded and private universities (57 in total), and (c) hundreds of community and women's colleges and (d) technical and vocational training schools (Allahmorad and Zreik 2020; Alsaleh 2019; al-Soudeir 2020; Oxford Business Group 2020).

The next section describes KSA's educational reforms as they pertain to teacher education and certification, where we propose Saudi female PSTs should be intentionally socialised into educational leadership roles for nation building. This socialisation matters because most of KSA's half million teachers are women (al-Soudeir 2020).

Saudi educational reforms and teacher education

As noted, Saudi Arabia is currently going through wide-ranging educational reforms per *Vision 2030* (KSA 2016). Investing in human minds and education, instead of the oil industry, reflects the intent to improve and empower higher education programmes including teacher preparation programmes (Alrashidi and Phan 2015; al-Soudeir 2020). Many Arab nations do not have teacher education programmes at the university level (Sawalhi and Chaaban 2022). Saudi Arabia is an exception to that rule with one source reporting 17 teacher's colleges ('Saudi Arabia' 2020). Another source claimed more than 300 Saudi colleges of higher education for women (Al-Lail 2017) with many containing specialisations in teacher education (Allahmorad and Zreik 2020).

The Saudi MoE's plan to implement a new system for teacher licensure and certification (Alsobeiy 2015) was introduced in July 2019. Al-Sarja, a Saudi education expert, explained that 'Saudi Arabia introduced a teacher certification

license along with a new salary structure that can only be obtained if an individual passes certain criterion [*sic*] as well as the exam for the license. ... We finally have a teacher certification in Saudi Arabia that will help to raise the standards of our educational system' (2019, paras. 3, 4).

Also, in 2018, the MoE issued a mandate to review and reform all teacher preparation programmes in conjunction with discontinuing existing education bachelorette curricula until they comply with *Vision 2030s* agenda (Al-Abdullatif 2019). The MoE wants the curricular changes to reflect (a) humanitarianism, (b) tolerance (instead of hatred and prejudice) and (c) moderate Islamic notions instead of extreme fundamentalism (al-Soudeir 2020).

In the Arabian higher education context, there is a pressing demand for a teacher leadership framework as an essential part of PST education (Sellami et al. 2022). Al-Abdullatif (2019) recognised the 'need for teacher education institutes to re-examine the current curriculum specifications and guidelines developed for preservice teacher education programmes' (3410). In that process, we recommend that Saudi policymakers and MoE curriculum designers become aware of the professional socialisation process that moves lay persons to professionals (to be discussed). Alghamdi and Al-Hattami (2018) claimed that leadership skills 'are indispensable to the development of Saudi Arabia' (258) and must be instilled in female university students. Al-Ahmadi (2011) 'stresse[d] the importance of training as a means for leadership development [for Saudi women]' (165).

Islamic understandings of educational leadership

National cultures (includes religion) provide the context within which people are socialised to leadership as a phenomenon (Dimmock and Walker 2006; Sperandio 2010). We assert that attempts to socialise PSTs into educational leadership must be cognizant of how KSA understands educational leadership. 'Better understandings of educational leadership within an Islamic context are important because many Islamic nations are developing countries, and female teacher leaders have influential roles to play in growth and development' (Alghamdi, El-Hassan, and Alattiq 2022, 2).

Saudi Arabia has a deep Islamic tradition. More than a religion, 'Saudis believe that Islam ... is a comprehensive system which regulates their behaviour and embraces detailed prescriptions for the whole of life [including leadership]' (Alotaibi, Cutting, and Morgan 2017, 33). Samier and ElKaleh (2019) discussed Islamic leadership traditions that are relevant to education in Arabic nations including (a) values pertaining to educational administration in Islamic institutions and (b) distinctive Islamic leadership traditions in the education sector (see also Alghamdi, El-Hassan, and Alattiq 2022).

Regarding the former, drawing on related literature, they outlined a collection of values and virtues that have traditionally underpinned Islamic education:

civil rights and responsibilities, balanced growth of the personality, character development, and service to the community and humankind (Samier and ElKaleh 2019). In their Qatar study, Sellami et al. (2022) reported similar connotations of educational leadership. Of direct relevance to this position paper is the belief that Islamic education (a) 'provides a foundation for the development of educational administration and leadership' (Samier and ElKaleh 2019, 8) and (b) prepares people to responsibly participate in social institutions (including political) (Samier and ElKaleh 2019).

Regarding the latter, Samier and ElKaleh (2019) profiled Islamic traditions in educational leadership. Succinctly, informed by Islamic traditions, exemplary Saudi educational leaders will be truthful, trustworthy, just, benevolent, humble, kind, and patient. They will be inspirational, authentic, and have deep integrity. This character profile fully depends on 'a high level of self-awareness, self-reflection and self-critique' (9). They specifically clarified that, for teachers, 'educational leadership is a role modelling position from which one ensures that knowledge is respected and used for the public good' (9). And pertinent to this position paper, the Islamic education tradition must meet 'the needs of modernisation ... and nation ... building' (9).

Offering a reality check, Algarni and Male (2014) concluded instead that the Saudi system currently views educational leadership as the responsibility of a single person, usually male. This stance 'invokes concepts of competition and power, maintenance rather than development, and management rather than leadership' (54). They maintained that the Saudi MoE 'models a centralised decision-making culture inside educational settings [while] trying to implement collaborative [approaches]' (Algarni and Male 2014, 54). As a result, despite best intentions, 'educational leaders in KSA have a negative impact on [education]' (Algarni and Male 2014, 54). If true, this is unfortunate, because educational leadership is ideally associated with 'influencing people, creating a vision, appreciating values, encouraging collaboration and adopting a culture of change' (Algarni and Male 2014, 53).

People tend to resist both change and educational reform, and Saudi Arabia is no exception (Al-Sarja 2019). Appreciating this human trait, Saudi university colleges of education should design and implement teacher education curricula that include change management *and* an educational leadership framework (Alaseh 2019). That way, educational leaders can become change managers who understand the necessity for both (a) enabling innovation (internal factors – views, attitudes, and perspectives) and (b) creating and/or using the conditions of change that effect the implementation of the innovation (external factors – resources, technology, support, and government agencies) (Alaseh 2019).

Effecting system-wide change in the Saudi educational sector, so that women educators can be socialised to become educational leaders for nation building, will require intentionally designed university curricula that (a) include specific

leadership courses, (b) integrate a leadership ethos across course offerings (i.e. sensitise and predispose women educators to the leadership role) or (c) both (Bush 2020).

A strong argument for orienting Saudi female PSTs to educational leadership and nation building *while* at university is the lack of professional development (PD) hours for licensed Saudi teachers. In 2016, they received only 10 PD hours per year compared to a regional average of 25 h per year. The Saudi government was aiming for 18 h by 2020 (Strategic Gears Management Consultancy 2018). It may be challenging to convince Saudi stakeholders of the merit of an intentionally planned leadership-orientation curriculum for Saudi female PSTs. But depending on inservice PD for existing teachers in the meantime does not seem viable.

Intentionally planned professional socialisation process

Enomoto and Matsuoka (2007) asserted that socialisation into leadership roles should not be happenstance. And future leaders should not be left to flounder trying to figure out what role they can play when they leave university. They should be professionally socialised into an educational leadership role for nation building. This role socialisation process can help PSTs accrue knowledge pursuant to educational leadership and nation building through a combination of formal and informal approaches.

That said, teachers need help recognising that their work does in fact constitute leadership (Frick and Browne-Ferrigno 2016). To illustrate, Brody, Vissa, and Weathers (2010) asserted that school principal preparation programmes can fail when ‘pre-service experiences are inadequate for the professional socialisation and consequent identity development that a change-oriented leader needs’ (612). To be effective educational leaders, administrators in training must ‘develop a professional identity or [come to view themselves] as a proactive leader who can make a difference’ (Brody, Vissa, and Weathers 2010, 612). This argument also holds for preservice teachers in training.

Indeed, students do not come into a profession knowing what it is about and what is expected of them. They need to be socialised into it – moved from an outsider to an insider status after having fostered an emotional and intellectual attachment to the profession. Professional socialisation is thus ‘the process by which people selectively acquire the values and attitudes, the interests, skills and knowledge – in short, the culture – current in groups of which they are, or seek to become, a member’ (Merton, Reader, and Kendall 1957, 278).

Socialisation into a profession also entails the ‘process of learning the norms, attitudes, behaviours, skills, roles, and values of the profession’ (Hodges and Bratina 2020, 5). The socialisation process is not complete until the person has internalised this learning and made it part of their behaviour, professional philosophy, self-concept, self-image, and sense of identity. The adaptation to and acceptance of curricular orientations to a profession allows individuals to

be socialised (Cornelissen 2006; Hodges and Bratina 2020). This position paper is about socialising Saudi women educators in training into educational leadership roles for nation building. We maintain that universities can intentionally plan their PSTs' professional socialisation process to that end. In the face of KSA's educational reform, Alsaleh (2019) has also recommended a 'well-planned pre-service education [that is focused on] educational leadership' (182).

Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) formalised the socialisation process. Their adapted contributions are presented in Figure 1 and discussed below in relation to Saudi female PSTs being socialised as educational leaders for nation building. In brief, novices become apprentices who ultimately emerge from the graduate degree programme transformed with an identity with the education profession and attendant leadership obligations and opportunities.

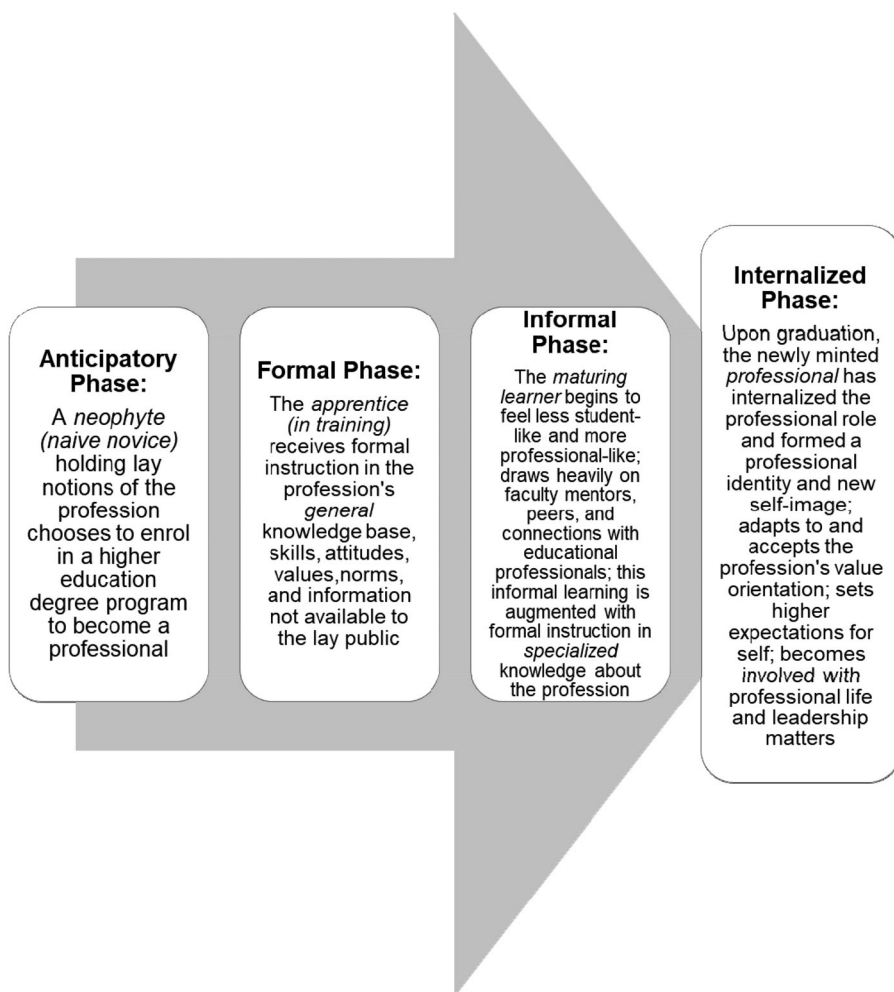


Figure 1. Stages of preprofessional socialisation (adapted from Weidman, Twale, and Stein 2001).

In more detail, when people enter a university education programme, they are basically novices to the education field and profession. They harbour perceptions of the profession that makes sense to them at their current stage of human development with these perceptions likely reflecting society's image of the profession. The latter can encompass misconceptions (false or mistaken beliefs), myths, and prejudices (Dimitriadou, Pizirtzidou, and Lavdaniti 2013). This lay person's perception (i.e. not grounded in professional qualifications or specialised knowledge) (Boyask, Boyask, and Wilkinson 2004) is purposefully challenged through curricula intentionally designed to help students internalise and commit to an identity as an educator and educational leader, which herein includes nation building per Starratt (2011).

To illustrate this socialisation process to the Saudi text, a woman would enter a teacher education programme to obtain credentials to teach in the public or private school system. In the anticipatory phase, she would be a novice to the field of education arriving with lay notions of what it means to be an educational leader or a nation builder. In the formal phase, she would be introduced to the nuances of practising in the education field. Formal courses would orient her to the norms and mores of the profession (i.e. values, attitudes, generalised knowledge, and tailored skill sets).

As she matures as a learner and professional, the formal curriculum would be augmented with an informal orientation that reflects heavy dependence on faculty mentors, peers, and professional mentors from the education field and profession. But it also involves more specialised knowledge about the profession a part of which could be (a) a separate course(s) on educational leadership, (b) a purposefully integrated leadership ethos across curricula or (c) both.

The formal and informal phases would sustain her until graduation, whereupon she would ideally have (a) *internalised* what it means to be a professional educator, (b) begun to develop an identity with the field and the profession and (c) attained clarity around her responsibility to eventually assume an educational leadership role within and beyond the school system to effect nation building (see Figure 1).

Some may query whether fulfilling these three roles is too ambitious for a teacher education programme. We believe it is possible in the KSA because teacher education is delivered at the graduate level after attaining a bachelor's degree. Graduate students are presumed more mature than undergraduates and better able to assume this responsibility. That is, they are more likely to respond to this learning expectation (i.e. contribute to nation building) in an appropriate manner because experience and insight now trump their instinct to resist new learnings (Wani and Masih 2015).

Preprofessionals (i.e. novices naive to the nuances and expectations of the education profession) would enter a teacher education programme with one set of values. If successfully socialised, they would leave with a deeply entrenched value of the education profession and their educational leadership

potential. Their pre-set values would be replaced by or augmented with values of educational leadership and an appreciation for nation building. Such values would include a focus on lifelong learning, human development, community and interaction, communication, and inclusion (Dorczak 2015).

When values change, behaviour can change, which leads to changes in self-concept and self-identity to such an extent that an 'identity develops within and for the profession' (Cornelissen 2006, 50). In this case, it would be Saudi female PSTs accepting the role and values of an educational leader within and beyond the school. They would have a broad understanding of leadership and a predisposition to become involved in nation building.

'The quality of the [university] program ... affect[s] the thoroughness and success of the total socialisation process' (Weidman, Twale, and Stein 2001, 13). A total reconstruction of identity is not an easy task. Despite feeling they have internalised the mores of the profession upon graduation, new professionals may 'experience reality shock as a result of disharmony between the image that had formed for the profession as a student ... and the reality they [encountered] in their actual work' (Dimitriadou, Pizirtzidou, and Lavdaniti 2013, 316). This discrepancy between socialisation into the profession while at university and acculturation into the profession's culture beyond university can be problematic especially for a nation building imperative.

Professional identity cultivation

To offset this discrepancy, curriculum planners could avail themselves of the *professional identity cultivation* (PIC) approach when integrating educational leadership and nation building into PST education curricula. Comprising knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement (see Figure 2), the PIC approach assumes that PSTs can cultivate an identity with and commitment to a profession and engage in role identity development to sustain this commitment (Kleine and Kleine 2000; Kleine, Kleine, and Laverie 2006; Weidman, Twale,

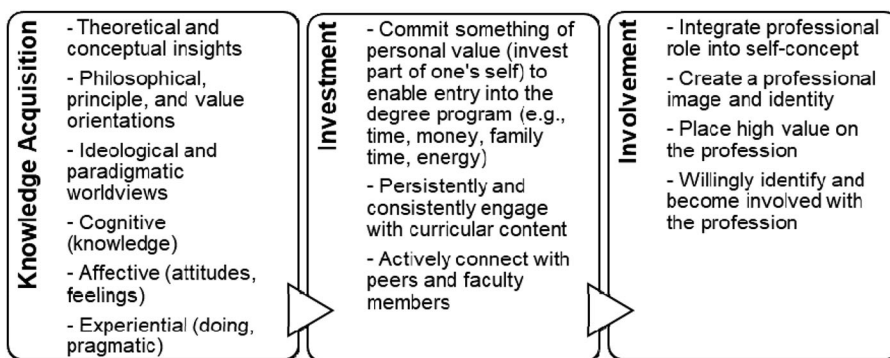


Figure 2. Professional identity cultivation (adapted from Kleine, Kleine, and Laverie 2006).

and Stein 2001). 'Couple this with a high valuation of the profession, participation in it and a willingness to be identified as a member (called *professional attraction*), and the novice is much more likely to become [an educational leader for nation building]' (McGregor 2011, 564).

Evolving professional

The Evolving Professional (EP) is a third useful idea that assumes students develop gradually as a professional; that is, they evolve over time (Tsang 2009). Evolve is Latin *volvere*, 'to roll' (Harper 2022). Their successful evolution hinges on purposefully designed curricula that ensure specific professional attributes are developed and internalised (Tsang 2009) one of which could be educational leadership for nation building. An "*involved professional*" is able to participate in shaping the dynamic professional culture in which s/he is engaged, informed by professional knowledge which [lay people] do not possess' (Boyask, Boyask, and Wilkinson 2004, 3). Part of that knowledge and attendant skill set is educational leadership for nation building necessitating an especially designed curriculum, which is described in the next section.

Proposed educational leadership for nation building curriculum for Saudi female PSTs

Saudi female PSTs are teachers in the making. Their leadership skills are at a developmental stage, and any progress forward requires opportunities to develop over time. To support this professional evolution, Saudi teacher education providers can develop and deliver a well-constructed framework (that supports theory and practice) for introducing aspects of educational leadership for nation building to Saudi female PSTs. Using this framework, novice Saudi women educators would intentionally be socialised into the educational leadership role as it pertains to nation building through a formalised course of study and preplanned acculturation (Boyask, Boyask, and Wilkinson 2004; Merton, Reader, and Kendall 1957; Weidman, Twale, and Stein 2001).

As a caveat, the issue herein is with nation building in a monarchy based on a religion instead of secular (nonreligious) nation building in a democracy. The latter entails elected state and bureaucratic representatives using their power to help the country become more politically and economically stable and viable (Deutsch and Folt 1996; Mylonas 2012). Speaking to the former, Anderson (1991), in a seminal paper, opined that 'far from hindering change, certain characteristics of absolutist monarchy appear to be very useful in nation building and state formation' (3).

In more detail, characteristics of these regimes include centralised governance that is not fully institutionalised. 'Old privileges are under challenge and new rights are still unsecured; old institutions are ignored and new procedures

are still undetermined [and emergent, which creates] a period of unusual uncertainty' (Anderson 1991, 12). Indeed, Anderson was convinced that, 'in many important respects, the modern Middle Eastern monarchs are more similar to [secular] European nation builders and state makers than to [nonsecular] Middle Eastern prophets' (1991, 12). More recently, Samin (2019) commented on the 'cross-pollination of religious and modernising influences in the modern Saudi education system' (11) and how these reflect Saudi state and nation building.

All said, the Saudi teacher education curriculum should be designed to orient PSTs to the specific skills, tasks, competencies, knowledge sets, processes, and roles pursuant to *influencing* the state and nation-building process (see Figure 3). These include but are not limited to an appreciation for (a) political dynamics and contexts, (b) cultural and religious traditions as they pertain to national stability and viability, (c) societal norms and gendered power relationships and (d) anticipating and leading transitional and transformative change along many vectors. Curricular implementation would likely include some combination of in-class instruction, role playing, internships, practica, job shadowing, and mentoring. The ultimate curriculum and pedagogy would depend on political will, resources, and faculty members' confidence and familiarity with the notion of teaching teachers how to influence nation building.

Contextual orientation

In the Saudi national and educational context, such a framework (see Figure 3) would begin with an overview of *Vision 2030* (KSA 2016) (or which ever national development plan is in place) and where the education sector fits within anticipated nation building. This would include women's role in nation building. The curriculum would then profile the Saudi education sector with a focus on ongoing and intended educational reform. In addition to an orientation to educational leadership as a construct, students would learn about Saudi understandings of educational leadership including (a) pervasive values and (b) distinctive Islamic traditions. The curriculum would also orient them to the process of nation building and how this is linked with educational leadership.

Al-Ahmadi (2011) and Kattan et al. (2016) asserted that cultural barriers, structural inequities, societal attitudes, and some Islamic traditions present obstacles to Saudi women being able to obtain leadership positions in contemporary times. Consequently, their role as women in a gendered society would be addressed in this curriculum with a focus on how *Vision 2030* envisions them as a key asset of nation building (KSA 2016). They would also learn about KSA's local and regional politics as they pertain to nation building and how politics connect with the education sector and vice versa. Because their leadership role extends far beyond local school politics, they should gain insights into their role as an educational leader who is primed to engage with educational reform

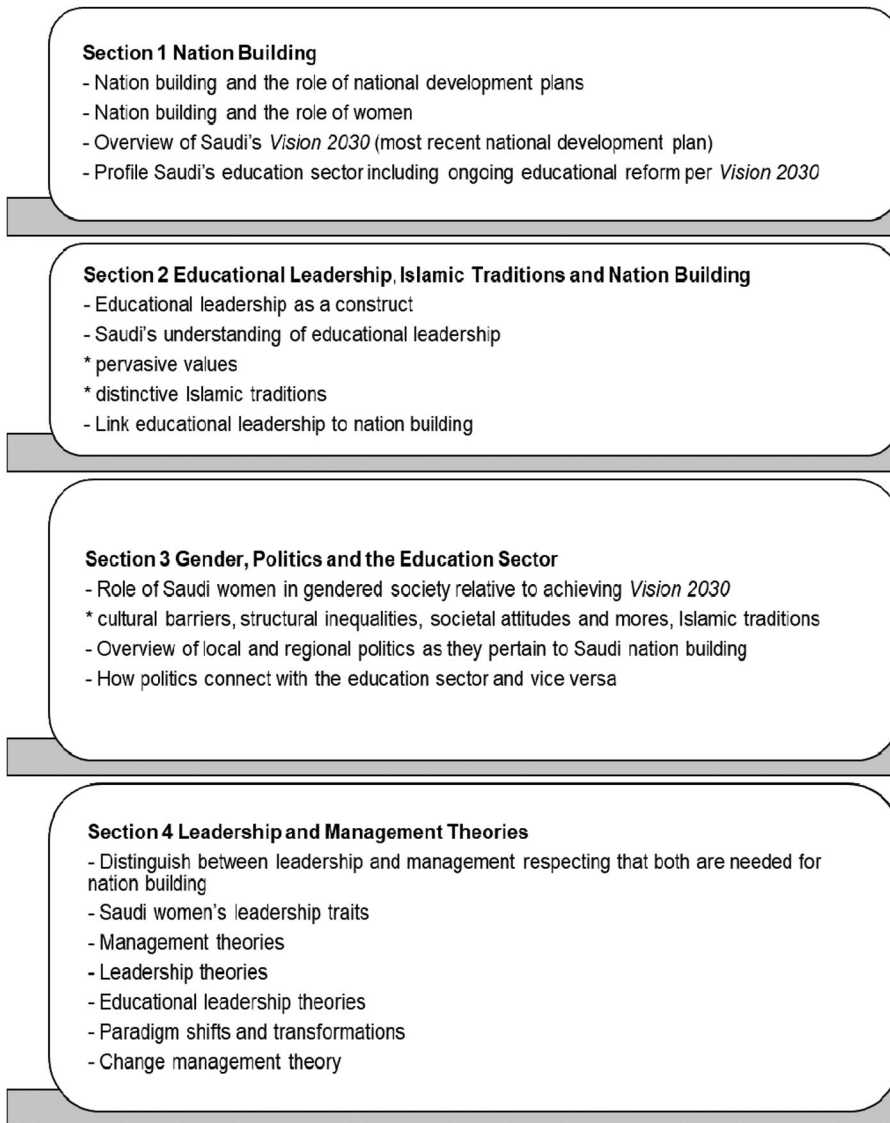


Figure 3. Proposed educational leadership for nation building curriculum for Saudi female pre-service teachers.

to benefit the entire nation, which is undergoing monumental political, economic, and social changes.

Balanced management and leadership

In his work around educational leadership in Saudi Arabia, Alsaleh (2019) recommended that related curricular initiatives should include both *management* and *leadership*. Manage is Latin *manus*, 'to handle or touch.' Leader is Old English *lædan*, 'to guide' (Harper 2022). Leaders work on guiding changes to

the system, while managers work within it and handle things. Leaders proactively adapt and draw on principles to provide direction and guidance for transformation. Managers react to situations by gaining control of resources and implementing tasks and strategies to efficiently maximise transactions and benefits (Bush 2020; Covey 1992). Leaders influence others' opinions, goals, motivations and, ultimately, their actions. Managers sustain current arrangements with the intent to maintain the status quo instead of changing things. The latter occur only if change contributes to maintenance (Cuban 1988). Nation building requires both – leadership and management (Alsaleh 2019).

Transformation and change management

Educational leadership curricula for nation building should also include content dealing with (a) theories and types of management and leadership; (b) theories of educational leadership; (c) building leadership teams and team and project management; and (d) handling paradigm shifts as well as crises, conflicts, and conciliation. Saudi female PSTs would also learn how to (e) lead transformation, which entails changing the nature or essence of something (Alsaleh 2019; Bush 2020). This appreciation for metamorphosis is needed if nation building is to succeed through educational leadership spearheaded by women educators socialised into this role.

Because leadership for nation building is inherently linked with change (Cuban 1988), educational leadership curricula should also include *change management* in addition to management in general. Change management involves sharing visions, missions, and responsibilities via effective communications and motivational strategies (Alsaleh 2019; Cuban 1988). For clarification, to change something is to make it different by moving from one system or situation to another. Change management thus focuses on transitioning people, often expressing resistance, from one state to another. Educational leaders would learn why people resist change and how to break down those barriers. They would learn how to support people's transitions and maybe even help them self-transform in the process.

Anticipated learning outcomes

On a final note, to paraphrase Bush (2020), particular learning outcomes are intended from this especially designed curriculum (see Figure 3). For example, female educators socialised to engage in educational leadership intent on Saudi nation building would be able to exert influence through the education sector. This influence would be based on clear values and beliefs tied to ensuing national development plans. KSA's current plan, *Vision 2030*, values a thriving economy and an ambitious nation through the involvement of women and men (KSA 2016).

Female Saudi educational leaders in action would also learn why it is important to (a) seek to gain commitment from stakeholders who can appreciate the importance of women and the education sector in building a viable and stable nation. And they would (b) become skilled at leading educational change management, so diverse parties with a vested interest in KSA can embrace sustained engagement with systemic and political change. 'This means attempting to change the mind-set of leaders to regard the processes of teaching and learning as central to their role rather than simply leaving such matter to educators' (Bush 2020, 404).

As a caveat, rather than speculating about what issues might arise when trying to bring this curricular innovation (see Figure 3) into existence and fruition, we anticipate likeminded others reflecting on and publishing their own attempts to do so. Their efforts can pave the way to comparative studies and curricular innovations respecting the socialisation imperative and process in PSTs' education. This position paper served to convince others of the merit of doing so.

Discussion and conclusion

There is a dearth of research about women leadership in Saudi Arabia (Al-Ahmadi 2011; Kattan et al. 2016), especially educational leadership and its role in nation building. In fact, 'conceptualising educational leadership for women at an international level is a newly emerging theme' (Sperandio 2010, 716). This position paper strived to present a convincing argument in favour of using university curricula to intentionally socialise Saudi female preservice teachers into educational leadership responsibilities for nation building upon graduation.

It is a timely curricular innovation in Saudi Arabia because the involvement of women balances gender representation in educational leadership (Sperandio 2010). 'More and more, [Saudi] women are part of the decision-making process in the public and private sectors' (Al-Lail 2017, para. 2). KSA policy makers are expecting 'women to flourish professionally and to assume greater and more responsible roles in the public sphere [vis-à-vis] Vision 2030' (Al-Lail 2017, para. 8).

The intent of educational leadership is to get the most out of people, so they can rise above self-serving behaviours to affect aggregate goals (Starratt 2011) such as nation building. In KSA, women educational leaders are needed to ensure an adequate and timely response to Saudis' *Vision 2030*, which directly concerns nation building. 'Although, in Saudi Arabia, there are social and cultural parameters that restrict the advancement of women to leadership positions, it is increasingly common to find men and women working together [in public and private sector leadership roles]' (Al-Lail 2017, para. 5). Intentionally planned socialisation into educational leadership roles through especially

developed university curricula may enable female PSTs to gain the confidence, knowledge, and skills required to become Saudi educational leaders for the good of the nation upon graduation.

We accept that the Saudi MoE's proposed educational reforms for teacher education in Saudi Arabia will likely follow a customary gradual process and take years to implement (Al-Lail 2017; Al-Sarja 2019; Oxford Business Group 2020). Fortunately, this anticipated time frame opens a window for revising teacher education curricula, so they can be ready to orient female PSTs to educational leadership for nation building. 'It is through socialization ... that [women] adopt values and norms that carry over to their leadership execution' (Sperandio 2010, 719).

To conclude, with intentional socialisation into the educational leadership role, upon graduation, Saudi female educators should be more inclined to assume a role in nation building by (a) influencing the educational sector and its players and policies to benefit the nation and (b) convincing other sectors to value women and the education sector's contributions in ensuring an ambitious nation. Integrating Saudi women's educational leadership curricula for nation building into KSA's teacher education programmes is thus imperative.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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