3-26-2015

A Phenomenological Study on Principal Leadership in Islamic K-12 Schools

Allen Farina
Lynn University

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP

IN ISLAMIC K-12 SCHOOLS

By

Allen Farina

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctorate in Education

Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at Lynn University,

College of Education

Lynn University,

2015

ABSTRACT

ALLEN FARINA: A Phenomenological Study on Principal Leadership in Islamic K-12 Schools

The Muslim population in America is increasing and to meet the demand for quality religious and academic instruction for Muslim youth, Islamic K-12 schools are being established throughout the U.S. As these institutions multiply, it becomes necessary to study school board influence and leadership by principals, although literary sources appear to be sparse. This phenomenological study can be a starting point for scholarly research on this topic, as follows:

1. How do Islamic school principals describe their leadership role as administrators of Muslim K-12 schools?

2. What impact does the school board have on the leadership role of principals in Islamic K-12 school settings?

Seven Muslim principals participated in this study using criterion sampling and case numbers were assigned to encourage truthfulness.

Data was gathered accordingly:

1. Demographic survey sent by email

2. An online open-ended survey

3. Two interviews

The data was analyzed inductively using a process called 'horizontalization of data' (collected and reviewed with equality in importance). Major themes were extracted to compile the phenomenon being studied. Some key findings indicated religious and personal characteristics of principals in an Islamic K-12 school. Religious influences include pleasing Allah, following the ways of the Prophet Mohammad as respectful "peace be upon him" (PBUH) and being servant leaders. Some personal characteristics explored were a passion for education,

ii

professional competency, having a positive attitude and learning from past mistakes. Islamic school boards are a major factor in influencing the leadership role of Muslim principals because they hire the administrators, create the job description and set policies. In order for principals to excel and carry out the mission and vision of their respective schools, there needs to be a positive working relationship and adequate support, both professionally and personally, from the boards. Additional research is recommended on principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools specifically and Islamic education matters in general so that Islamic school leaders can meet the needs of stakeholders more effectively. Such efforts also help to educate society at large on a growing foreign mainstay in the American education landscape.

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP IN ISLAMIC K-12 SCHOOLS

Farina, Allen A., Ed.D.
Lynn University, 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

dissertation topic involving a different aspect of Islamic education inspired me to do my best with my research efforts. It is great to see Muslim professionals making strides to provide scholarly research to improve Islamic education in the United States. You are a true colleague and friend!

Cohort 4 – Thank you for the help, support, and friendship over the last three years. You have each individually influenced me to become a better educator, professional and person. You will not be forgotten.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the following individuals:

My wife, Lizeth Chica: You are my rock, foundation, and support! Without your encouragement and sacrifice, completing this dissertation would not be possible. Thank you for helping me to accomplish one of my life-long goals of earning a doctorate degree. I love you!

My son, Anthony Farina: Everything I do is to make your life better. I love you more than you will ever know!

My Mother, Grandmother and Sister: My foundation for service and success in life was laid by you. Thank you for the love, support, and guidance over the years. I love you all!

Mary Lu Vega, Cinty Chica and Rene Hoyos: Your support and assistance in so many ways, family and personal, contributed to the success of this dissertation. I thank you.

Br. Rubayet Khan: You memory is kept alive and well by all the people you have touched. My brother in Islam, you were a great friend and quality educator. You are also part of the inspiration for this dissertation. Your friendship, memories and life lessons still impact me today and will for the rest of my life. I thank you. Rest in peace.

My mentor, Dr. Nita Stika: You have greatly impacted my life professionally and personally in more ways than you will ever know. I thank you.

Garden of the Sahaba Academy: Thank you to the board members, principals, administrators, teachers, all faculty and staff and the larger community who work so diligently to advance positively Islamic education in the United States.

Br. Sadiq Hamidani: Thank you for your dedication and commitment to advancing Islamic education. Your dedication, consistency, and sense of personal responsibility for all Muslim youth do not go unnoticed. You are part of the inspiration for this dissertation.

Sr. Salima Ziani: I highly respect you and consider you the best of the best of Islamic school teachers because of your caring nature, pure heart, and true love for Allah and Islam. Thank you for your commitment to advancing Islamic education. You are part of the inspiration for this dissertation.

All Islamic School Leaders: Islamic school boards, principals, teachers, and staff play a pivotal role in educating Muslim students on matters of faith and being productive members in society. Thank you for all the work that you do! It is my hope that this dissertation contributes something positive to Islamic K-12 education in the United States.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

This study investigated the perspectives of Islamic school leadership and the influence of school boards on administrator headship from a select group of Muslim principals overseeing full-time Islamic K-12 schools throughout the United States. In 2011, research conducted by Karen Keyworth from the Islamic school League of America found that there were approximately 235 Islamic K-12 schools in full-time operation in the U.S. The number of Islamic schools is expected to increase in the coming decades to meet demand due to the increase in Muslim population in America ("United States Census," 2012). While the number of Muslim schools is expanding in American society, scholarly research on Islamic education issues in general and principal leadership specifically, is significantly lacking (Senzai, 2009). Given the projected increase of Muslim schools and the lack of formal research on Islamic education matters, this study attempted to contribute to the existing meager literature on principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools. A phenomenological methodology was used to inquire about the experiences and insights from the selected Muslim principals as they reviewed their professional lives and careers.

In 1989, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) published a report entitled, *In-Depth Study of Full-Time Islamic Schools in North America: Results and Data Analysis*. This research found that there were approximately 50 full-time Islamic K-12 schools operating in North America. In 2011, author Karen Keyworth conducted a similar study titled, *Islamic Schools in the United States: Data-based Profiles*. The

results showed that circa 235 Islamic K-12 schools were in full-time operation in the United States. This number is expected to upsurge in the foreseeable future due to the rapid growth of the Muslim population. According to the most recent 2010 census, the Muslim populace increased from approximately one million individuals in 2000 to roughly 2.6 million people in 2010 ("United States," 2012). In addition, according to the *Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, the number of practicing Muslims in the U.S. could potentially reach 6.7 million by 2030 (Grossman, 2011). This increase in population to a large degree can be attributed to immigration. For example, for Muslims age 18 and older, approximately 63% of this segment of the Muslim population was born abroad with many individuals being relatively new to the United States. Further, roughly 25% of all U.S. Muslim adults arrived on American soil since 2000 ("Pew Research Center," 2011). Table 1 below provides further statistics on nativity and immigration of Muslims in the United States.

Table 1.

Nativity and Immigration of Muslims in the United States		
Generation	U.S. Muslims %	Foreign Born %
1st Generation	63	100
2nd Generation	15	--
3rd Generation and Beyond	22	--
Born in...		
United States	37	--
Middle East/North Africa	26	41
Pakistan	9	14
Other South Asia	7	12
Iran	3	5
Europe	5	7
Sub-Saharan Africa	7	11
Other	6	10
Country of birth...	U.S. Muslims %	Foreign Born %
Pakistan	9	14
Iran	3	5

Nativity and Immigration of Muslims in the United States		
Generation	**U.S. Muslims %**	**Foreign Born %**
Palestinian Territory	3	5
Bangladesh	3	5
Yemen	3	5
Jordan	3	5
Iraq	3	4
Year of Arrival		
2000-2011	25	40
1990-1999	20	31
1980-1989	10	16
1979 and earlier	8	12
Native Born	37	--
U.S. Citizen		
Yes	81	19
No	19	30

Table 1: Nativity and immigration of Muslims in the United States. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker) Adapted from *Pew Research Center 2011 Muslim American Survey, Birth, Father, Mother, Q204, Citizen*, 2011. Retrieved from http://www.people-press.org/2011/08/30/section-1-a-demographic-portrait-of-muslim-americans

Additional demographic information on gender, age, family status and racial composition of Muslim Americans compared to the general public are detailed in table 2 below.

Table 2.

Muslim American Demographic Information		
Gender, Age, Family Status		
Heading	**U.S. Muslims %**	**General Public %**
Male	55	48
Female	45	52
Ages 18-29	36	22
Ages 30-39	23	17
Ages 50-54	28	28
Ages 55+	12	33
Married	55	54
Living with Partner	2	N/A
Divorce	5	11
Separated	1	2
Widowed	2	6
Never Married	35	27

Muslim American Demographic Information			
Gender, Age, Family Status			
Heading	**U.S. Muslims %**		**General Public %**
Racial Composition of Muslim Americans			
Race	**Total %**	**Foreign Born %**	**Native Born %**	**General Public %**
White	30	38	18	68
Black	23	14	40	12
Asian	21	28	10	5
Other/Mixed	19	16	21	2
Hispanic	6	4	10	14

Table 2: Muslim American demographic information. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker) Adapted from *Pew Research Center 2011Muslim American Survey, Sex, Age, Marital, Fert. and Race, Hisp.,* 2011. Retrieved from http://www.people-press.org/2011/08/30/section-1-a-demographic-portrait-of-muslim-americans

As the religion of Islam continues to permeate American society, some Muslim families will turn to Islamic schools to provide religious and academic instruction for their children. Preserving religious identity and promoting a social milieu that encourages religious practice are of the utmost importance for these stakeholders (Claus, Ahmed, & Salvateera, 2013). American public school systems are not able to accommodate these religious needs. Muslim schools, within the context of Islam, focus on character development, shelter children from some stereotyping, offer Islamic explanations on social issues like sex and drugs and avoid a public school curriculum that can potentially be contrary to the tenets of Islam (Haddad & Smith, 2009).

As Islamic K-12 institutions continue to grow and dot the American educational landscape, challenges exist in the area of school genesis. Ideally, Muslim school creation should follow a systematic plan that takes into account policies, budgets, teaching staff, principals and boards before opening their doors to students and the larger community. While some Muslim educational leaders operate from this perspective, the reality is that many Islamic schools come into existence precipitately (Imam, 2007). Consequently,

when schools function without scholarly guidance, strategic planning and competent leadership, they often struggle to survive and face difficulties in operation, a reality evident when it comes to principals and school boards. While there are some Islamic schools run by qualified principals and governed by effective school boards, many such schools have inadequate administrative and financial structures and, thus, promote inadequacy and inhibit success (Qadri & Qadri, 2002). Many Muslim principals are overworked, underpaid, have scant administrative support and work under ineffective school boards (Merry & Driessen, 2005). Concurrently, many school boards fail to develop an autonomous governance structure and lack formal training in managing K-12 schools. Furthermore and frequently, membership does not include women and parents have limited, if any, influence on the board (Syed, 2006). If there is a lack of efficacious leadership on the part of administrators and school boards, then it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to address the many pressing matters impacting Islamic schools. Some of these issues include how to integrate faith with learning, financial stability, school accreditation, acceptance by the Muslim community and the general American public and many other challenges.

Significance of the Study

Over the past two decades, Muslims have become more visible in American society as noted in tables 1 and 2 above. The Muslim population is increasing, which coincides with the fact that Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the United States today (Clauss, Ahmed, & Salvaterra, 2013). The expanded presence of Muslims throughout this country has resulted in a proliferation of businesses and institutions to meet community needs. This reality is especially evident when it comes to education.

For nearly three decades, there has been an upsurge in the establishment of Islamic K-12 schools to meet the growing demand by Muslim families for religious and academic instruction. This growth is projected to continue in the foreseeable future (Keyworth, 2011). To some degree, the rising number of Muslim schools in the United States has put Islamic education (and by extension the religion of Islam) at the forefront of consciousness (Clauss, Ahmed, & Salvaterra, 2013). Consequently, for Muslims it has become a necessity to establish effective educational institutions to address the religious and academic needs of young learners. In order for school genesis to be fruitful and existing Islamic schools to thrive, efficacious leadership of the principal position and the creation of knowledgeable school boards are of paramount importance. Scholarly research on such topics can assist in establishing and administering quality K-12 Islamic schools. For collective society, becoming socially aware of the intentions and practices of Islamic schools can aid in dispelling possible stereotyping and prejudice. Formal investigations can help with edifying the general public on Islamic K-12 schools, the new mainstay of the American educational landscape. However, an abundance of academic studies on Islamic education issues in general (and specifically Muslim principal leadership) is deficient (Senzai, 2009). Given said realities, this phenomenological study is of great importance and significance because it aims to contribute original, scholarly research on a topic that lacks substantial depth and analysis in existing literature.

Conceptual Rationale

The conceptual rationale for this study is based on the intentionality of consciousness toward the perceptions and involvements of Islamic school principals relating to leadership. Intentionality of consciousness, as a phenomenological

perspective, maintains that reality is inextricably linked to experience (Cresswell, 2007).

"Not only can we think of the things given to us in experience; we can understand ourselves as thinking about them. Phenomenology is precisely this sort of understanding: phenomenology is reason's self-discovery in the presence of intelligible objects" (Sokolowski 2000, p. 4).

Figure 1.
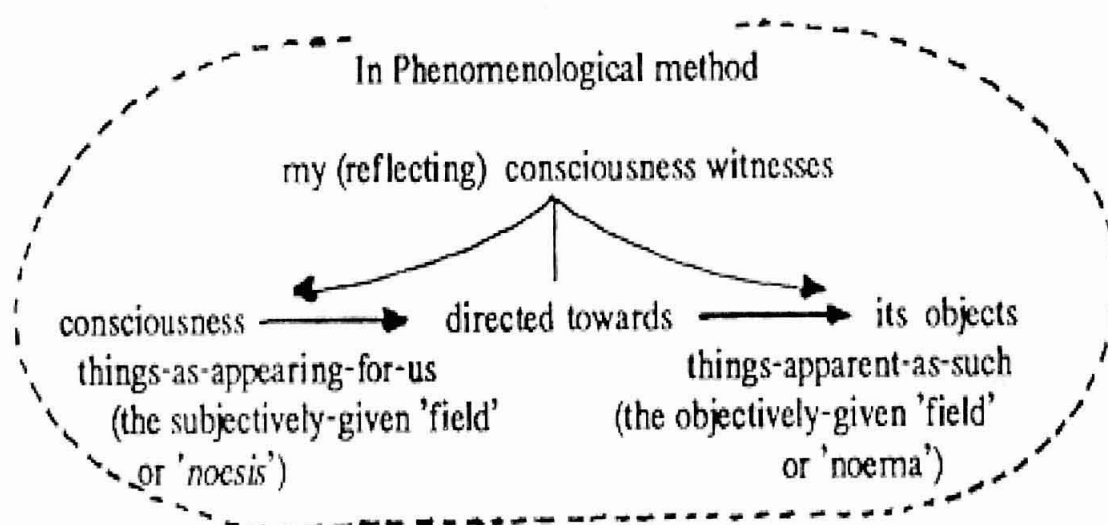
Figure 1. Consciousness intentionality as depicted by Husserl, E. Retrieved from http://robertpriddy.com/P/3consc.html

Reality then, in this case principal leadership, is socially constructed based on the meanings of the experiences assigned to them by the school administrators who participated in this study. Their perceptions of various Islamic principles relating to leadership will also underpin the research efforts. These doctrines include:

Table 3.

Application of Islamic Principles to School Leadership	
Four Layers of Moral Leadership	
Doctrine	**Definition**
Iman	Belief in the articles of faith of Islam as detailed in the Qur'an.
Islam	The religion of Muslims. Submission to the will of Allah.
Taqwa	Being pious and having fear or consciousness of Allah.
Ihsan	Doing good. Ihsan is one of the highest expressions of Iman.

Application of Islamic Principles to School Leadership	
Four Layers of Moral Leadership	
Doctrine	**Definition**
Four Layers of Moral Leadership Emphasizing Five Parameters	
Parameter	**Definition**
Amanah	Trust.
'Adl	Justice, equilibrium, and equity.
Mujahada	Struggle within oneself for improvement.
'Ahd	The ability to keep promises.
Birr	Righteousness.

Table 3: Application of Islamic principles to school leadership. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker) Adapted from *Leadership An Islamic Perspective.* Beekun, R.I., & Badawi, J., 1999.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gather, examine and elucidate the knowledge, beliefs and actions of selected Islamic school principals in full-time K-12 settings whose leadership roles are often influenced or dictated by school boards. The research allowed the participants to voice their perceived leadership roles as principals of Islamic schools. In addition, the administrators were able to expound on what impact, if any, school boards had on their leadership roles and in managing the day-to-day functions of their schools. A total of seven principals participated in the study. As stated in Cresswell (2007), data "are collected from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. Often data collected in phenomenological studies consists of in-depth interviews and multiple interviews with participants…researchers interview from 5 to 25 individuals who have experienced the phenomenon" (p. 61). The participants were be selected by having some dissimilarities in education level, country of origin, geographical location and school mosque affiliation. Data came from a demographic survey, an online open-ended survey and two in-depth personal interviews. This research was conducted in order to aggregate qualitative information on how Islamic school principals describe their

leadership roles and to explain the degree of influence school boards have on principal leadership. The data will be used to contribute to the literature on principal leadership in full time Islamic K-12 schools and to propose possible recommendations to improve school governance structures of Muslim schools.

Research Questions

This phenomenological study investigated the following two general research questions:

1. How do Islamic school principals describe their leadership role as administrators of Muslim K-12 schools?

2. What impact does the School Board have on the leadership role of principals in Islamic K-12 school settings?

Delimitations

Seven Muslim principals of full-time Islamic K-12 schools in the United States were chosen based on dissimilarities established by the researcher. These characteristics included education level, country of origin, geographical location and school mosque affiliation. The scope of the study centered on principal leadership and school board impact on principal leadership in full-time Islamic K-12 schools in American society. In addition, Islamic schools that mirror mainstream public education or other private schools were the focus of this research. Finally, for the purposes of this study, Islamic schools and Muslim schools are used interchangeably.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this phenomenological study, the following terms are defined: "Adl, 'Ahd, Allah, Amanah, Birr, Ihsan, Iman, Intentionality of Consciousness, Islam, Mosque, Mujahada, Muslim, Phenomenological Study, Qur'an, Sunnah, and Taqwa.

1. 'Adl: 'Adl means leading any organization with justice, equilibrium and equity (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

2. 'Ahd: 'Ahd refers to the ability to keep one's word and promises (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

3. Allah: Allah is the equivalent of God. Allah is the creator and sustainer of all (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

4. Amanah: Amanah translates to trustworthiness (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

5. Birr: Birr refers to righteousness (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

6. Ihsan: Ihsan is reflected in performing good deeds or in excelling in one's position (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

7. Iman: Iman is faith in Islam (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

8. Intentionality of Consciousness: Intentionality of Consciousness is a philosophical concept advanced by Dr. Edmund Husserl, a principal founder of phenomenology. This theoretical framework maintains that reality is inextricably linked to experience. Reality is socially constructed based on the meanings individuals assign to any particular phenomenon (Cresswell, 2007).

9. Islam: Islam is a monotheistic religion typified by the acquiescence of complete submission to Allah (God) and the acceptance of Mohammad as the foremost and last Prophet of God (Clauss, Ahmed, & Salvaterra, 2013).

10. Mosque: Mosques are Muslim places of worship that host prayers, services and other Islamic related activities (Bagby, 2012).

11. Mujahada: The task of Mujahada is to strive for improvement in all aspects of life (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

12. Muslim: Muslims are individuals who embrace the Shahada, which is the profession of faith acceding Allah as the only God with no partners and the Prophet Mohammad as the final messenger (Alghorani, 2003).

13. Phenomenological Study: A phenomenological study describes "the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon" (Cresswell, 2007, p. 57-58).

14. Qur'an: The Qur'an is the Muslim sacred book and serves as the fundamental source of Islam ("ISNA," 2013).

15. Sunnah: The Sunnah entails the actions, practices, and traditions of the Prophet Mohammad (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

16. Taqwa: Taqwa is defined as having piety and consciousness of Allah (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

Overview of Chapters

The review of the literature in chapter two covers the following topics:

1. Introduction

2. Growth of Islamic K-12 Schools in the United States

3. Challenges Facing Islamic Education in the United States

4. The Moral Bases of Islamic Leadership

5. Servant Leadership

6. Leadership Principles

7. Islamic School Board Organization

8. Principal Leadership

9. Professional Learning Communities

10. Western Leadership and Islamic Leadership Principles

11. Summary.

Chapter three presents an account of the research methodology that was utilized in this phenomenological study. The details covered in this chapter include:

1. Research Questions

2. Context of the Study

3. Description of the Population

4. Qualitative Inquiry

5. Instruments

6. Data Collection

7. Ethical Considerations

8. Trustworthiness of Data

9. Delimitations

10. Summary.

Chapter four presents the research findings. Chapter five provides a discussion on the results of the study, implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Islam, by definition, is a monotheistic religion typified by the acquiescence of complete submission to Allah (God) and the acceptance of Mohammad (peace be upon him (PBUH) as the foremost and last Prophet of God (Clauss, Ahmed, & Salvaterra, 2013). Muslims then are individuals who embrace the Shahada, which is the profession of faith acceding Allah as the only God with no partners and the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) as the final messenger (Alghorani, 2003). At present, the religion of Islam is significant in American society because over the past decade, Muslims have become more visible on a macro level. For example, Islam is currently the third largest religious group in the United States ("The Pew Forum," 2011). At the same time, it is also the fastest growing faith in the country. According to the most recent 2010 census, the Muslim population increased from approximately one million individuals in 2000 to roughly 2.6 million people in 2010 ("United States Census," 2012). In addition, according to the *Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, the number of practicing Muslims in the U.S. could potentially reach 6.7 million by 2030 (Grossman, 2011).

This increase in population to some degree has ignited a growth of scholarly interest in various topics related to Islam and Muslims over the past fifteen years. The other major stimulus appears to be the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 (or 9/11) attacks in New York City (Kurzman & Ernst, 2012). For example, using data from the ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Database (PQDT), statistics show that doctoral dissertations on topics related to Islamic studies increased by over four percent since

2001. In the decade of the 1980s and 1990s, there was a three percent increase. In the

1970s, there was less than one percent growth on topics dealing with Islam and Muslims

(Kurzman & Ernst, 2012). Another indication of amplified interest in Islam post-9/11 is

the increased publications of articles in peer-reviewed journals. A review was conducted

on eight academic journals analyzing the publication of content related to Islam and

Muslims for the years 1960 to 2001 and 2002 to 2010. Identified below in Table 4 are

the periodicals reviewed and the percentages of articles related to Islam and Muslims for

the aforementioned years.

Table 4.

Journal Review for Islamic/Muslim Themes		
Journal Title	Years	Percentages of Articles
Journal of the American Academy of Religion	1960 – 2001 2002 - 2010	4.4% 11.2%
American Anthropologist	1960 – 2001 2002 - 2010	6.6% 9.5%
American Economic Review	1960 – 2001 2002 - 2010	1.0% 1.5%
American Historical Review	1960 – 2001 2002 - 2010	1.5% 6.1%
American Political Science Review	1960 – 2001 2002 - 2010	1.9% 3.9%
American Psychologist	1960 – 2001 2002 - 2010	0.9% 3.8%
American Sociological Review	1960 – 2001 2002 - 2010	1.1% 3.6%
Annals of the Association of American Geographers	1960 – 2001 2002 - 2010	2.8% 3.2%

Table 4: Journal review for Islamic/Muslim themes. (A chart created by A. Farina using
Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Islamic Studies in U.S. universities,*
Kurzman, C., & Ernst, C.W., 2012.

All of these publications saw an increase of articles covering various aspects of

Islam after 9/11 (Kurzman & Ernst, 2012). The final indication of academic interest in

Islam is the increased number of classes being offered by colleges and universities in the

United States. Programs of study can range from single courses as well as interdisciplinary courses and minors to full-scale bachelor degrees in Islamic studies. Challenges exist, however, in finding qualified scholars willing to teach such courses and oversee the degree programs (Kurzman & Ernst, 2012).

As evidenced in this writing, there is growing interest among academics in undertaking the serious study of Islam in America. It appears that a solid foundation is starting to be established. However, more research is still needed, especially in the area of Islamic education in the United States. There remains a lack of statistical information and baseline data about Islamic education in general and Islamic school leadership specifically. Consequently, a clear consensus within the Muslim community and larger society does not exist on the identity, systems and governance structures of Islamic schools (Senzai, 2009). In order for the Muslim community to effectively meet their education needs and to raise awareness for non-Muslims about a growing mainstay in American society, more in-depth scholarly research on said topics must continue and be expanded. The need for such academic pursuits becomes greater as the Muslim population increases and Islamic K-12 schools assert more influence in collective society.

Growth of Islamic K-12 Schools in the United States

As the Muslim population continues to multiply in the United States, there is a growing interest among some families to send their children to Islamic education-based schools. The social milieu of Muslim schools edifies students to learn about the religious faith, create a dynamic sense of community and engage in daily prayers. In addition, Islamic schools offer some protections from exposure to sex, drugs, and other actions that violate the tenets of Islam while fostering a Muslim identity (Siddiqui, 2001). Given the

growing demand for educational institutions to meet the spiritual and academic needs of this emerging populace, there has been tremendous effort put forth by established Islamic centers and Muslim professionals to create new Islamic schools. The end result has been the materialization of many K-12 Islamic schools dotting the American educational landscape.

While there has been a steady progression of founded Islamic schools over the past few decades, there is lacking a concrete record of the exact number of such institutions operating within the United States; one possible explanation is that most Muslim schools, if not all, operate as individual entities. They are not formally governed by national religious organizations, school districts or departments of education. Many of these institutions are affiliated with individual mosques or boards, and ties to other governing bodies are often voluntary (Keyworth, 2011). In addition, the instituting of Islamic schools is not based on universal protocol and practices. Many different avenues are undertaken by Islamic centers, mosques and by individuals with varying degrees of expertise in the educational field when forming Islamic schools. On many occasions, the founders of the schools may not have a professional background in education administration or teaching. This situation can potentially be a problem if the founders are responsible for controlling and running all aspects of the organization. The end result is an eclectic and smorgasbord of Islamic schools that are as diverse as the people who create, are employed and study in them (Merry, 2007). Accordingly, these situations make it somewhat difficult to gather accurate figures. Nonetheless, a review of related literature indicates that two major attempts have been made to calculate the number of Islamic schools in the United States. The first bid took place in 1989 by the Islamic

Society of North America (ISNA). ISNA published a report entitled, *In-Depth Study of Full-Time Islamic Schools in North America: Results and Data Analysis*. At that time, this study concluded that roughly 50 such schools existed in North America. In May of 2011, a similar effort to tabulate the number of Islamic schools was undertaken by Karen Keyworth from the Islamic School League of America (ISLA) organization. This research, entitled, *Islamic Schools of the United States: Data-Based Profiles*, found that approximately 235 Islamic schools were in full-time operation. This same study also concluded that the number of K-12 Islamic schools is projected to increase in the years ahead (Keyworth, 2011). Also, approximately 40,000 students are enrolled in these educational institutions (Zain, 2011). Maintaining accurate records of the total number of Islamic schools is critical for several reasons. Such information helps with "establishing and identifying community, professionalism, standards, and shared educational philosophies, as well as providing the American Muslim community and the larger American society with a crucial understanding of full-time Islamic education based on fact rather than conjecture" (Keyworth, 2011, p. 5). Yet, the aforementioned challenges still persist in 2015, making research initiatives daunting at times.

Despite these challenges, one circumstance remains unambiguous. As the Muslim population continues to grow in the United States, so too does the formation of Islamic schools. These scholastic institutions will continue to expand and become permanent mainstays in the American education landscape. Many Islamic schools are moving past the growing pains that come with being new organizations and they are establishing themselves as quality educational institutions to meet the needs of young Muslim students. Part of this process typically involves going through the stages of

school accreditation. For private institutions looking to secure this professional

designation, there is not a national set of standards in place to accomplish this goal.

Individual states have their own requirements and there is a plethora of accrediting bodies

with which schools can work. In order to assist Islamic schools with this endeavor, there

have been attempts made by some Muslim organizations to advise and provide assistance

to help administrators navigate the process of accreditation. Some national organizations

include the Islamic Society of North America, the Islamic Schools League of America,

and the Council of Islamic Schools in North America (CISNA). However, the levels of

services offered by these groups vary and participation on the part of Islamic schools is

purely voluntary. Even so, the major impetus in encouraging Islamic schools to become

professionally accredited started in 1997 with CISNA making this the primary objective

of their organization. The leadership team ardently pushed Islamic schools to follow suit

(Merry & Driessen, 2005).

Accreditation is a voluntary process of quality assurance that many private

schools elect to take on to confirm its academic legitimacy to relevant stakeholders by

adhering to an established set of educational benchmarks. Focusing on continuous

improvement across the entire organization via self-evaluation and using research-based

procedures to evaluate institutional effectiveness are hallmarks of the accreditation

process ("AdvancEd," n.d.). Many Islamic schools have either achieved some type of

state or national accreditation or are currently working through the process. Some

Muslim educational institutions are also striving to establish International Baccalaureate

programs (Huus, 2011). Accreditation is essential for Islamic schools because it helps

gain growth, development, and recognition for academic quality. If administrators stay

true to the process of accreditation, protocol and procedures must be established and adopted in order to realize achievement. The end result would be a clear accountability system for all stakeholders in the school (Qadri & Qadri, 2002). However, not all Islamic schools elect to undertake the arduous process of accreditation and many institutions may lack the necessary personnel to carry out such efforts (Merry & Driessen, 2005). Consequently, there is great disparity in the educational quality among many of the Islamic schools. However, as Muslim schools continue to expand and grow, along with the push for accreditation from organizations like CISNA, the objective would lessen this incongruence. Yet, in order for this goal to progress into a reality, it becomes incumbent among Islamic school leaders to stress the importance of accreditation to their stakeholders and to work with other Muslim organizations.

While Islamic education is growing, evolving, and becoming a permanent fixture in American society, there is some foundational support that newer schools can draw upon. In the United States, there are 23 full-time Islamic schools that have been in operation for more than 20 years. Below in Table 5 is a listing of the pioneering Islamic schools.

Table 5.

Full-time Islamic Schools in Operation for More Than Twenty Years in the United States		
Year Founded	Name of School	City/State
1977	Islamic Community School	Baltimore, MD
1980	Clara Muhammad Elementary School	Atlanta, GA
1983	Orange Crescent School	Garden Grove, CA
1984	New Horizon School Pasadena	Pasadena, CA
1984	New Horizon School – Los Angeles	Los Angeles, CA
1984	Al-Ghazaly Elementary School	Jersey City, NJ
1984	Al-Ghazaly High School	Teaneck, NJ
1986	Aqsa School	Bridgeview, IL

Full-time Islamic Schools in Operation for More Than Twenty Years in the United States		
Year Founded	**Name of School**	**City/State**
1986	Michigan Islamic Academy	Ann Arbor, MI
1987	Granada Islamic Academy	Santa Clara, CA
1987	Al-Rahman School and Nursery	Baltimore, MD
1987	Alim Academy	Potomac, MD
1988	Huda School and Montessori	Franklin, MI
1988	Madruastu Ahlis Sunnah	East Orange, NJ
1989	Muslim Community Center Full Time School	Morton Grove, IL
1989	Al-Ihsan Academy	South Ozone Park, NY
1989	Brighter Horizons Academy – College Preparatory	Garland, TX
1990	Dar-un-Noor School	Atlanta, GA
1990	Universal School	Bridgeview, IL
1990	Peace Academy	Tulsa, OK
1991	College Preparatory School of America	Lombard, IL
1991	School of Knowledge (Madrasa-Tul-Ilm)	Indianapolis, IN
1991	Al-Ikhlas Training Academy	Detroit, MI
1991	Crescent Academy International	Canton, MI
1991	DCC Dar Al-Arqam School	Dearborn, MI
1991	Al Nur School	Schenectady, NY
1991	Quba Institute	Philadelphia, PA
1992	Islamic School of San Diego	San Diego, CA
1992	Universal Academy of Florida	Tampa, FL
1992	Al-Iman School	Raleigh, NC
1993	Noor-Ul-Iman School	Monmouth Junction, NJ
1993	Oregon Islamic Academy	Portland, OR
1993	Salam School	Milwaukee, WI

Table 5: Full-time Islamic schools in operation for more than twenty years in the United States. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Pioneering Islamic Schools found in Islamic Horizons*, Chaudhry, W.Z., 2014. Retrieved from http://issuu.com/isnacreative/docs/ih_mar-apr_14

School boards and principals of Islamic schools in genesis or just a few years in existence would be well-served to consult with some of these long-standing academic institutions for guidance and structures to aid in their own success.

Challenges Facing Islamic Education in the United States

Beyond the growth and expansion of Islamic schools, accreditation and academic quality, a review of the literature shows that there are many other issues impacting Islamic K-12 schools in the United States. Table 6 below details some of these challenges.

Table 6.

Challenges Impacting K-12 Islamic Schools in the United States	
Issue	**Explanation**
Integrating Faith with Learning	Most, if not all, Islamic schools teach content centered on the Qur'an, Arabic and Islamic Studies. The pedagogical debate centers on the value of teaching these subjects as separate disciplines or infused within the entire curriculum. Regarding the Qur'an, there is an ongoing dialogue among Muslim educators as to the value of memorization versus putting religion into action (Anderson, Tan, & Sulieman, 2011). There are different interpretations of Islam. School leaders must reflect on how the tenets of Islam will be inculcated and taught within the organization (Senzai, 2009).
Islamic Pedagogy and Curriculum	There is not a clear consensus on the definition and components of Islamic pedagogy. There seems to be lacking a standardized curriculum that amalgamates Muslim principles with official state standards (Elbih, 2012). There is lacking formal guidance by a national governing body to help establish academic standards for Islamic schools (Senzai, 2009).
Religion and Culture	The religion of Islam is color blind. Muslims can be from any racial or ethnic background. As such, administrators must differentiate between religious and cultural mannerisms as it impacts the educational practices in schools (Haddad & Smith, 2009).

Challenges Impacting K-12 Islamic Schools in the United States	
Issue	**Explanation**
Principals and Teachers	Many principals lack formal training in educational leadership and do not hold the corresponding administrator or teaching license (Imam, 2007).
	While some Islamic schools employ state certified teachers, not all of them do. As schools move toward accreditation, this hiring practice tends to increase. Nonetheless, more effort is still needed in hiring and retaining qualified and certified Muslim educators (Clauss, Ahmed, & Salvaterra, 2013).
	There is lacking established qualifications for teachers of Qur'an, Arabic, and Islamic Studies (Imam, 2007).
	Some Islamic schools elect to hire some non-Muslim educators while others may prefer to employ only Muslim teachers. There are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. Individual Islamic schools tend to decide which approach is best for the needs of their campus (Elbih, 2012).
Financial	Many K-12 Islamic schools lack sources of revenue beyond tuition dollars.
	There is a lack of attention given to long-term financial planning.
	More emphasis is needed on developing a professional financial plan to meet short-term and long-term goals. Securing sources of funding beyond tuition dollars is essential for long-term viability (Haddad & Smith, 2009).
Acceptance by Muslim Community	As previously mentioned, there is great disparity in the educational quality among Islamic K-12 schools. For schools that struggle academically, many Muslim families may elect to send their children to public or other private schools. As a result, at times there are challenges with full-fledged acceptance of Islamic schools within the larger Muslim community (Clauss, Ahmed, & Salvaterra, 2013).

Challenges Impacting K-12 Islamic Schools in the United States	
Issue	**Explanation**
American Society	A fair amount of Islamic school principals come from other countries. This situation is only problematic if these principals attempt to run the Islamic schools in the same image of their home countries. Some of the leadership practices may not be as effective when operating within the context of American society (Elbih, 2012).
	Islamic religious scholars and school leaders must recognize the fact that they are educating young Muslim students in a western country. As such, proper attention must be given to educating learners on how to be practicing Muslims in contemporary American society (Haddad & Smith, 2009).

Table 6: Challenges impacting K-12 Islamic schools in the United States. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from various sources as noted in the in-text citations.

Trying to overcome the obstacles mentioned above is a tall order for many Islamic schools because there are additional trials when it comes to the principal position. The first issue centers on the fact that statistical gen and baseline data on Islamic education in the United States is wanting. Consequently, on a macro level, there is not a clear accord among Islamic school leaders on the identity, practices, and governance structures of Muslim schools (Senzai, 2009). Also, there are other factors that contribute to the difficulty in sustaining a stable leadership model. For example, some principals may be appointed to positions because of their vocation and dedication to Islamic education, but they may lack the formal and scholarly training to effectively lead schools (Imam, 2007). In addition, table 7 below describes many of the difficulties experienced by Islamic school administrators on a daily basis.

Table 7.

Challenges Facing Islamic School Principals	
Challenge	**Explanation**
Overworked	Many Islamic school principals work long hours, including evenings and weekends. Typically, administrators in this setting must balance the academic, business and religious aspects of the school.
Underpaid	School administrators in Islamic schools typically make substantially less money when compared to their peers in public education systems.
Limited Administrative Support	Funds may be lacking to add the necessary administrative support for school leaders. This situation adds an extra amount of pressure and obligations to an already overburdened position.
Staff Burnout	Just as principals are overworked and underpaid, so too are many of the other positions in Islamic schools. Dealing with staff burnout as an administrator and managing it on all levels within a school setting can be a daunting task at times.
School Board Ineffectiveness	Some Islamic schools endure pedagogical and philosophical challenges when the roles of principals and the School boards are not clearly defined. When board members are actively involved in the day-to-day operations of the school, it can potentially blur the leadership lines as perceived by the staff. This situation can also add undue stress to the principal position.

Table 7: Challenges facing Islamic school principals. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Islamic schools in three western countries: Policy and procedure*, Merry, M.S., & Driessen, G., 2005.

The documented challenges facing Muslim principals are tangible and must be addressed to ensure effective management in the day-to-day operations of schools. However, overcoming these obstacles is exigent due to the impediments on the part of many Islamic school boards. School boards superintend overall leadership, governance structures, and vision of Islamic K-12 schools (Qadri, 2002). They hire administrators and are ultimately held accountable for the success or failure of the academic institution (Qadri, 2009). Consequently, the board should consist of "thoughtful, dedicated trustees

who fit the board's and the school's needs, are prepared to volunteer sufficient time to learn about the school, and come prepared to board and committee meetings" (Stanton, 1989, p. 16). Some Islamic schools are fortunate to have board members who embody such professional attributes. However, many Muslim K-12 schools are not as auspicious. Documented in table 8 below are some hindrances impacting optimal performance of many Islamic school boards.

Table 8.

Challenges Facing Islamic School Boards	
Challenge	**Explanation**
Training/Experience	Most board members are not formally trained in educational leadership, curriculum and instruction and the individual needs of young learners. Practical leadership and other experiences in K-12 settings may also be lacking.
Wealthy Trustees	In many cases, major financial contributors to Islamic K-12 schools are also board members. This situation can be detrimental if these trustees are absent from fulfilling the requirements of said position. When members of the board occupy a post based solely on money versus work performed, it becomes more difficult to accomplish stated obligations.
Time	Occupying a seat on the board is voluntary and pay is not received. However, given the dynamic needs of Islamic K-12 schools, serving on the board is a major commitment of time and energy. Most board members have their own jobs and careers to which they must attend. Having enough time to attend meetings, prepare reports and offer services to Islamic schools and the larger Muslim community can be a daunting task at times.
Active v. Non-Active Members	On many occasions, there is an imbalance in the level of activity of board members. Some board members are diligent in meeting the obligations of their position, while others are more absent physically and in meeting the demands of their post. In this type of scenario, leadership effectiveness is lacking and school growth is negatively impacted.

Challenges Facing Islamic School Boards	
Challenge	**Explanation**
Leadership Styles	School board members must take into account their own leadership style as well as that of school personnel. As much as possible, there should be accord between the board, principal and employees on key processes and outcomes of the school. Any major signs of dissension can potentially translate to complications in areas of recognition from the state, accrediting bodies and even skeptical parents.
Primary Focus	The primary responsibility of the school board is governance, vision and financial stability of the academic institution. Unless requested by the principal and absent of any emergency situations, the board should not interfere with administrator leadership and the day-to-day operations of the school. In many Islamic schools, this clear division of focus is not fully adhered to causing confusion among staff and making the principal position that much more difficult.

Table 8: Challenges facing Islamic school boards. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Islamic schools in North America and the Netherlands: Inhibiting or enhancing democratic dispositions?,* Merry, M.S., & Driessen, G,. 2009 & *The school board handbook*, Qadri, Y., 2009. Retrieved from http://www.edconsultations.com/access

If Islamic schools aspire to resolve all of their challenges, provide for the educational and religious needs of young Muslim students and thrive in American society, then a systematic and effective solution must be employed to improve the lot of Muslim principals and school boards. If there is a lack of efficacious leadership at the top administrative positions, then it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to address the aforementioned pressing matters impacting Islamic schools. Recommendations to improve this situation are discussed at the end of this current chapter.

As Islamic K-12 schools continue to grow and expand in the United States, a debate exists within the Muslim community and, by extension the larger society, on the purpose and function of these academic institutions. Some fundamental questions are

being asked, such as what is "specifically Islamic about Islamic education? Does it mean the teaching of Muslim pupils, or the teaching of Islamic sources in a confessional environment, or the pursuit of knowledge with particular ethical attitudes and aims" (Anderson, Tan, & Sulieman, 2011, p. 5)? Given the independent nature of Islamic K-12 schools in the United States and the different perspectives embraced by school leaders and the larger Muslim population, there does not exist a definitive answer to the purpose and function of Islamic education in American society. However, there appears to be some themes that loosely amalgamate many Muslim schools in their pursuit of providing a religious and academic education to students. Those focus areas include integrating faith with learning, the development of moral character and behavior, wisdom, intellectual autonomy and critical thinking (Anderson, Tan, & Sulieman, 2011). As stated by Mr. Habeeb Quadri, principal of the Muslim Community Center Full Time School in Morton Grove, Illinois, "we want to give students the necessary tools to be productive citizens and Muslim citizens in this society, but also the necessary tools to be productive citizens in the hereafter, which is paradise" (Huus, 2011, para. 7). Yet, the degree of focus in these areas and the means to accomplish such objectives can vary greatly from one Islamic school to the next (Elbih, 2012). Such efforts are still a work in progress.

While the identity of Islamic K-12 schools in the United States on a micro and macro level is still evolving, many schools are progressing to the stages of professionalism in all facets of the organization (Senzai, 2009). This development is essential for Muslim students and the extended community because "an Islamic school is more than an educational institution; it is the blueprint of the future generation and a

future society" (Qadri & Qadri, 2002, para. 1). If the Muslim populace hopes to thrive and be productive citizens, then the larger social context of living in a western country like the United States cannot be ignored. Muslim schools must strike a delicate balance and merge the preservation of the religious identities of students as followers of Islam while also promoting the necessary skill sets to be successful American citizens (Clauss, Ahmed, & Salvaterra, 2013). As such, Islamic schools should be the driving force in changing society and meeting the needs of students and the larger community. Such difficult undertakings can only be accomplished through a team-effort approach involving all of the necessary stakeholders, especially by school board members and principals (Qadri & Qadri, 2002).

In order to confront the challenges impacting Islamic schools and bring about the needed changes, it is crucial for school boards and principals to work together in leading and managing school affairs. The derivation of such a relationship should stem from a common understanding of leadership from an Islamic perspective. Leadership "in Islam is a trust (Amanah)" (Beekun & Badawi, 1999, p. vi). This trust represents a psychological contract between a leader and consortiums that the leader must strive "to guide them, to protect them and treat them justly. Hence, the focus of leadership in Islam is on doing good" (Beekun & Badawi, 1999, p. vi). Moreover, leadership in Islam "is rooted in belief and willing submission to the Creator, Allah" (Beekun & Badawi, 1999, p. 17). The primary focus is on serving and pleasing God. Based on this condition, the goals of leaders are to carry out good deeds and perform all actions in accordance with Islamic virtues as ordained by Allah. In addition, the righteous actions should be preceded by good intentions. This type of conviction, together with patience and faith in

God, is crucial if leaders want to ameliorate and reform Islamic organizations for the better (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). If school boards and principals understand, embrace and carry out the moral bases of Islamic leadership, then Muslim K-12 schools have a higher likelihood of thriving and success.

The Moral Bases of Islamic Leadership

The moral bases of Islamic leadership are rooted in four layers of Islamic ethical character. These strata include Iman, Islam, Taqwa and Ihsan. Depending on the stage leaders occupy, they can be expected to underscore five essential parameters of Islamic comportment. These behaviors include 'Adl, Amanah, birr, Mujahada and 'Ahd. Table 9 below details the four layers of Islamic moral character necessary for effective leadership.

Table 9.

Four Layers of Islamic Moral Character	
Attribute	**Explanation**
Iman	1. Tawhid – Faith in the oneness of Allah. 2. Saw – Acceptance of the prophethood of Mohammad (PBUH). 3. Akirah – Belief in the afterlife. 4. Leaders take responsibility for all actions undertaken.
Qur'an Verse	
Surah Al-Anaam, Chapter 6, Verse 102: وَكِيلٌ شَيْءٍ كُلِّ عَلَىٰ وَهُوَ ۖ فَاعْبُدُوهُ شَيْءٍ كُلِّ خَالِقُ ۖ هُوَ إِلَّا إِلَٰهَ لَا ۖ رَبُّكُمُ اللَّهُ لِكُمُ That is Allah, your Lord! There is no god but He, the Creator of all things: then worship ye Him: and He hath power to dispose of all affairs.	
Attribute	**Explanation**
Islam	1. Peace and submission. 2. Leaders achieve peace with Allah, internally, and with all of creation through alacritous submission to God. 3. Leaders who embrace and practice Islam will not have an inflated ego or see themselves above Allah.

Four Layers of Islamic Moral Character

Qur'an Verse
Surah Al-Hadid, Chapter 57, Verse 16:

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

Has not the Time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the Truth which has been revealed (to them), and that they should not become like those to whom was given Revelation aforetime, but long ages passed over them and their hearts grew hard? For many among them are rebellious transgressors.

Attribute	Explanation

Taqwa	1. Having both the fear of Allah and the feeling of God's presence.
	2. Being conscious of responsibilities and accountability toward Allah.
	3. The substance of Taqwa is a manifestation of an attitude of heart and mind.
	4. Leaders who have Taqwa are known as the muttaqin. The moral attributes associated with the muttaqin include:
	  (a) Act justly.
	  (b) Care for others simply for the love of Allah.
	  (c) Engage in daily prayers and give charity.
	  (d) Be both patient and firm in any situation.
	  (e) Honor all contracts and keep one's word.

Qur'an Verse
Surah An-Nahl, Chapter 16, Verse 90:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۚ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.

Attribute	Explanation
Ihsan	1. Love of Allah. 2. Individuals who love Allah are motivated to work hard in obtaining God's pleasure. 3. Leaders who exhibit Ihsan are known as the muhsinin.

Qur'an Verse
Surah Al-Baqara, Chapter 2, Verse 195:

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ ۛ وَأَحْسِنُوا ۛ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And spend of your substance in the cause of Allah, and make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction; but do good; for Allah loveth those who do good.

Table 9: Four layers of Islamic moral character. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Leadership an Islamic perspective*, Beekun, R.I., & Badawi, J, 1999 & Quran, *Search the Quran*, n.d., Retrieved from http://search-the-quran.com

Iman, Islam, Taqwa, and Ihsan serve as the foundation of Islamic moral

leadership. Within each layer, there are five key parameters of Islamic behavior that

leaders are expected to accentuate. These hallmarks include Adl', Amanah, birr,

Mujahada, and 'Ahd. Table 10 below specifies these mannerisms in more detail.

Table 10.

Five Parameters of Islamic Behavior		
Attribute	**Explanation**	**Application to Leadership**
Adl'	1. Justice or balance. 2. Balance is achieved when leaders take the 'middle road' approach on issues.	1. Justice must be heeded by all practicing Muslims. 2. Personal associations or other considerations can never compromise justice.
Qur'an Verse		
Surah Al-Maeda, Chapter 5, Verse 8: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۖ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَآنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۚ اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do. | | |
| **Attribute** | **Explanation** | **Application to Leadership** |
| Amanah | 1. Trust. 2. Stresses the concept of accountability toward organizational stakeholders. | 1. If individuals accept a position of leadership, they are accepting Amanah, a "trust". 2. Leaders must be truthful, keep one's word, practice humility and modesty, and act justly. 3. In Islamic K-12 schools and other Muslim organizations, leaders are entrusted with the critical task of strategic management for the good of the community. |

Five Parameters of Islamic Behavior		
Qur'an Verse		
Surah Yusuf, Chapter 12, Verses 54-55:		
قَالَ أَمِينٌ كِينٌۢمَ لَدَيْنَا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّكَ قَالَ كَلَّمَهُ لَمَّا فَ ۖ لِنَفْسِي أَسْتَخْلِصْهُ بِهِ ائْتُونِي الْمَلِكُ وَقَالَ عَلِيمٌ حَفِيظٌ إِنِّي ۖ الْأَرْضِ خَزَائِنِ عَلَىٰ اجْعَلْنِي		
So the king said: "Bring him unto me; I will take him specially to serve about my own person." Therefore when he had spoken to him, he said: "Be assured this day, thou art, before our own presence, with rank firmly established, and fidelity fully proved! (Joseph) said: "Set me over the store-houses of the land: I will indeed guard them, as one that knows (their importance).		
Attribute	**Explanation**	**Application to Leadership**
Birr	1. Righteousness. 2. Leaders and followers have a responsibility to act with righteousness.	1. Leaders must always act justly and not let personal biases encumber justice. 2. Possess strong Iman. 3. Provide care for others for the love of Allah. 4. Observe daily prayers and practice charity. 5. Follow all established contracts. 6. Be patient in all circumstances.
Qur'an Verse		
Surah Al-Baqara, Chapter 2, Verse 177:		
الْيَوْمِ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَ لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ اٰمَنَ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِيلٍ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَوٰالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّنَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۖ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِي صَدَقُوا ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ		
It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces Towards east or West; but it is righteousness- to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allah-fearing.		
Attribute	**Explanation**	**Application to Leadership**
Mujahada	1. Personal struggle for self-improvement. 2. With Mujahada, there is an advancement from Iman to Ihsan and continues afterward.	1. Leaders consistently reflect on their intentions and actions. 2. Leaders have a solid work ethic in putting into practice their words and they encourage others to do the same.

Five Parameters of Islamic Behavior
Qur'an Verse
Surah Al-Hajj, Chapter 22, Verses 77-78:   حُونَتُقْلِ لَعَلَّكُمْ الْخَيْرَ وَافْعَلُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَاعْبُدُوا وَاسْجُدُوا ارْكَعُوا آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا يكُمْ بِوَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِلَّةَ أَ تَكُونُوا إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَ نِعْمَ شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ فَ مَوْلَى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ الْ   O ye who believe! Bow down, prostrate yourselves, and adore your Lord; and do good; that ye may prosper. And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive, (with sincerity and under discipline). He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion; it is the cult of your father Abraham. It is He Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (Revelation); that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and ye be witnesses for mankind! So establish regular Prayer, give regular Charity, and hold fast to Allah! He is your Protector - the Best to protect and the Best to help!

Attribute	Explanation	Application to Leadership
'Ahd	1. Keeping a promise. 2. It is incumbent upon Muslims to keep their word and avoid being a hypocrite.	1. Leaders must keep all promises and contracts. 2. Leaders are not excuses from 'Ahd.

Qur'an Verse
Surah Al-Maedaj, Chapter 5, Verse 1:   حُرُمٌ وَأَنْتُمْ الصَّيْدِ مُحِلِّي غَيْرَ عَلَيْكُمْ يُتْلَى   O ye who believe! Fulfil (all) obligations.

Table 10: Five parameters of Islamic behavior. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Leadership an Islamic perspective*, Beekun, R.I., & Badawi, J, 1999 & Quran, *Search the Quran*, n.d., Retrieved from http://search-the-quran.com

School board members and Muslim principals who adhere to these behaviors demonstrate a strong commitment to guiding others toward erudition and uprightness through words and actions. The focus of Islamic education is to develop students through knowledge and cultivation of the skill sets necessary for leading righteous lives as productive members of the ummah (Muslim believers) and society at large (Shah, 2006). Accordingly, the role of Islamic education is perceived as "giving meaning to life and

enriching it, instilling discipline, preserving human values and strengthening and advancing human societies" (Shah, 2006, p. 367). These discernments interpose heightened expectations by Islamic school leaders to provide an effective education for all learners and to manage school operations effectively (Shah, 2006). Such efforts are only possible if school boards and administrators work together to produce successful administrative and financial structures (Qadri & Qadri, 2002).

Servant Leadership

Moving from the religious foundation of headship to practical application, Islam prescribes that one primary role of leadership is service. In this context, school boards and principals take on the position of servant leader (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). In modern times, Robert Greenleaf, founder of the modern servant leadership movement, is credited with coining the phrase "servant leadership" in an essay published in 1970 entitled *The Servant as Leader*. In this essay, Greenleaf postulated:

> The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to

become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will

they benefit or at least not be further deprived ("Robert K. Greenleaf Center",

n.d., para. 2).

Researcher Larry Spears (2010) distilled Greenleaf's concepts into a list of ten

characteristics central to the development of servant leaders. Table 11 below explains

these characteristics in detail.

Table 11.

Ten Characteristics of Servant Leaders	
Characteristic	**Explanation**
Listening	Servant leaders strive to identify the motivation and resolve of the group and seeks to clarify these attributes. Listening intently on what is being said or not said is of paramount importance. Adhering to one's 'inner voice' is also essential. Listening and self-reflection are crucial for the growth and development of servant leaders.
Empathy	Servant leaders try to understand and empathize with others. Individuals need to be recognized and appreciated for their strengths and talents. Successful servant leaders are skilled empathetic listeners.
Healing	The healing of relationships is very influential for transformation and integration.
Awareness	Self-awareness and general awareness provide strength and wisdom in the areas of ethics, power and values. As Greenleaf stated, awareness is "not a giver of solace-it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awaker. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity" (Spears, 2010, p. 27-28).
Persuasion	Persuasion is used as a means for convincing others and building consensus within groups. Coercion and positional authority are avoided.
Conceptualization	Servant leaders strike a fine balance between conceptual, long-term thinking and the day-to-day operational realities of their respective organizations.
Foresight	Foresight allows servant leaders to learn lessons from the past, be fully cognizant of present day realities and understand the consequences of the future. Foresight is entrenched within the perspicacious mind.

Ten Characteristics of Servant Leaders	
Characteristic	**Explanation**
Stewardship	Stewardship refers to holding something in trust for others because a commitment is embraced to serving the needs of others. The attributes of openness and persuasion are embraced, while absolute control is rejected.
Growth of Others	Servant leaders strive to help all individuals within the organization to grow and advance.
Building Community	Servant leaders look for ways to build up the community spirit within the organization. In this regard, Greenleaf stated all that is needed to rebuild "community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant leader demonstrating his or her unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group" (Spears, 2010, p. 29).

Table 11: Ten characteristics of servant leaders. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Character and Servant Leadership: Ten Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders,* Spears, L., 2010.

Based on the premise put forth by Greenleaf and expanded upon by Spears, servant leadership is an intrinsically inherent attribute rather than an externally driven entity. Extending this logic further, the primary force pulling people to education administration is an altruistic calling with an authentic passion to make a difference in the lives of stakeholders. In short, proponents of servant leadership maintain the vocation of service is embraced as a prerequisite to leading (Wheeler, 2012). This perspective reaffirms the moral bases of Islamic leadership as discussed in tables 9 and 10. Other qualities from this standpoint include living out core values, being humble and genuine, showing compassion, and maintaining calmness under pressure. Servant leaders manage others by building and fostering relationships. Through positive working relations individuals can be empowered to achieve to the best of their ability, embrace shared values, and achieve common goals. The quintessential definition of success for principals with this type of leadership style is applauding the advancements and accomplishments of others. Additionally, servant leaders are life-long learners in that

they view leadership development as a never-ending process (Wheeler, 2012). Wheeler

maintains that leaders who embody all of these eminences should be at the forefront

steering education institutions to overcome challenges and bring about innovations for

the future.

Wheeler (2012) identified ten principles and practices that characterize servant

leadership. These dogmata are detailed in table 12 below.

Table 12.

Ten Principles and Practices of Servant Leadership		
Principle/Practice	**Main Ideas**	**Strategies/Recommendations**
I. Service to Others is the Highest Priority	1. Commitment to service is a prerequisite to leading. 2. Servant leaders experience a calling or vocation to service. 3. Embracing the call to service helps to generate passion and commitment to overcome obstacles. 4. Leadership work is about the stakeholders.	1. Active listening. 2. Understand the roles and expectations of all faculty members and staff. 3. Be educated on generational differences. 4. Utilize several sources of power to positively influence others.

Ten Principles and Practices of Servant Leadership		
Principle/Practice	**Main Ideas**	**Strategies/Recommendations**
II. Facilitating Meeting the Needs of Others	1. The highest priority needs are multi-dimensional in nature involving the professional, personal and spiritual. 2. The importance of powerful listening. 3. Servant leaders comprehend the power of the spiritual in a work setting. 4. Understanding the background and motivations of others can aid in meeting their needs. 5. The objective is to build commitment and trust.	1. Ask questions that integrate the professional and the personal. 2. Be a visible model of holistic working and living. 3. Let people work out their own issues if possible. 4. Offer strategies and tools to facilitate success. 5. Protect each other's reputation.
III. Foster Problem Solving and Taking Responsibility at All Levels	1. Involvement and decision making are synonymous. 2. Where appropriate, involve stakeholders in the decision making process. 3. Take responsibility for decisions. 4. When needed and where appropriate, clarify the decision and seek out stakeholder input.	1. Recognize the importance and contributions of all staff members. 2. Treat all staff members equally. 3. Develop an attitude among faculty that all participants on the team are essential for success. 4. Make sure work groups have clear expectations and the resources to be successful. 5. Stress accountability for all individuals. 6. Foster consensus decision making.

Ten Principles and Practices of Servant Leadership		
Principle/Practice	**Main Ideas**	**Strategies/Recommendations**
IV. Promote Emotional Healing in People and the Organization	1. It is important to recognize those people who may need emotional healing. 2. Lack of emotional healing can impact individual and institution effectiveness. 3. It takes courage to intervene. 4. Promote civility and emotional healing.	1. Recognize the interplay of the professional and personal. 2. Be cognizant of the necessity of emotional healing for individuals and groups. 3. Tackle all problems in a ferocious manner, but be gentle on the people. A delicate balance of strength and gentleness must be adhered to when dealing with people who cause the problems. 4. Use expert and outside resources when necessary.
V. Means are as Important as Ends	1. Know the difference between means and ends. 2. Using inappropriate means to accomplish any goal devalues trust and development. 3. Servant leaders are not fearful of difficult decisions because they are willing to sacrifice along with other stakeholders.	1. Seek input from others on the most effective means to accomplish stated goals. 2. Do not be afraid to make modifications and adjustments when needed. 3. When a decision has been rendered from the top down, seek input from those impacted to determine the best means of application. 4. Model sacrifice and emotional healing as needed.

Ten Principles and Practices of Servant Leadership		
Principle/Practice	**Main Ideas**	**Strategies/Recommendations**
VI. Keep One Eye on the Present and One on the Future	1. Neglecting the present or the future will bring about disastrous results. 2. The importance of policies, protocol, and structures to maintain a balance on the needs of the present and the future. 3. Transformations occur when stakeholders are empowered to follow through on commitments and actions. 4. Use innovation and positive reinforcement. 5. Cultural change is an exercise in time and patience.	1. Have candid discussions about the present and the future. 2. Ensure that the appropriate staff and processes are in place to promote efficient operations of the present and to anticipate the future. 4. Clarify values as needed. 5. Visit and research other institutions for ideas on improvement.
VII. Embrace Paradoxes and Dilemmas	1. There are times when two competing ideas may be equally valid. 2. Servant leaders take the time to explore and understand all sides of an issue or situation. 3. Active listening plays a crucial role to solving paradoxes and dilemmas.	1. Have frank discussions with stakeholders on the importance of paradoxes in decision making. 2. Encourage all associates to recognize multiple sides to any issue or situation. 3. Make sure people are fully aware of latent consequences.

Ten Principles and Practices of Servant Leadership		
Principle/Practice	**Main Ideas**	**Strategies/Recommendations**
VIII. Leave a Legacy to Society	1. The importance of being a good steward. 2. Take small actions on a daily basis to ensure the efficient and effectual use of resources. 3. The future is considered and a vision is embraced and followed. 4. Impactful stewards are leaders and followers. 5. The importance of leadership succession.	1. Clarify one's legacy. 2. Foster the use of sustainable resources. 3. Discuss the necessity of being service oriented. 4. Evaluate institutional effectiveness in preparing students to be citizens in a complex world. 5. Develop a plan for leadership succession. 6. Leave entities better than the state one received them in.
IX. Model Servant Leadership	1. Servant leaders are a living example of their principles and values. 2. Leadership is about serving the primary needs of stakeholders. 3. Provide others with opportunities for growth and success. 4. Servant leaders are morally courageous individuals.	1. Model important values and practices and encourage others to do the same. 2. Articulate the values behind all decisions made and practices carried out.
X. Develop More Servant Leaders	1. Modeling servant leadership principles may encourage others to do the same. 2. Utilize formal and informal teaching and experiences to develop future servant leaders. 3. Evaluations can play a positive role in servant leadership development.	1. Model and discuss servant leadership. 2. Infuse leadership development in all professional development opportunities. 3. Formally evaluate leadership and service.

Table 12: Ten principles and practices of servant leadership. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Servant Leadership for Higher Education*, Wheeler, D., 2012.

In Islam, the best example of demonstrating servant leadership principles as explained by Greenleaf, Spears, and Wheeler is Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) (Omar, 2011). Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), the last and most beloved prophet of Allah, substantiates that he is a servant leader. Three significant dimensions of his demeanor that highlight this point include justice, mutual consultation, mercy and compassion (Omar, 2011).

The quality of justice was an unbending component to the life and mission of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). In the Qur'an it is stated:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ
We have surely sent Our Messengers with clear signs, and we sent with them the Book and the Balance, so that they may establish justice among humankind.
Quran Surah al-Hadid 57: 25

In addition to justice, Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) endorsed and practiced shura. Shura is defined as a "consultative process of decision making" (Beekun & Badawi, 1999, p. 139). This approach to seeking counsel is highlighted in the Qur'an. In surah Ali-Imran, shura is referenced by stating:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ
It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (Their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast Taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).
Quran Surah Ali-Imran 3: 159

The final attribute that exemplifies servant leadership is rahma. Rahma refers to mercy and compassion (Omar, 2011). Allah sent the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) to be

a source of tenderness, mercy, and compassion to the world. As stated in surah al-Anbiya:

لِلْعَالَمِينَ رَحْمَةً إِلَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ مَاوَ
We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.
Quran Surah al –Anbiya 21: 107

Matters of justice, consulting others for advice, and mercy as displayed by the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) all underscore important breadths of servant leadership. In addition, Islam maintains that he is the best of leaders as reflected in surah al-Ahzab. The Qur'an states:

اللَّهَ وَذَكَرَ خِرَالْآ وَالْيَوْمَ اللَّهَ يَرْجُو كَانَ لِمَنْ حَسَنَةٌ أَسْوَةٌ اللَّهِ رَسُولِ فِي لَكُمْ كَانَ لَقَدْ كَثِيرًا
Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah.
Quran Surah al –Ahzab 33: 21

The life and ways of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), the Holy Qur'an, the moral bases of Islamic leadership, and being of service to others are the hallmark exemplars for principals and school board members to follow when leading Islamic K-12 schools.

Leadership Principles

When evaluating the effectiveness of any institution, perhaps the single most important factor in determining success or failure is quality leadership (Vecchio, 2007). Superior leadership is the necessary mainstay to sustain any established achievements and for any improvement strategies. Top notch headship provides unity of purpose and greatly influences the direction that the organization takes. When leaders promote a social milieu that is collegial where all people to some degree play a role in the decision making process, then individuals are more apt to strive to accomplish the vision and goals

of the institution. The converse is also true. In short, good leadership is essential to improve and sustain quality across any organization. However, defining leadership outside of the Islamic perspective is an exigent undertaking because the attributes that constitute quality leadership is a social construction based on the values and events of any given time period (Ciulla, n.d.). A review of the literature demonstrates that many delineations of leadership exist. However, universality is lacking because the concept of leadership itself is arbitrary and subjective (Yukl, 2006). The multiplicity of follower interactions within the many diverse organizations and environments also contribute to the intricacy of properly defining leadership (Steward, 2006).

Despite these challenges, some researchers have provided workable frameworks from which to view leadership. For example, Gary Yukl (2006) defines leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (p. 8). Correspondingly, Peter Northouse (2010) describes leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 3). These explanations allude to several components central to the occurrence of leadership. Table 13 below identifies these leadership principles.

Table 13.

Leadership Principles
1. Leadership is a process.
2. Leadership involves influencing others.
3. Leaderships originates from a group context.
4. Leadership involves goal achievement.
5. Goals are a shared entity between leaders and followers.

Table 13: Leadership principles. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Cases in leadership,* Rowe, W.G., & Guerrero, L., 2011.

The act of defining leadership as a process suggests that such attributes are not limited to a select group of individuals bequeathed at birth. Rather, leadership as a process is "a transactional event that happens between leaders and their followers" (Rowe & Guerrero, 2011, p. 1). In essence, there is a clear distinction between trait and process leadership.

Trait leadership refers specifically to individual factors that influence thoughts and actions taken (Jago, 1982). Beliefs, values, thought patterns, personal responsibility, work ethic and countless other personas can be mentioned here. Individuals who excel in trait leadership tend to have leadership self-confidence, which can potentially translate to collective confidence among team members (Chemers, n.d.). The underlying assumption is that some people are just natural born leaders with abilities not possessed by all individuals (Rowe & Guerrero, 2011). This view differs significantly with process leadership. Process leadership refers to the technical knowledge and skill sets needed to effectively run an organization (Jago, 1982). In other words, good administrators possess organizational intelligence. This type of astuteness can be defined as having knowledge of and knowing how to apply best practices, as well as being dynamic and adaptable to change (Chemers, n.d.). The argument can be made that people can learn and improve in this aspect of leadership. Leadership in this circumstance is seen as contextual and suggests that everyone has the potential to be a leader (Northouse, 2010). The end result is that quality governance includes elements of both process and trait leadership. In addition, positive leaders will take into account the concerns of stakeholders who may disagree with them.

The Hay Group, a global management consulting firm, conducted a study on what employees consider to be important keys to effective leadership and satisfaction with the organization as a whole. The top two indicators were:

1. Trust and confidence with top leaders in general.

2. If management can communicate in a respectful and successful way with the workers, more times than not leaders win the trust and confidence of its employees. This situation is best accomplished when subordinates understand the strategies used by the organization to achieve goals, recognize their role in this process and information is shared openly (Lamb & McKee, 2004). Elements of trait and process leadership are evident in these results. When applied to Islamic education settings, rudiments of both approaches to leadership may be evident on an individual basis and in the running of the day-to-day operations of K-12 schools. However, for many Islamic schools, the concept of shura is embraced and followed. This process involves making important decisions in collaboration as directed by Islamic principles. More than likely, therefore, the majority of Muslim school leaders are bound to follow the path of process leadership.

Islamic School Board Organization

In Islamic K-12 settings, elements of process leadership and shura are set up in school governance structures. The highest leadership position for the majority of Islamic schools rest with the school boards because they are ultimately held accountable for the success or failure of their respective institutions (Qadri & Qadri, 2002). When establishing Islamic school boards, there are several characteristics to take into account in order to create an effective governing body. These properties are detailed in Table 14 below.

Table 14.

Structure and Governance Properties	
Property	**Guiding Questions**
Board Selection and Process	What are the requirements? What process is followed to select board members?
Board Size and Organizational Structure	What is optimal number of board members?
Legal Document	What are the by-laws of the board? What are the procedures to follow to carry out board functions?
Defined Responsibilities	What are the defined roles of individual board members?
Relationships	How will relationships with stakeholders be maintained?
Conflict Resolution	What is the process to manage conflict? Who will oversee matters related to conflict resolution?
Evaluation of the School Board	Who will evaluate the board and what process will be employed?
Finances and Assets	Are finances being maintained by a professional accountant? Are finances and assets shared with other organizations? Is there long-term financial planning?
Governance or Management	Is there a clear distinction between the roles of the board and principal? Who makes the final decisions in the day-to-day operations of the school?
Professional Growth	Do board members update their skill sets with professional development training or schooling?

Table 14: Structure and governance properties. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *The school board handbook,* Qadri, Y., 2009.

Creating, building, and sustaining Islamic K-12 schools are complex, demanding endeavors. Advancing Muslim schools to a higher level of excellence takes vision, dedication and strategic planning on the part of Islamic school boards. In order to be

agents of change and accomplish the goals they set for their academic organizations, the structure and governance properties discussed in Table 14 must be seriously considered and judiciously implemented. The manner in which board members perform their assigned roles and measure growth can be examined via a developmental lens. Typically, the life cycle of Muslim school boards can be identified through three distinct stages. These phases include:

1. Stage 1 – Founding/Working Board

2. Stage 2 – Policy Board

3. Stage 3 – Strategic/High Impact Board (Ozgur, 2014).

During stage 1, there is a strong desire and commitment to establish Islamic K-12 schools to meet the needs of Muslim students and families. Typically, a few visionary and high impactful leaders take the reins and do whatever needs to be done to make the dream a reality. With vigor and zeal, any tasks that need to be completed to get the school operational are undertaken by the board members and other committed stakeholders. A great sense of pride and fulfillment often follows when families place their trust in the school and enroll their children. However, this feeling of accomplishment often gives way to moods of apprehension and concern. Most board members eventually recognize that running a school takes more time than anticipated. They may also feel unprepared for their post and consensus may be lacking on the roles and responsibilities to be carried out. Either out of necessity and survival or group consensus, most school boards come to realize the importance of hiring qualified staff to ensure the successful running of schools, especially for the principal position (Ozgur,

2014). The vision of the institution plays a critical role at this point in the developmental process.

Islamic school boards are tasked with the objective of inspiring the vision of their organizations (Qadri, 2009). Therefore, it is important that board members hire the best personnel to live out and accomplish the vision of the school (Qadri, 2009). The highest leadership position the board must reflect on and employ is the principal. This decision is critical because:

> The role of the principal is pivotal because it involves putting the beliefs of the principal as an educator into action to achieve student and school success. As a leader, the principal must be able to appraise the present, anticipate the future, and collaborate with the school's stakeholders to develop a school vision that will yield a learning experience for all members of the learning community (Speck, 1999, p. 4).

The principals of Islamic schools play a dominant role in the effective functioning of the institution. They are beheld as "the liaison between the administration and the school board and an ambassador to the community" (Qadri, 2009, para. 39). School administrators would also be the primary individuals to build bridges and form necessary partnerships with the larger, non-Muslim community (Qadri, 2009). Consequently, individuals hired for the principal position by the board should be intrinsically driven to serve Allah and have the requisite skill sets to match. A sense of vocation and professionalism go hand-in-hand.

After going through some of the growing pains of school genesis, most Islamic school boards advance to stage 2 of the lifecycle. The working board begins to transform

to a policy board (Ozgur, 2014). With some established experience and the hiring of an effective principal, the board typically starts to let go of some of the operational duties that they have been performing. Authority and management of the day-to-day operations of the school gets delegated to the principal. A natural division of functions and leadership focus begins to emerge. The school administrator becomes the academic leader and manager of the school while the board successfully moves to becoming a policy board. Policies and guidelines are drafted to assist the principal in running school operations and for overall governance of the organization. Such an evolution is necessary to advance board effectiveness and to promote school growth (Ozgur, 2014).

As Islamic K-12 schools grow and show signs of achievement and board members have a better grasp of their functions and responsibilities, there is the intuition to take the board to the uppermost echelon of leadership and governance. When these goals are embraced and realized, the board undergoes a metamorphosis to become a strategic and high impact board (Ozgur, 2014). During stage three of the lifecycle:

Now it is time for the board to evolve to a new stage, which is the high-impact board. Usually at this stage, there is a professional and effective principal managing the school, the policies and procedures in place, there are prominent people on the board, responsible for planning, strategizing and raising funds for the organization. The board becomes a "high-impact board" by continuously developing and improving board governance so that they offer high-impact services to the community (Ozgur, 2014, p. 4).

As Islamic school boards advance through the phases of the lifecycle, there are some major responsibilities to which they must attend. These accountabilities are

outlined in Table 15 below. Improved efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out these

obligations should result when going from one stage to the next.

Table 15.

Islamic School Board Responsibilities	
Area of Accountability	**Explanation**
Establish Mission and Purpose	The board, in collaboration with the principal, develops, safeguards and lives out the mission and purpose of the organization.
Hire, Support, and Evaluate the Principal	The board hires the school principal. As such, board members must balance supporting, nurturing and evaluating the school principal. The principal is typically the only employee of the board.
Board Management	The adopted bylaws must be followed and members should be actively involved in their respective committee assignments.
Fiscal Oversight and Stability	The operating budget and major fund-raising efforts falls primarily on the shoulders of the school board.
Strategic Planning	Strategic planning, both short-term and long-term, is critical for the stability and growth of Islamic schools.
Develop Policies	The board adopts and consistently evaluates policies to ensure compliance with legal codes, Islamic principles, and the goals of the institution.
Legal Compliance and Ethics	The board must ensure that all established by-laws and practices are consistent with the legal code of their respective communities.
Improve the School's Lot	Improving the school's image and taking steps to garner support from the Muslim community specifically and the larger society in general are important functions of board members.
Monitor and Strengthen Programs	The board sets, measures and reaches their goals by monitoring and strengthening programs and services. All actions should adhere to the mission and vision of the school.
Ensure Accountability	Accountability is ensured through annual evaluations of the principal, individual board members, and the board as a whole.

Table 15: Islamic school board responsibilities. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Developing an exceptional board: Moving from a working board to an exceptional board,* Ozgur, N., 2014.

Howard Schultz, the CEO of Starbucks, wrote a book in 1999 entitled, *Lessons from the Top: The Search for America's Best Business Leaders.* Regarding leadership, Schultz made the following observation:

> I think it's very difficult to lead today when people are not really truly participating in the decision. You won't be able to attract and retain great people if they don't feel like they are part of the authorship of the strategy and the authorship of the really critical issues. If you don't give people an opportunity to really be engaged, they won't stay (Vogan, 2006, para. 2).

In essence, Schultz is making the point that true leadership, when it comes to making key decisions, is not a vertical process. Rather, it is a collaborative effort to accomplish common goals. With this approach, most people feel empowered instead of a worker simply taking orders. Using such a strategy may encourage people to ask questions, consider multiple perspectives on issues, be open to ideas that differ from their own and increase the likelihood that individuals will buy-in once a decision is finalized (Gardner, 2008). In today's society, using a distributed leadership style is more times than not valued by the entire team. It is also the mark of transparent, effective and excellent leadership. Other characteristics that people should possess when successfully leading institutions include vision, passion, great decision making abilities, being a team builder and character (Vogan, 2006). In this regard, when Islamic school boards advance to the strategic and high stakes stage, it is imperative that they use a distributed leadership model by hiring a qualified principal who shares the same vision conceptually and in practice. By working collaboratively to live out the mission and accomplish common

goals, the board and principal can bring this same mentality to the entire school team. The primary impetus for such initiatives resides with the school principal.

Principal Leadership

Principals are the academic leaders and administrative heads at the school level. All principals, regardless if leading a public, private or religious institution, face many challenges. Two issues that currently impact school leaders are student achievement and accountability measures. Due to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Race to the Top (RTTP) program, the hallmark of learner success depends on the results of high stakes testing. To ensure that students are receiving the best education possible, much of the focus has been on teacher effectiveness in the classroom and on merit pay. More recently, however, there has been a shift to take accountability measures a step further by scrutinizing the performance of principals. This action should come as no surprise given that President Obama's administration has made it a requirement for ineffective administrators to be removed from their positions if schools consistently struggle and if they are part of a federally funded turnaround program (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013). Taking it a step further, standardized test scores may soon become the norm as evaluation criteria for school principals. For example, during the 2013-2014 academic years in the city of Chicago, student achievement gains were considered as part of the assessment process for administrator effectiveness. Fifty percent of the evaluation involved student growth measures, including graduation rates, levels of attendance and test results. The other fifty percent focused on the professional practices of principals. In 2013, Illinois state law mandated that at least 25% of administrator appraisals be based on test scores. That number jumped to 30% in 2014

(Zubrzycki, 2013). Chicago Public Schools elected to surpass what the law requires.

Other states are also following suit. There is no dispute among most educators and the

general public that principals should be held accountable for student learning. The

debatable issue is to what extent, if any, standardized testing should be part of the

evaluation process of school administrators. This situation leads to the broader question

of determining the best means of gauging principal effectiveness. While the NCLB and

RTTP legislation impacts public schools specifically, Muslim schools are indirectly

impacted. Some Islamic schools, especially those institutions that are accredited or going

through the accreditation process, use some form of standardized testing to measure

student achievement. For many Islamic schools, there is uncertainty about the academic

quality from some Muslim families (Clauss, Ahmed, & Salvaterra, 2013). Consequently,

principals of Islamic K-12 schools are being called upon to ensure academic gains of

students and for accountability measures.

There are many valid concerns with legalizing the use of high stakes testing to

assess the performance of principals. For example, standardized testing does not account

for the full extent of learning that takes place in the classrooms. Also, the multiple choice

format and content of the examinations restrict the use of multiple intelligences and

critical thinking skills (Popham, 1999). It also encourages a one-dimensional way of

thinking and does not fully apply to real life situations (Sacks, 2001). Another concern

is that high stakes testing does not consider the learning that takes place outside the

school walls. Issues related to socio-economic status, parental involvement, and other

external factors influence student achievement (Ballard & Bater, 2008). In short, there is

the human element that comes into play when striving to educate our nation's young

people. Everybody is unique and the needs of pupils vary greatly. Society and the education profession dictate that teachers must be creative and do what they can to ensure the success of their students. In practice, this means using a variety of instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of learners. High stakes testing essentially ignores the complexity of the human element in the education process.

Another concern is with statistical variance. Since high stakes testing is norm-referenced, there will always be some students who will finish at the top and others who finish at the bottom. This circumstance is further exacerbated by the test companies and scorers of these exams. For example, if test takers are correct 90% of the time or higher on any of the questions, they are often omitted from the results (Popham, 1999). Consequently, these questions would be considered invalid because too many people answered it correctly. Following this logic, there will always be large groups of students and schools who do not reach the targeted benchmarks. The latent consequence here is that, indirectly, competition is at the heart of educational achievement. Directly or obliquely, this should not be the driving force in teaching and learning. Other concerns with high stakes testing include teaching to the test, high failure rates, neglecting certain subjects and other similar matters.

Given the many influences on student learning and issues related to high stakes testing, there is some trepidation with using standardized testing as a requisite in holding principals accountable for student achievement. There are even greater concerns from a research perspective. The positive aspect of legislating accountability measures is that it is engineering new studies on the effectiveness of school administrators on student learning. More inquiries are needed in this area because a review of the literature will

show that most investigators focus on what successful administrators do. The information is thin when attempting to make direct causation or correlation between the actions taken by school principals and the success of learners on standardized tests. There always has to be a starting point. Yet, problems arise when lawmakers establish formal policy on accountability that is flawed because it is not based on peer-reviewed research. Adding to the problem is that most laws are created without consulting qualified education professionals. For Islamic K-12 schools in the United States, the situation is even direr because of the lack of formal research on Muslim education issues. Many of these schools also operate with little or no scholarly guidance (Imam, 2007). These matters will ultimately have to be resolved if there is there is going to be a fair and valid assessment of principal effectiveness in all types of school settings.

Examining current investigations on the influence of administrators on student achievement will help to highlight the dichotomy that exists between accountability measures for principals and the findings of research. Detailed in Table 16 below are some of the most recent studies conducted on this topic.

Table 16.

Recent Studies on Principal Effectiveness and Student Learning		
Author(s)	**Year and Publication**	**Title**
Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin	2013 – Education Next	School leaders matter.
Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin	2012 – National Bureau of Economic Research	Estimating the effect of leaders on public sector productivity: the case of school principals.
Chiang, Lipscomb, & Gill	2012 – Mathematical Policy Research	Is school value-added indicative of principal quality?
Grissom, Kalogrides, & Loeb	2012 – Vanderbilt University	Using student test scores to measure principal performance.

Recent Studies on Principal Effectiveness and Student Learning		
Author(s)	**Year and Publication**	**Title**
Leithwood & Jantzi	2008 – Educational Administration Quarterly	Linking leadership to student learning: the contributions of leader efficacy.
Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe	2008 – Educational Administration Quarterly	The impact of leadership on student outcomes: an analysis of the differential effects of leadership types.

Table 16: Recent studies on principal effectiveness and student learning. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Review of Two Articles on Principal Effect"*, Orr, M.T., 2013. Retrieved from http://nepc.colorado.edu/thinktank/review-estimating-effect-principals

All of the studies mentioned above employed varying methodologies and statistical analysis when carrying out the research process. Despite the different approaches to the investigations, the researchers had the goal of establishing causation between principal effectiveness and student achievement. The conclusions drawn from these and similar studies had one common denominator. The findings showed that "principals have only an indirect impact on student test scores and that such analyses do not provide information about the principal behaviors associated with test score increases" (Orr, 2013, p. 9). Given the fact that major studies to date cannot conclusively infer that school administrators directly impact student scores on high stakes testing, lawmakers and school policies must take this fact into account when establishing evaluation protocol for principals. School boards must also be made aware of this research.

While formal research has yet to clearly establish direct causation between the actions taken by principals and student achievement, it would be naiveté to say that school leaders lack a role in this area. They clearly do. It is just a matter of logistics and how the influence is measured. The primary reason it is so difficult to make a direct

connection between administrators impact on test results is because of the multitude of circumstances that influence student learning. It is virtually impossible to control all of the variables. While there is benefit for such research initiatives to continue, it should be balanced with studies that consider what areas principals have control over that more directly influence student learning. For example, hiring qualified teachers and developing the skills of the entire school team, setting the tone and direction of school initiatives and making changes to the infrastructure of the organization to be more student-centric have direct impact on student learning and achievement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

When it comes to K-12 education, the bottom line is always the students. Their learning needs should always come first. While school administrators have many responsibilities and various stakeholders to answer to, the most important group is the learners. Principals must do all that they can to ensure that students receive the best education possible, that they are learning and that continuous achievement takes place. While formal research has yet to correlate specific influence of principals on student achievement, there is a body of knowledge that demonstrates strong and effective school leaders do make an impact. As claimed by the Wallace Foundation (2012):

> Education research shows that most school variables, considered separately, have at most small effects on learning. The real payoff comes when individual variables combine to reach critical mass. Creating the conditions under which that can occur is the job of the principal (2).

For more than a decade, the Wallace Foundation has supported multiple efforts to improve leadership in K-12 schools. Funding projects in 24 states and conducting more

than 70 studies on various aspects of school leadership, a solid foundation has been laid

to discern the nature of the role of principals, administrator effectiveness and how to

improve student achievement. Based on an analysis of all these research initiatives, there

are identified five attributes of highly effective principals. These characteristics are

highlighted in Table 17 below.

Table 17.

Functions of Highly Effective Principals
1. Implementing a vision of academic success for all learners.
2. Creating a social milieu conducive to learning.
3. Cultivating leadership opportunities for the entire school team.
4. Improving Instruction
5. Managing people, data, processes, and policies to bring about school improvement.

Table 17: Functions of highly effective principals. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *The school principal as leader: Guiding schools to better teaching and learning,* The Wallace Foundation, 2012.

Prior research conducted on principal leadership reaffirms the findings made by

the Wallace Foundation. For example, researchers Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and

Anderson (2010) commented from a research project that took six years to complete:

In developing a starting point for this six-year study, we claimed, based on a

preliminary review of research, that leadership is second only to classroom

instruction as an influence on student learning. After six additional years of

research, we are even more confident about this claim. To date we have not

found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the

absence of talented leadership. Why is leadership crucial? One explanation is

that leaders have the potential to unleash latent capacities in organizations (p. 9).

In addition, McEwan (1994) identified seven responsibilities that principals should engage in as instructional leaders of schools. Table 18 below underscores these responsibilities.

Table 18.

Seven Responsibilities of Instructional Leaders
1. Establish clear instructional goals.
2. Have an open door policy for faculty and staff.
3. Create a climate and culture conducive to teaching and learning.
4. Communicate the mission and vision of the institution.
5. Set high expectations for the staff.
6. Develop leaders in the school.
7. Maintain positive attitudes in all facets of the organization.

Table 18: Seven responsibilities of instructional leaders. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Seven steps to effective instructional leadership*, McEwan, E.K., 1994.

Professional Learning Communities

Given the critical role that principals play in shaping an environment conducive for authentic teaching and learning, professional development opportunities for school administrators should be a top priority to develop and improve their leadership abilities. Principals of Islamic K-12 schools in particular would benefit from such professional focused training. Many Muslim principals lack advanced degrees and may not have formal training in education administration (Saleh, 2000). In addition, some principals have been trained in other countries. As such, they need exposure to and must develop an understanding of leadership in the context of western society. One strategy to accomplish this goal and provide leadership training to principals and all school staff is the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

PLCs are the antithesis of traditional models of professional development. Removal from the equation is the primary role of outside specialists and off-site training.

PLCs are school site-based and the experts are the principals, teachers and all staff members within the school setting. In addition, there is a mental shift that takes place. Instead of professional development being viewed as a one or two day event, it becomes part of the psyche that each day presents opportunities for growth. In short, professional development becomes a collaborative and ongoing mechanism to meet the needs of schools and students (Linder, Post, & Calabrese, 2012). The defining traits of successful Professional Learning Communities include:

1. The primary focus is on student learning and this drives all relevant activities. The mission and vision statement also reflects this goal in some capacity and all staff member embrace this goal.

2. The team holds high academic expectations for all students.

3. To the degree that is possible, a shared leadership model is in place. Teachers play a role in the decision making process.

4. There is the perception of mutual support among all staff members.

5. The team works together and as professionals to address student needs.

6. The infrastructure and schedule is set up to support and encourage collaboration.

7. The habits of work and professional practice also reflect and encourage a collaborative learning environment (Sigurdardottir, 2010).

8. Action research is used to address the pertinent topics that are relevant to the school (West, 2011).

9. There is an overall focus on learning.

10. The team works together to accurately assess any given situation and to develop and implement "best practices".

11. There is a focus on continuous improvement.

12. There is an orientation focused on proof and results ("All Things PLC," n.d.).

The ideals and goals of Professional Learning Communities are sound. These epitomes are what all educators should strive to accomplish. However, there are some challenges and criticisms to this operational strategy. First, principals and teachers are already strapped with responsibilities, making time an issue (Linder, Post, & Calabrese, 2012). Larger schools may have a more difficult task of developing a strong attachment to the group process. If there is not complete buy-in by all stakeholders, PLCs are likely to be unsuccessful. The school culture, as well as beliefs on individual and collective accountability, also impacts the success or failure of Professional Learning Communities. School leaders also need to consider external factors like support from parents and the larger community, relevant laws and access to college and university campuses (Feger & Arruda, 2008). Finally, there are many schools that may claim to be PLCs, but they are not following the actual protocol and structure of such a program (DuFour, 2007). When this happens, the true intent and purpose of Professional Learning Communities can never be fully realized. This situation can also cause confusion as to what actually constitutes a PLC. A great deal of effort and emphasis needs to be placed on set-up, policies and role expectations for any program to be effective.

Schools that embrace Professional Learning Communities, or some variation, are part of the transitional period that seems to be taking place in the K-12 education world ("All Things PLC," n.d.). In simple terms, principals and teachers cannot work in

isolation any longer and presume to meet the needs of individual students and external expectations. There needs to be some level of collaboration to accomplish the objectives of legislation, state standards and school board directives. The argument can be made that perhaps this transition is already completed, but the focus now is how to best create collaborative environments and effective professional development programs.

As Islamic K-12 schools grow and expand, they will also have to consider how to best implement PLCs or some variation. Regardless of the types of programs used to promote professional growth, they should be complemented with a well-designed evaluation. This step is important to determine overall quality and effectiveness. Evaluation can be both formative and summative in nature. Formative assessments are important to use throughout the professional trainings to monitor progress whereas summative measures are used at the conclusion of programs to determine overall effectiveness. Based on the results of evaluations, actions can be taken to improve professional development programs for individual teachers or the entire school community (Cook & Fine, 1997).

When extending professional development training to Islamic schools that emphasize leadership and student achievement, there are some unique challenges to overcome. First, Muslim schools are in their infancy stage when compared to public school systems and other private schools. Second, there is not a clear consensus within the Muslim community and larger society on the purpose and function of Islamic education in American society. Finally, a theoretical and practical debate exists among Muslim school leaders on what constitutes Islamic pedagogy (Elbih, 2012). Despite these issues, it is imperative for Islamic school boards, Muslim principals and the larger

Muslim community to take greater initiative to resolve many of the challenges as outlined in Tables 6 and 7. Recommendations for such courses of action will be detailed in Chapter 5.

Another important element that must be given prominence for effective management of Islamic K-12 schools is the partnership between the school boards and principals. The working relationship between the boards and principals is crucial to the functioning of schools and the place it inhabits in the larger community (Qadri, 2009). In general, it is understood that school boards establish the mission and vision of the school and determine policies. The functions of principals are to impart the mission and vision and to implement the policies to accomplish common goals. Despite this clear distinction, many Islamic schools experience tension and disparities between the board and administration (Qadri, 2009). As Islamic schools advance past the stage of genesis, one possible strategy to address this situation is to follow the established constitution and bylaws of the organization. These policies typically state that the primary function of school boards are to govern more, while the task of principals is management of school operations (Qadri, 2009). To avoid putting undue stress on the principal position and blurring the leadership lines among school staff, steps should be taken to limit board interference in the day-to-day maneuverings of the school (Merry & Driessen, 2005).

There are steps that can be taken by principals and board members to help each entity maintain its proper focus. The school administrators can take the following steps when working with school boards:

1. Work with the board to develop an appropriate strategic plan mapping the direction of the school. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined.

2. When principals bring up issues for discussion at board meetings, be sure to provide proper justification.

3. Embrace and employ checks and balances to address all pressing school matters.

4. The culture of board meetings should be one of service and collaboration, not principal versus the board.

5. Have an agreed upon criteria for evaluating principal effectiveness (Qadri, 2009).

There are also initiatives that school boards can take when in collaboration with the heads of school. These efforts include:

1. Trust the leadership abilities of the hired principal. Empower the principal to be the academic leader of the school rather than a puppet working under the hands of board members.

2. Have a clear understanding of the roles and functions of school administrators. Allow principals to do their jobs.

3. Work in collaboration with the principal to plan the yearly calendar, determine meeting agendas and be involved in the evaluation process of board members (Qadri, 2009).

Islamic school boards have a major impact on the perceived leadership roles of school principals, as well as practical implications on how administrators will carry out the functions of their position. Board members must be cognizant of this fact, as it impacts all facets of school operations.

Western Leadership and Islamic Leadership Principles

Muslim principals and board members are carrying out their professional and religious obligations in the United States. Consequently, there is bound to be some level of influence of Western leadership ideologies formally via schooling or professional development opportunities, or informally through daily practices and interactions with the larger society. There is also a practical need to be able to understand and work within different leadership modalities, as laws have to be followed for full time Islamic K-12 schools to exist and operate. Muslim school leaders must develop a working knowledge on matters impacting religious schools, laws that private schools must follow, public policy, historical and philosophical foundations of Islamic education and pedagogy and curriculum planning and development. Comparisons between Islamic and Western leadership principles are detailed in Table 19.

Table 19.

Western Leadership and Islamic Leadership Principles		
Category	**Islamic Leadership**	**Western Leadership**
Goals	The intention is to seek the pleasure of Allah by solving a problem by group consensus.	Problems are solved by groups, but no deference is given to Divine efforts.
Participants	Allah is always first, followed by the leaders and the willing followers.	There are formal and informal leaders and rarely do they follow a prescribed order.
Nature	Based on trust between leaders and followers.	Trusts are not involved. Rules and situational factors are considered.
Methodology	Shura, or consultation, is embraced.	Meetings, conferences, file reports, and so on are utilized.
Traits	Knowledge and application of Islamic principles are key.	Knowledge as prescribed by organizations is important.
Decision Making	The leader consults with others and puts trust in Allah while making a decision.	Decisions are made following rules and protocol with no mention of the Divine.

Western Leadership and Islamic Leadership Principles		
Category	Islamic Leadership	Western Leadership
Limitations of Leader	Leaders do not actively seek the position as it must come to them.	Leaders actively seek out opportunities for success.
Limitations of Follower	Followers are active in advising leaders.	In some circumstances, followers occupy a passive role.
Leadership Style	Leaders typically have a balance of democratic and authoritarian styles.	Authoritative, but democratic when needed.
Follower Style	Followers will advise the leader when requested to do so. Partial responsibility is accepted for any course of action. Leaders and followers are accountable to Allah and the organization.	Followers will advise leaders if requested to do so, but leaders are solely responsible for any course of action taken. Follower and leaders are accountable to the organization and no Divine entity.

Table 19: Western leadership and Islamic leadership principles. (A chart created by A. Farina using Microsoft Word Table Maker.) Adapted from *Managerial leadership: An Islamic perspective,* Ather, S.M., & Sobhani, F.A., 2008.

The success of full-time Islamic K-12 schools in the United States depends on quality leadership and effective collaboration between principals and board members embracing Islamic virtues and tenets, but also operating within the context of American, western society.

Summary

Islam is a monotheistic religion characterized by complete submission to Allah and the acceptance of Mohammad (PBUH) as the last prophet of God (Clauss, Ahmed, & Salvaterra, 2013). Islam is gaining significance in American society because it is the fastest growing religion in the country ("The Pew Forum," 2011). The Muslim population has also increased from approximately one million individuals in 2000 to about 2.6 million people in 2010 ("United States Census," 2012). In addition, according

to the *Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, the number of practicing Muslims in America can potentially reach 6.7 million by the year 2030 (Grossman, 2011).

As the Muslim population continues to grow in the United States, many families are interested in sending their children to Islamic schools for religious and academic instruction. In 2011, Keyworth conducted a study entitled *Islamic Schools of the United States: Data-Based Profiles*. The results of this investigation showed that there were approximately 235 full-time Islamic K-12 schools in the United Sates. This number is expected to increase in the foreseeable future (Keyworth, 2011). Accordingly, Islamic education institutions are becoming mainstays in the American education landscape. However, with the growth of Islamic K-12 schools, there are many challenges that school leaders must overcome (Table 6). Confronts are also present with principal positions (Table 7) and Islamic school boards (Table 8). If Islamic schools aspire to resolve all of their challenges, provide for the educational and religious needs of young Muslim students and thrive in American society, then a methodological approach must be utilized to improve the lot of Muslim principals and school boards. If there is a lack of efficacious leadership at the top administrative positions, then it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to address the many pressing matters impacting Islamic schools.

The moral bases of Islamic leadership are rooted in four layers of Islamic ethic character. These strata include Iman, Islam, Taqwa and Ihsan. Iman deals with matters of faith, Islam requires complete submission to Allah, Taqwa requires fear of Allah in the sentiment of God consciousness and Ihsan is the love of Allah (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). Leadership in Islam also has roots in servant leadership (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). For

Muslims, the prophet Mohammad (PBUH) is the best example to follow to be of service to others and to lead people and institutions (Omar, 2011).

In order for Islamic K-12 schools to function effectively and to meet the needs of stakeholders, the leadership structure in the top positions of school boards and principals must operate under efficacious governance structures (Table 14). In addition, Islamic school boards must hire the most qualified principals to lead their schools and to carry out the established mission and vision (Qadri, 2009). It is also imperative for Islamic school boards and principals to work in concert with each other in their defined roles as outlined in the by-laws of the organization. Finally, a balance is also needed by school leaders taking into account Western and Islamic perspectives on leadership (Table 19).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this phenomenological investigation are as follows:

1. How do Islamic school principals describe their leadership role as administrators of Muslim K-12 schools?

2. What impact does the school board have on the leadership role of principals in Islamic K-12 school settings?

Context of the Study

Six of the seven research participants are current principals of Islamic K-12 schools located in the United States. One participant was a former principal at several Muslim schools, but is now a consultant advising multiple Islamic schools in the United States. The geographical breakdown of school locations represented in this study can be found in Table 20 below.

Table 20.

Geographic Breakdown of Islamic K-12 School in the United States	
Number of Muslim Principals	**Geographical Location**
Three	West Coast
Two	South
One	Midwest
One	Multiple States

Broad descriptors are used for geographical locations due to the limited number of Islamic K-12 schools in many states. Taking this step was necessary to help ensure the anonymity of the participants in this study. Simply listing the states of some school locations could potentially make obvious who participated in the research. Finally, the

researcher resides in the State of Florida. Due to logistics and distance considerations, the study was conducted using email, Survey Monkey and telephone. Surveys were completed using both email and Survey Monkey. The two conversations were conducted over the telephone or using FaceTime.

Description of the Population

The research participants for this investigation were chosen using criterion sampling. Criterion driven selections involve meeting predetermined criteria prior to being considered for the study (Patton, 2001). A total of seven principals participated in this investigation. Table 21 below details the characteristics considered for participation in the study.

Table 21.

Criterion Sampling	
Criteria	**Result**
Country of Origin	United States: 5 participants Egypt: 1 participant Pakistan: 1 participant
Education Level	Doctoral Degree: 4 participants Education Specialist Degree: 1 participant Master's Degree: 2 participants
Geographical Location	West Coast: 3 participants South: 2 participants Midwest: 1 participant Multiple states: 1 participant
School-Mosque Affiliation	Yes: 4 schools connected to a Mosque No: 3 schools independent of a Mosque

Qualitative Inquiry

The purposes of this phenomenological study were to cognize and describe the shared meaning of principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools from the point of view of the research participants. The goal of this study was to describe the lived experiences of Muslim principals of full-time Islamic K-12 schools as they detailed their perceptions of

leadership roles, professional experiences as school administrators and the impact school boards have on their leadership functions in running their respective schools. The objective was to discover relationships, themes and divergences in the accounts of these principals. In this phenomenological study, open-ended surveys were administered and interviews were conducted to make these determinations.

Given the purpose, goal and objective of this study, a qualitative research methodology was an appropriate method to take for this person-centered approach by humanizing the problem of study and providing more in-depth analysis of the data to extend beyond numeric explanations. Qualitative researchers are interested in "understanding the meaning people have construed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in this world" (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). Utilizing qualitative methods when investigating certain phenomenon is also needed and justified because:

> We need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue. This detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work and allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature. We conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in the study…We conduct qualitative research because we want to understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue. We cannot separate what people say from the context in which they say it – whether this context is their home, family, or work…We also use qualitative

research because quantitative measures and the statistical analyses simply do not fit the problem (Cresswell, 2007, p. 40).

One particular qualitative method, phenomenological research, is utilized when it is essential to understand the common and shared experiences of several individuals in order to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Cresswell, 2007). Given the overall lack of scholarly research in the literature on Islamic education issues in the United States in general and Muslim principal leadership specifically, a phenomenological approach for this investigation is very appropriate.

Phenomenology, as a research methodology, is the study of conscious experience. The focus is on individual experiences, beliefs and perceptions on any given phenomenon. Questions asked and observations made strive to draw out the experiences of research participants and their perceptions. Interviews and in-depth conversations are the ideal methods used for such a purpose (Cresswell, 2007). To further expand on these points, researchers Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) define phenomenology as

>...a philosophical approach to the study of experience...that shares a particular interest in thinking about what the experience of being human is like, in all of its various aspects, but especially in terms of the things that matter to us, and which constitute our lived world (p. 11).

The conceptual rationale for this study is based on the intentionality of consciousness toward the perceptions and involvements of Islamic school principals as it relates to leadership. Intentionality of consciousness, as a phenomenological perspective, maintains that reality is inextricably linked to experience (Cresswell, 2007). "Not only can we think of the things given to us in experience; we can understand ourselves as

thinking about them. Phenomenology is precisely this sort of understanding:

phenomenology is reason's self-discovery in the presence of intelligible objects"

(Sokolowski 2000, p.4).

Figure 2.
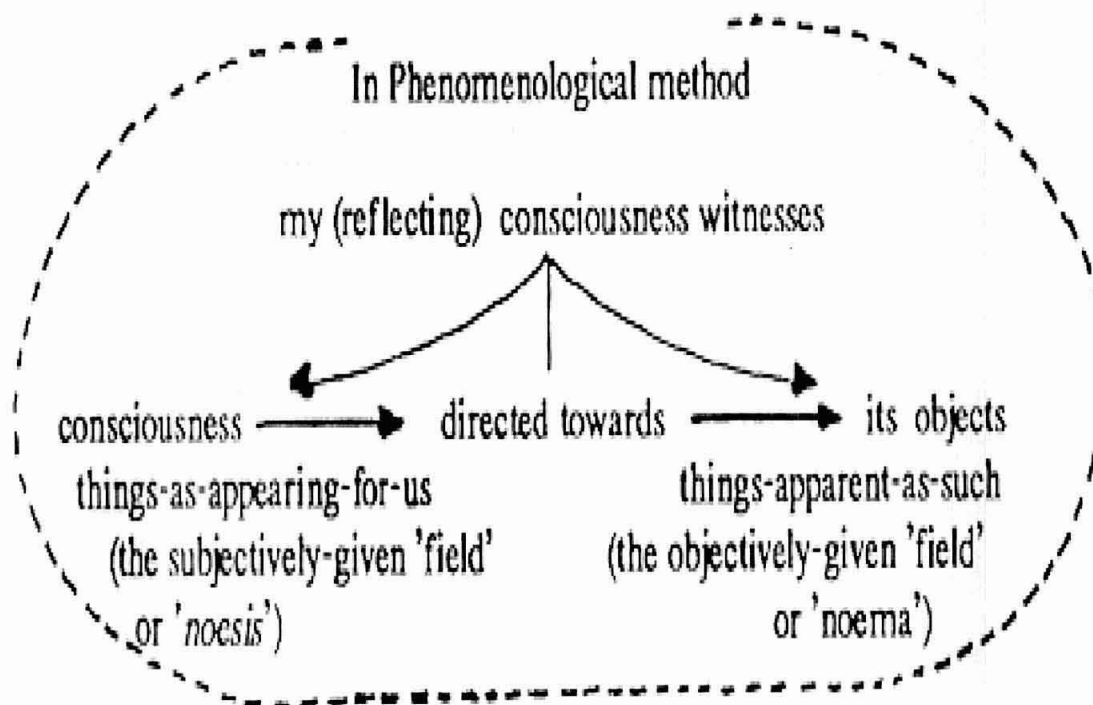
Figure 2. Consciousness intentionality as depicted by Husserl, E. Retrieved from
http://robertpriddy.com/P/3consc.html

Reality then, in this case principal leadership, is socially constructed based on the

meanings of the experiences assigned to them by the school administrators participating

in the study.

Instruments

Data was collected using four research instruments. Table 22 below provides

information on the instruments used in this phenomenological study.

Table 22.

Research Instruments		
Method	**Medium**	**Instrument**
Demographic Survey	Email	See Appendix A
Open-Ended Survey	Online via Survey Monkey	See Appendix B
Interview 1	Telephone or FaceTime	See Appendix C
Interview 2	Telephone or FaceTime	See Appendix D

Data Collection

The Islamic School League of America is a Muslim organization that strives to maintain an up-to-date database on Islamic K-12 schools located in the United States. This database can be accessed online at the following web address: http://theisla.org/FindASchool. Utilizing said resource, this researcher sought Islamic K-12 schools across the country and found contact information for the principals via the schools' websites. An email was sent to numerous principals describing the purpose of the study to gauge possible interest in confidential participation. Potential research participants were then cross-referenced with the criterion sampling requirements previously mentioned. Using this method, a total of seven participants were selected to participate in the study. To maintain anonymity of the research contributors in order to encourage open and honest dialogue and foster trustworthiness, their names were substituted with case numbers to identify them. In addition, no videotaping or audio recordings were utilized and all materials forwarded by them to this researcher were sent anonymously or kept anonymous by the researcher.

The research participants selected for this phenomenological study were sent a copy of the Institutional Review Board (Appendix E) approval for research and a consent form (Appendix F) to sign and return by email. Next, the principals were sent a demographic survey (Appendix A) to complete by email, as well as a link to participate

in an open-ended online survey (Appendix B) via Survey Monkey. Lastly, this researcher set up two interviews with each principal at a mutually agreed upon day and time. Due to logistical and distance considerations, interviews were conducted by telephone or FaceTime. Interview one (Appendix C) focused on principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools from the point of view of the research participants. The second interview (Appendix D) centered on the principals' perception of Islamic school board impact on administrator leadership.

To ensure accuracy of data collected, this researcher took copious notes during the interviews. The information was then sent back to the research participants via email for review, any possible revisions and approval.

Data Analysis

When undertaking a phenomenological study and working with the data collected, common themes begin to materialize (Kleiman, 2004). Consequently, a procedure is needed to code, categorize, and make sense of the essential meanings of the phenomenon being investigated. For this phenomenological study, the information collected from the Muslim principals was analyzed using a process called "horizontalization of data" (Cresswell, 2007). Horizontalization is a process of considering all data equally during the genesis phase of analysis. This data is then organized and grouped into emerging themes (Cresswell, 2007).

The first step in this process involved reading the data collected from surveys and interviews fully to develop an inclusive understanding of the topic being studied. Next, the same data was read a second time, but at a much slower pace and with a more critical eye. The purpose was to take note of explicit themes emerging from the collected data

(Kleiman, 2004). Finally, the data was examined for a third time. During the final review, a systematic identification of the statements made by the participants relating to the research questions were organized into meaningful units (Cresswell, 2007) and, to consolidate the gathered data, the themes found in the descriptions were then identified and labeled (Wertz, 2005).

Using the established themes revealed through analysis, this researcher proceeded to write a composite description of what the participants experienced. The resulting narrative is known as "textual description" and captures the essence of the phenomenon being studied (Cresswell, 2007). This situation represents the end goal of a phenomenological study. Moustakas (1994) explains the purpose of a phenomenological study and describes horizontalization as an "interweaving of person, conscious experience, and phenomenon. In the process of explicating the phenomenon, qualities are recognized and described; every perception is granted equal value, non-repetitive constituents of experience are linked thematically and a full description is derived" (p. 96).

Ethical Considerations

The participants in this phenomenological study provided information voluntarily and offered informed consent by reviewing, signing and returning the consent form back to this researcher. Participation in this investigation was of minimal risk. Minimal risk for research purposes is defined as "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests" ("United States Department of Health," 2010, para. 35). In

addition, no form of interventions, treatments or exploitations of any kind were utilized in this study. When this researcher interacted with the Muslim principals partaking in this study, emphasis was placed on open conversation to foster trust and rapport with the participants. The principals were also explicitly informed in writing with the consent forms and verbally at the start of the interviews that all information would be kept confidential.

To ensure that the data collected from surveys and interviews caused no psychological or societal harm to participants, all information gathered has continued to remain anonymous and confidential. All records acquired during this phenomenological investigation have been password-protected on two fronts. First, each document is assigned a password in order to access the information. Second, the records are kept securely on this researcher's password-protected computer.

Trustworthiness of Data

In this study, all efforts were made to ensure that the data collected was trustworthy and authentic. To provide assurance to the participants of ongoing anonymity, this researcher explained verbally and in writing that all information gathered would remain confidential by using case numbers instead of names as identification of the principals, that there would be no direct video or audio recordings of the interviews and that all documents would be password-protected   This researcher also took copious notes during the conversations which were followed by typewritten transcript summaries. The transcript summary of each interview was then sent to the corresponding participant for review, any possible revisions and approval. Taking this step gave the participants control over the information that was utilized for this study thereby helping to ensure that

their statements would not be misrepresented. Taking such approach added to the trustworthiness of the data collected which was essential to a qualitative research design.

Delimitations

The parameters of this study focused specifically on principal leadership and school board influence on administrator headship in Islamic K-12 schools located throughout the United States. Seven Muslim principals participated in this study based on criterion sampling. The characteristics considered were education level, country of origin, geographical location and school mosque affiliation. Islamic schools and Muslim schools were used interchangeably.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand and describe how Muslim principals in Islamic K-12 schools located in the United States describe their leadership role and how school boards impact their respective positions. This chapter summarized the research methodology that was utilized in this phenomenological investigation. This chapter included information on the following items:

1. Research Questions

2. Context of the Study

3. Description of the Population

4. Qualitative Inquiry

5. Instruments

6. Data Collection

7. Data Analysis

8. Ethical Considerations

9. Trustworthiness of Data

10. Delimitations

Chapter Four will report the findings of this study. Chapter Five will present the

conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Summary of Analyses

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the results of the dissertation research

study. Data was collected by the following means:

1. Demographic Survey (Appendix A)

2. Online Survey (Appendix B)

3. Two Semi-Structured Interviews (Appendix C and Appendix D).

The demographic survey was sent to the seven participants via email and returned

to the researcher using the same medium. For the online survey, the participants were

sent a link by email to answer 10 open-ended questions related to principal leadership and

Islamic school board impact on the principal position. Survey Monkey was the means

used to collect this information. This researcher received email alerts when the surveys

were completed. Finally, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the

principals over the phone or using FaceTime. Conversation 1 focused on principal

leadership from the view of the participants. The second interview concentrated on the

impact of Islamic school boards on principal leadership from the perspective of the

participants. A copy of the interview notes were sent to the participants for review, any

possible revisions and approval.

The information collected from the Muslim principals was analyzed inductively

using a method called "horizontalization of data" (Cresswell, 2007). Horizontalization is

a process of considering all data equally during the genesis phase of analysis. This data

is then organized and grouped into emerging themes (Cresswell, 2007). Based on the

established themes revealed through analysis, this researcher proceeded to write a composite description of what the participants experienced. The resulting narrative is known as textual description and captures the essence of the phenomenon being studied (Cresswell, 2007); this situation represents the end goal of a phenomenological study. Moustakas (1994) explained the purpose of a phenomenological study and described horizontalization as an "interweaving of person, conscious experience and phenomenon. In the process of explicating the phenomenon, qualities are recognized and described; every perception is granted equal value, non-repetitive constituents of experience are linked thematically and a full description is derived" (p. 96).

The results of this study are organized and reported in three parts. Part one focuses on demographic information. Part two addresses the human element of the topic being investigated by providing direct quotes and experiences of the research participants. Part three centers specifically on the research questions guiding this phenomenological investigation.

Theme one highlights the experiences and perceptions of principal leadership as described by the participants. The second theme focuses on the impact of Islamic school boards on principal leadership as expressed by the participants. Following the reported results for each theme, a composite description is provided. This rich, descriptive narrative is intended to reconstruct the lived experience of the participants as it relates to principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools and thus better comprehend the phenomena under investigation.

Summary of Results – Part 1

Summary of Individual Participant Backgrounds:

All participants in this study have one common denominator - the call to serve students, families and the larger Muslim community as principals of Islamic K-12 schools. The paths taken to secure such an important leadership position, however, are quite diverse. Below is a summary account of what lead the principals to take on administrator headship in Islamic, K-12 schools.

Research Participant 1:

Participant 1 started out studying Biology and Chemistry in college with the goal of becoming a physician. However, Participant 1 walked away from this career path because of the extensive focus on money and covering oneself on the job. Much more purpose was wanted out of a professional career. As Participant 1 considered options, it turns out that the local school district was hiring teachers on an emergency basis for high-need subjects. This situation was the genesis for forging a career path in Islamic education for Participant 1. This person had a science background. Consequently, the school district made the hire as a biology teacher. Ironically, Participant 1 replaced the biology instructor who taught Participant 1 in high school.

Participant 1 enjoyed the teaching position, but marriage would take this person to Egypt. Teachers did not earn high salaries in Egypt, but options existed to make money via private tutoring. Yet, the fact that many families could not afford private tutoring was bothersome for Participant 1. Ultimately, Participant 1 landed a position working in management for an American company that also operated in Egypt. This job was held for four years.

After five years in Egypt, Participant 1 came back to the United States, started a family and stayed home to raise the son. When the child turned 5, Participant 1 went back to work on the board of a local Islamic school where she had enrolled her daughter. The son had autism, so he attended another institution that could better meet his educational needs. This Islamic school on two different occasions found itself needing to hire a teacher under some tough circumstances. On both occasions, Participant 1 took on the task. During one school year, the existing principal left the position three days after school ended. Participant 1 heeded the call once again and became the school administrator. Accordingly, resigning from the board was necessary to avoid any potential conflict of interest. Embracing the call to be of service, Participant 1 helped the school by creating infrastructure, adopting an employee handbook and filling in the gaps as needed.

Research Participant 2:

Participant 2 earned a bachelor's degree in social sciences with an elementary teaching credential, two master's degrees in sociology and educational leadership and a doctoral degree in sociology. Participant 2 had been on faculty for several colleges and universities, worked in corrections and involved in school administration. This career path eventually led to being a principal of an Islamic K-12 school.

Research Participant 3:

Participant 3 has earned a bachelor's degree in liberal studies with an emphasis on education, health education and political science. Two master's degrees were earned; one in education and the other in school counseling psychology. A doctoral degree in educational leadership was also earned. Participant 3 has been a principal for 5 Islamic

schools, taught college courses and now runs an educational consulting company focusing on leadership, professional development, school development and advising school board members.

Research Participant 4:

Participant 4 maintains that God has something in mind for all people. For this participant, that plan was a vocation to serve in the field of education. When in college, Participant 4 was not aware at the time where her professional path would guide her. She became involved with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization, was a teacher's assistant in a Chinese classroom and switched hrt major from social work to Middle East studies. Given hrt major in college, Participant 4 ultimately ended up working in Islamic schools assisting with Islamic studies. During these efforts, the school's administrator saw leadership potential in Participant 4. Consequently, administrative duties were assigned, especially in the middle school area. When this principal retired, Participant 4 took on the administrative position. To prepare, a master's degree in educational leadership was earned. This degree has helped Participant 4 to successfully run and lead the school.

Research Participant 5:

In college, Participant 5 started out as French major and earned a master's degree in Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) geared toward adults. For 12 to 15 years, this participant taught English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to adults at the college level in the United States and in Egypt. As time moved forward, the opportunity presented itself to get involved in K-12 education. As a result, Participant 4 took pedagogy courses and earned teacher certification for grades four through eight. Utilizing her professional experiences, Participant 4 worked with a team of professionals

to open a charter school. Two years of voluntary work was invested to make this goal a reality. Once opened, Participant 4 worked for eight years in the charter school eventually being promoted to Curriculum and Instruction Director. With these successes in hand, a group whose Islamic school was experiencing growth approached Participant 4 to gauge her interest in an open principal position. This Islamic school had been run by a few teachers and a board member, but growth mandated a formal administrator with experience. Ultimately, Participant 4 left the charter school to take on the principal position, which is still held today.

Research Participant 6:

Participant 6 had aspirations of having a career in higher education. To achieve this goal, a master's degree in English and a doctorate in education administration were earned. Participant 6 started out as an instructor at the university level and was eventually promoted to Associate Professor. The ultimate goal was to get into administration. Success over a 10-year period was achieved in this area by holding positions of Vice President of Academic Affairs and President of a small private college. Upon hire as President, Participant 6 elected not to reveal the religious background, although this action was allowed by policy. The college was Christian based. After the events of 9/11, there was some disagreement within the college as to whether religious identification needed to be revealed. Conflict ensued and the superiors ultimately found out that Participant 4 was Muslim. This situation subsequently led to dismissal from the President position and hampered future success in higher education. After some time had passed, a friend of Participant 4 indicated that with the professional background and experiences, success and acceptance were possible in Islamic education. To explore this

path, Participant 6 took a teaching position in a K-12 Islamic school. This experience, together with learning how such schools operate, ultimately led to Participant 6 securing a principal position in an Islamic K-12 school.

Research Participant 7:

Participant 7 started out professionally in business and pharmaceuticals. With marriage on the horizon, Participant 7 moved to the Midwest. For community service purposes, this participant took on a teaching position in an Islamic K-12 school to meet community needs. This positon was held for six or seven years. Participant 7 had a bachelor's degree, but not formal training as an educator and decided that in order to continue down this professional path, proper academic training was needed. After consulting with family, time was taken off from the teaching positon to earn certification and a master's degree. Essentially, Participant 7 was earning the degrees to match the experience already acquired. Upon returning to Islamic education, a principal position was secured. However, due to difficulties working with the school board, this participant left this position to work in a charter school run by Muslims. This participant worked for three years in the charter school. During this time, an educational specialist degree was also earned. After this experience, Participant 4 went back to being a school principal in Islamic education. The board and principal relationship improved in this new position. In total, Participant 7's career path by the numbers include eight years in teaching, over ten years as an administrator or principal and approximately five years in corporate work.

To go along with the background information on what led the research participants to take on principal positions in Islamic K-12 schools, Table 23 below details the demographic data on the principals.

Table 23.

Summary of Individual Participant Backgrounds	
Demographic Information – Case Number 1	
Category	**Response**
Sex	Female
Country of Origin	Egypt
Formal Degrees Earned	BS – Biology MA - Educational Technology Ph.D. - Education, Cultural and Curricular Studies
Certifications	Single Subject Teaching Credential
Years Principal at Current School	11 years
Years Principal in General	11 years
K-12 Teaching Experience	Private Islamic school 1st and 4th grades, multiple subject teacher for 2 years, public high school and middle school science teacher for approximately 4 years
Geographical Location of School	West Coast
School/Mosque Affiliation	Independent School, but affiliated with an Islamic center
Grade Levels of School	Pre-K – 6
2014-2015 Enrollment	190 students
School Accreditation Status	Fully accredited
Number of Board Members	12 members (9 men, 3 women)
Professional Background of Board Members	Varied depending on the needs of the school

Demographic Information – Case Number 2	
Question	**Response**
Sex	Female
Country of Origin	United States
Formal Degrees Earned	B.S., M.A., M.A. and Ph.D.
Certifications	6 single subject teaching certifications
Years Principal at Current School	1 year
Years Principal in General	7 years
K-12 Teaching Experience	3.5 years of K-12 with adults (corrections) 6 years in a K-12 Islamic (substitute for absent staff/specialty teachers)
Geographical Location of School	West Coast
School/Mosque Affiliation	Affiliated with a mosque
Grade Levels of School	K-12
2014-2015 Enrollment	School is currently closed for new building construction

School Accreditation Status	Fully accredited
Number of Board Members	4 (3 men, 1woman)
Professional Background of Board Members	Senior professionals

Demographic Information – Case Number 3	
Question	**Response**
Sex	Female
Country of Origin	Pakistan
Formal Degrees Earned	Doctorate, Master's, Bachelor's
Certifications	Principal/Administrator certification
Years Principal at Current School	N/A; serving as consultant for several Islamic K-12 schools
Years Principal in General	10 Years
K-12 Teaching Experience	15 Years
Geographical Location of School	Varies
School/Mosque Affiliation	Both
Grade Levels of School	K-12
2014-2015 Enrollment	N/A
School Accreditation Status	Some schools are accredited
Number of Board Members	8-12 depending on the school
Professional Background of Board Members	Primarily business

Demographic Information – Case Number 4	
Question	**Response**
Sex	Female
Country of Origin	United States
Formal Degrees Earned	Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership Bachelor of Arts in Middle Eastern Studies
Certifications	N/A
Years Principal at Current School	10 Years
Years Principal in General	10 Years
K-12 Teaching Experience	Aide in 2nd grade in public school K-1 Islamic Studies teacher: 1 year 2nd and 3rd grade classroom teacher: 1 year 3rd and 4th grade classroom teacher: 1 year 4th grade teacher: 4 years 5th-8th grade Islamic Studies: 12 years 5th-8th grade electives: citizenship, science fair, speech and debate, acting
Geographical Location of School	West Coast
School/Mosque Affiliation	Currently affiliated with Islamic center

Demographic Information – Case Number 4	
Question	**Response**
Grade Levels of School	Pre-K-8
2014-2015 Enrollment	201 students
School Accreditation Status	Fully accredited
Number of Board Members	11 total (3 men, 8 women)
Professional Background of Board Members	Variety of professions, but mainly finance, marketing, business and legal

Demographic Information – Case Number 5	
Question	**Response**
Sex	Female
Country of Origin	United States
Formal Degrees Earned	Masters of Arts Bachelors of Arts
Certifications	Certified teacher for 4th-8th grades, ELA and Social Studies
Years Principal at Current School	2.5 years
Years Principal in General	2.5 years
K-12 Teaching Experience	K-8 administrator (Director of Curriculum and Instruction): 8 years University ESL teaching: 12 years
Geographical Location of School	South
School/Mosque Affiliation	No (independent school)
Grade Levels of School	PreK-9
2014-2015 Enrollment	277 students
Accreditation Status	Fully accredited
Number of Board Members	6 total (5 men, 1woman)
Professional Background of Board Members	An engineer, an accountant, a CFO, a business owner, a lab manager and an IT administrator

Demographic Information – Case Number 6	
Category	**Response**
Sex	Female
Country of Origin	United States
Formal Degrees Earned	AA, BA, MS, Ed.D
Certifications	N/A
Years Principal at Current School	Less than 1 year
Years Principal in General	3 years
K-12 Teaching Experience	Less than 3 years (grades 11, 12); one private school and one public school
Geographical Location	South
School/Mosque Affiliation	No – Independent

| Demographic Information – Case Number 6 ||
Category	Response
Grade Levels of School	PreK-6
2014-2015 Enrollment	124 students
School Accreditation Status	In process
Number of Board Members	4 total (4 men, 0 women)
Professional Background of Board Members	3 IT Professionals: 1 physician

| Demographic Information – Case Number 7 ||
Category	Response
Sex	Female
Country of Origin	United States
Formal Degrees Earned	BS - Business Administration Master of Arts in Teaching, Education Specialist in K12 Administration
Certifications	Expired secondary teaching certificate Activate Principal/Administrator certification
Years Principal at Current School	5 years
Years Principal in General	10 years
K-12 Teaching Experience	8 years in Islamic Schools
Geographical Location of School	Midwest
School/Mosque Affiliation	Independent
Grade Levels of School	PreK-8
2014-2015 Enrollment	471 students
School Accreditation Status	Fully Accredited
Number of Board Members	14 total (10 men, 4 women)
Professional Background of Board Members	Doctors, lawyer, engineers, dentist, homemaker, school teacher, college professors, finance professional and school director

A composite description of the demographic data collected on the research participants are summarized in Table 24 below.

Table 24.

| Composite Description of Demographic Data ||
Question	Composite of Responses
What is your sex (male or female)?	100% female

Composite Description of Demographic Data	
Question	**Composite of Responses**
What is your country of origin?	71% Responded United States Detailed breakdown: USA: 5 Egypt: 1 Pakistan: 1
Highest degrees earned.	Doctoral: 4 principals Education Specialist: 1 principal Master's: 2 principals
Relevant certifications.	4: Some form of State Teaching Credential 2: Reported none 1: Reported Principal/Administrator Certification
How many years have you been principal at your current school?	Average: 6.07 years Detailed breakdown as follows: 1 year: 1 2.5 years: 1 3 years: 1 5 years: 1 10 years: 2 11 years: 1
How many years have you been a principal in general?	Average: 7.64 years Detailed breakdown as follows: 2.5 years: 1 3 years: 1 7 years 7 10 years: 3 11 years: 1
Do you have K-12 teaching experience? If yes, how many years and what grade levels? Public, private, or Islamic schools?	K-12 Teaching Experience: 100 % responded "Yes" 100% taught at an Islamic School Detailed breakdown: 7.9 years reported average tenure 1 responded as having taught ESL 1 responded as having worked with adult learners in corrections 1 responded as having extensive public school experience

Composite Description of Demographic Data	
Question	**Composite of Responses**
(Detailed Breakdown Continued)	6 responded as having the majority of their experience in private schools Aide in 2nd grade in public school K-1 Islamic studies teacher: 1 year 2nd and 3rd grade in public school: 1 year 4th grade teacher: 4 years 5th-8th grade Islamic Studies: 12 years 5th-8th grade electives: citizenship, science fair, speech and debate, acting, media literacy, life skills, human development 8 years in Islamic Schools 3.5 years of K-12 with adults (corrections) 6 years in a K-12 Islamic (substitute for absent staff) Public high school and middle school science teacher for approximately 4 years Private Islamic school 1st and 4th grade multiple subject teacher for 2 years 15 years both private and public school experience K-8 administrator (Director of Curriculum and Instruction) for 8 years University ESL teaching: 12 years Less than 3 years (grades 11, 12): one private, one public
Geographic location of school?	Detailed breakdown: West Coast: 3 South: 2 Midwest: 1

Composite Description of Demographic Data	
Question	**Composite of Responses**
	Multiple States: 1
Is your school affiliated with a Mosque or independent?	Mosque Affiliation*: Yes: 4 No: 3 1 responded that the school is working on filing independent status 2 responded that they were affiliated but independent and were, therefore, counted as affiliated
What are the grade levels for your school? How many years has the school been in operation?	Levels of Education: K-12: 2 Pre-K-9: 1 Pre-K-8: 2 Pre-K-6: 2 Years of operation:3 Responded N/A Of the 4 that responded, the average was 15 years Detailed breakdown of years:(31, 10, 14, 5)
For the 2014-2015 academic years, how many students are enrolled in your school?	How Many Students Enrolled? 252.6 Average* 2 responses removed from the sample, as both were unable to provide enrollment figures Detailed breakdown of total enrollment: 201, 471, 190, 277, 124, 2 N/A
What is the accreditation status of your school?	Accreditation Status*: Fully Accredited: 4 schools Accreditation in Process: 1 school Not Accredited: 1 school *One respondent works with several schools. Some schools are accredited, while others do not have this designation
How many members are on your school board? How many board members are men? How many board members are women?	Average number of board members: 8.5 Total gender makeup of the board: 31 men, 16 women* Two schools omitted as gender breakdown information was not provided. Detailed breakdown of board members for each school: 11 total (3 men, 8 women)

Composite Description of Demographic Data	
Question	**Composite of Responses**
	14 total: (10 men, 4 women)
	4 total No gender breakdown provided
	12 total (9 men, 3 women)
	8-12 (varies) total No gender breakdown provided
	6 total (5 men, 1woman)
	4 total (4 men, 0 women)
Are schoolboard members appointed or elected? How many years are board members allowed to serve?	5 responded that they were appointed 1 responded of being elected 1 did not respond. Detailed breakdown as follows: Elected by the Board Appointed, new by-laws call for 2-year seats Appointed through a self-perpetuating model: the board's executive committee, working with the head of school, chooses prospective board members and recommends them to the board for vote Terms are 3 years renewable once for a total of 6 years maximum Appointed; no limit 10 years – Did not answer as to appointment Appointed; no set time period for term of service

Composite Description of Demographic Data	
Question	**Composite of Responses**
What is the work/professional background of school board members?	Detailed breakdown follows: Variety of professions mainly in finance, marketing, business and legal areas. Doctors, lawyer, engineers, dentist, homemaker, school teacher, college professors, finance professional, school director Senior Professionals Varied; recruited based upon the strategic plans for the school Mostly business An engineer, an accountant, a CFO, a business owner, a lab manager and an IT administrator 1 physician, 3 IT professionals

Results of the Study – Part 2

The Human Element

One component of the research process involved having the participants complete an open-ended survey via Survey Monkey. The results of the survey were returned anonymously to the researcher in order to promote open and honest responses. When conducting qualitative research in general and phenomenological investigations in particular, it is essential to dig deeper and capture the human element on the topic being studied (Cresswell, 2007). The objective is to capture the essence of the topic at hand; to tell the story of the research participants. To accomplish this goal, the following questions were posed to the Muslim principals who participated in this study:

1. What factors influenced you to become an Islamic school principal?

2. How has your didactic leadership style changed since you first began your role as principal?

3. How would you describe school leadership from an Islamic perspective?

4. In your experience as an educator and principal steeped in the Islamic faith tradition, how would you say your school board has helped shaped your approach to leadership?

5. Describe an instance when you felt your leadership style was in conflict with the needs of the school board. How did you resolve the situation?

6. From a principal's point of view, how do you navigate working with school boards?

Selected direct quotes as written by the research participants in response to the online survey are reported below.

The following question was posed to the research participants in the online survey: What factors influenced you to become an Islamic school principal? Based on the responses given, the following motivators were mentioned:

1. Being of service

2. Providing guidance

3. Belief in the mission and vision of the school

4. 9/11

5. Grow Islamic schools

6. Personal responsibility

7. Children enrolled in the school

8. Related motivators

These themes are highlighted in the quotes below made by the research

participants.

Table 25.

What factors influenced you to become an Islamic school principal?
Direct Quotes from the Research Participants
1. "I was compelled to serve the school and my community because I believed in the mission and vision. My own daughter was enrolled in the school, so I had a personal desire to see the school fulfill its promises to families."
2. "It is very important to provide guidance to our children, since many of their parents grew up depending on the schools and the community to teach Islam. They are unprepared to prepare their children to develop faith in this environment."
3. "In 2001 I became President of xxx College without telling them of my faith. Shortly after 9/11 happened, my faith became public and a good number of alumnae were opposed to having a Muslim as the President of their alma mater. They started a smear campaign that caught traction…."
4. "To help Islamic Schools grow."
5. "My intention to be of service to Islamic schools developed after about 10 years of teaching experience at the college level, when I had my 4 own children enrolled in the local Islamic school. I wanted to influence that school to adopt best practices, for continuous improvement for the children of our Ummah."
6. "At first, the main motivation was a sense of responsibility… Later on, this responsibility transformed into a passion to safeguard the mission of the school and ensure positive learning experiences for our children."
7. "I was recruited into helping start a brand new school. I knew the people involved, it was attached to the masjid near my house and I thought I would be useful to the community through my experience and expertise in the field of education."

The next question posed to the research participants in the online survey: How

has your didactic leadership style changed since you first began your role as principal?

Based on the responses given, the following attributes became apparent:

1. Bridge builder

2. Collaboration

3. Facilitator

4. Advisor

5. Community school

6. Professional growth

7. Related attributes

These attributes are highlighted in the quotes below made by the research participants.

Table 26.

How has your didactic leadership style changed since you first began your role as principal?
Direct Quotes from the Research Participants:
1. "I have always been a bridge builder and I believe in collaborative decision making. I like to hear all sides before making a decision so that all parties feel like their voice has been heard in the process. I also believe that I would never ask someone to do a job that I was not willing to do myself. As a school leader, I try to make the school environment a pleasant working and educational environment for the faculty and students. I would not say that my style has changed much, but I used to be the direct contact for all parents, students, and faculty members. As the school has grown, we have built in structures such as directors, so I do not have the same direct pulse on each individual on campus as I used to."
2. "I have become more of a facilitator and advisor, to support the community in developing leadership skills appropriate to this environment."
3. "My leadership style has changed because most Islamic schools are community schools. My earlier style was centered around shared governance which caused me to work with faculty members to meet the institutions' goals and objectives. When I first became principal, I did not understand how hands-on the school boards are in this environment. Neither did I understand the importance of catering to parents as more than just stakeholders. They are customers, and they expect to be heard and sometimes kowtowed to in the more extreme cases. In other cases, they want to have the school take on part of their parenting responsibilities because of their professional commitments. Above all, they want their children to receive strong academic foundation as well as a strong Islamic education. I am much more conscious of accommodating parents whereas before I may have drawn a line of where our jobs as educators began and ended."
4. "Have had a lot of personal and professional growth."
5. "I have always been collaborative, a 'team player,' and interested in reflective observation of the best models for any particular quality I was seeking, for either my charter school (8 years' experience) or my current Islamic school (3 years). The leadership style was influenced by what I observed in the charter school movement in which credentials were less important than vision, ability to articulate innovative yet effective techniques and strategies and a focus on the student outcomes necessitated by such a competitive paradigm as charters."
6. "I believe my confidence grew over the years as I became more comfortable with the leadership position and actually envisioned myself as the instructional leader of

How has your didactic leadership style changed since you first began your role as principal?
Direct Quotes from the Research Participants:
the school. My master's program in Educational Leadership greatly improved my understanding of visionary leadership and not just management of the school's day-to-day operations. This has helped guide my focus on teacher development and engaging the faculty in a culture of collaboration and collegiality."
7. "I began with the philosophy of servant leadership as my guidepost and I still observe that. However, with experience, I have become much more aware of the weight and the Amanah that the role entails, have evolved to become more cognizant of the relationships I cultivate, more trusting in what Allah swt has written for me and more grateful for His blessings daily."

The third question posed to the research participants in the online survey: How would you describe school leadership from an Islamic perspective? Based on the responses given, the following leadership themes emerged:

1. Servant leadership

2. Strength and character

3. Follow the example of prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

4. Leadership principles similar to other schools

5. Integrity

6. Shura

7. Related leadership principles

These leadership qualities are highlighted in the quotes below made by the research participants.

Table 27.

How would you describe school leadership from an Islamic perspective?
Direct Quotes from the Research Participants:
1. "I think about the 'leader of a people is their servant.' I believe a leader should have strength, strong character - but they do not have to be intimidating to be effective."
2. "Following the example of the Prophet and fostering the development of an Islamic environment within a non-Muslim society."

How would you describe school leadership from an Islamic perspective?
Direct Quotes from the Research Participants:
3. "I'm not sure that school leadership is any different from an Islamic perspective vis-a-vis a non-Islamic one. With the move to standards-based education, Islamic school leaders are charged with the same challenges that others are to a point. The additional responsibility for Islamic educational leadership creates a need to incorporate our Deen into our scheduling and curriculum (and role modeling), but the principles of leadership remain the same."
4. "I am a servant leader and a transformational leader."
5. "I see the Prophetic Model as the preferred school leadership model for Islamic schools. With a focus on Taqwa, God-Consciousness, Islamic school leaders must start with the central feature of Tarbiyah, upbringing of children in Islamic values. This is a broad concept, not a narrow one that leads Islamic school leaders to embrace best practices based on research, high standards and rigor for a goal of excellence in academics and character. Also, it embraces a leader's focus on the developmental stages of students from preschool to college, which includes an understanding of Fitra (innate nature) that is aligned with the current research on the stages of development and appropriate instructional and curricular approaches for each stage. Finally, such an approach is aligned with many best practices in the values-based study of education used by religious schools of all sects around the world, which links character, service and a holistic approach in teaching."
6. "One must lead with integrity, compassion and knowledge.... Engaging the faculty and staff in decision-making through consultation (shura) is another mark of good leadership from an Islamic (and professional) perspective. This is a driving force to nurture and develop a positive and effective school culture for the teachers and the students."
7. "The leader has to "be" an upright practicing Muslim truly dedicated to serving Allah swt first and foremost. The leader needs to recognize that while effort belongs to us, success belongs to Allah alone. Leadership is service, it's humbling, it's a weighty responsibility, and if we really knew what we were getting into beforehand, we would honestly run the other way. Once undertaken, it must be pursued with excellence. That means gaining knowledge of the field, building strong relationships with people and taking the counsel of your team as much as possible in decision making. No one is good at everything, so find strength in diversity. Surround yourself with people who complement your strengths by shoring up your weaknesses. Such a team will make the whole organization stronger."

Another question posed to these research participants in the online survey: In your experience as an educator and principal steeped in the Islamic faith tradition, how would you say your school board has helped shape your approach to leadership? Based on the responses given, the pendulum of school boards being very helpful, somewhat

helpful, or not at all helpful can be seen. These variances are highlighted in the quotes

below made by the research participants.

Table 28.

In your experience as an educator and principal steeped in the Islamic faith tradition, how would you say your school board has helped shaped your approach to leadership?
Direct Quotes from the Research Participants:
1. "The school board has gone through its own evolution over the years as I have developed skills. Initially, many of the board members were actively engaged in the operational aspects of the school. Before we had a CFO, there was a board member who took care of the accounting aspects of the school. Before we had a Director of Development, the board members were responsible for fundraising, and so on. I believe the board helped shape my leadership approach by supporting me as I grew as a leader and then trusting me to carry out responsibilities that were once on their plate. They attended professional workshops on what it means to be an Independent School Board Member or Board Chair along with me so that we can be sure to follow best practices."
2. "Not much help. School boards are not very helpful in Islamic schools."
3. "The school board has given me a picture of the gap between the community and what is required here to develop an effective organization."
4. "With the exception of my current school, my school boards have thwarted me. Because they were not educators, they tended to complicate matters (albeit from a position of trying to help) and prevented me from providing true leadership. I often felt like the hired help rather than a person with significant experience who could lead the school(s) to the next level. I never lasted in any of those earlier schools for more than six months because I felt that I was surrounded by ineptitude that I could not overcome. Because of the short tenure in those positions, I have developed more patience and tolerance for school boards that don't understand educational best practices and those that get caught up in culture (from whatever countries they emigrated from). Also, I no longer feel a need to explain educational best practices ad nauseam or to draw lines between the board's roles and responsibilities and mine. Instead, I sell ideas. Life is much easier."
5. "The board of my current Islamic school was seeking an educator who embraced the above view of Islamic leadership--a principal focused on Taqwa, exemplifying the character traits of the Prophet (saws) to the extent possible and dedicated to the vision of uplifting our Muslim community by offering this educational option. From the beginning, our view of education and Islamic schools was on the same page."
6. "The school board increases the number of individuals 'entrusted' with the mission of the school and ensuring the fiduciary health of the institution. This can be a very positive force if the board fulfills its role in supporting these areas and looking towards the strategic planning for the future of the organization. Without a sound board focused on long-term planning and supporting the school's growth, financially and otherwise, the school cannot be as successful and sustainable."

In your experience as an educator and principal steeped in the Islamic faith tradition, how would you say your school board has helped shaped your approach to leadership?
Direct Quotes from the Research Participants:
7. "Mostly they have taught me what not to do as a leader. They have taught me to be more reflective, to know myself better and they have taught me the value of seeking knowledge and expertise in my field."

The follow-up question posed to the research participants in the online survey:

Describe an instance when you felt your leadership style was in conflict with the needs of

the school board. How did you resolve the situation? Based on the responses given, the

following experiences were mentioned:

1. Left the principal position

2. The importance of the board chair and principal relationship

3. Just following orders

4. Took on teaching role to maintain stability

5. The importance of finding the right match

6. Other relevant experiences

These situations are highlighted in the quotes below made by the research

participants.

Table 29.

Describe an instance when you felt your leadership style was in conflict with the needs of the school board. How did you resolve the situation?
Direct Quotes from the Research Participants:
1. "I have a participatory style and at one school where I was principal, the chair was a bit heavy handed. I attempted to negotiate with the board to no avail. I left the position."

Describe an instance when you felt your leadership style was in conflict with the needs of the school board. How did you resolve the situation?
Direct Quotes from the Research Participants:
2. "By having a great relationship with every board chair I have ever had has mitigated any conflicts, Alhamdulillah. Ultimately, the relationship with the board chair is very critical because he/she is the one who can 'tell it like it is' to me and for me to be self-reflective in those moments. The board chair can privately be critical of me as long as I trust that publicly they are supportive. As a leader, there are very few people who are comfortable providing feedback to me directly, so I rely and welcome any potential negative feedback from the board chair. How else will I grow and be able to know how I am seen/perceived by others? Let's say I was too defensive about a situation during a board meeting. The board chair and I would discuss how to handle it at the next meeting. Or, if the board chair knows that something will be an issue, he/she will prepare me so that I cannot be surprised by an issue at the board level and I can have the information to address the concern. Trust and no surprises is the rule between Board Chair and Head for there to be no conflicts."
3. "When I first started, I quickly learned that I was the immigrant. I reflected, re-evaluated the situation, changed my expectations and moved forward."
4. "Many times I felt that the school board was not supportive of school administration. Therefore, I felt that it is best to follow orders to avoid conflict."
5. "I have not felt any conflict with them. The 6 members of our board are open-minded, collaborative, fair and transparent. If we disagreed on small matters, we have a respectful discussion and try to come to a majority consensus on a decision."

Describe an instance when you felt your leadership style was in conflict with the needs of the school board. How did you resolve the situation?
Direct Quotes from the Research Participants:
6. "During a particularly difficult year, we lost a new teacher mid-year and faced a negative backlash from one parent whom we had not hired for that same position. This parent and a number of others went about spreading negativity and causing havoc. Some of this rose up to the board level because some board members were also parents and affected by this parent. I was greatly distressed that the board members at the time did not speak to me about the talk that was going on and instead brought up the negativity in the boardroom. Thankfully, the board chair at the time was very supportive, especially knowing the details of the situation which I could not readily divulge to the rest of the board due to confidentiality issues. I tried in the best way I could to defend my position and my decisions and help them understand the situation. I felt that the trust level had gone down considerably and that they were more inclined to fall victim to the gossip talk than to their own school leader. I had to work very hard to counter the negativity with parent meetings and emails to get my message out and to instill confidence in the school's program. This even involved me taking on teaching for 2-3 months to ensure stability and continuity in the student learning experience, as the sub for the teacher who left mid-year did not work out. The next year, we did lose several families due to all the negativity, but we enjoyed an amazing year of successes and I worked very diligently to promote the school's many accomplishments to improve its image. We developed a number of marketing strategies, promoted teacher development, and I increased my leadership efforts, improving visibility and interaction with the families. I am not sure I got my board fully on board, but I did my best to dispel the negativity with positivity and emphasize the importance of their role as the school's cheerleaders who have an obligation to support the head of school and bring issues directly to her attention to better problem-solve."
7. "When the fit is wrong, it's very difficult to make it right. I resigned so they could find someone more like-minded. I went to another school where my style and their vision and were a good match. Minor differences are easy to resolve in this situation. Get to know your people and learn how to approach them with respect in a way that does not ask you to compromise who you are or your values (major conflict), and adjust accordingly. Stay true to Allah swt always and you can work out almost anything with others".

The final question posed to the research participants in the online survey: From a principal's point of view, how do you navigate working with school boards? A variety of suggestions were offered based on the experiences and school settings of the principals. Some of the recommendations are highlighted in table 30 below.

Table 30.

From a principal's point of view, how do you navigate working with school boards?
Direct Quotes from the Research Participants:
1. "Complicated because it depends on the makeup of the board and the relationship between the principal and board."
2. "The most important relationship is between the principal and chair. A positive relationship here can help with any anticipations and adjustments can be made easier as needed".
3. "Not always top-down style. A true partnership is needed. For example, at times there may be some deficits with the board and the principal will need to work with the chair and be able to go to the chair. For example, if a board member misuses the position".
4. "The board may not realize it, but they should stay out of the day-to-day operations of the school and focus on bigger issues".
5. "Depends on the school board".
6. "Be upbeat in meetings and when talking about school happenings. Give board members positive items to keep in "their back pocket" when working with parents".
7. "Very carefully".

Results of the Study – Part 3

Results for Research Question 1:

The first research question that directed this study was: How do Islamic school principals describe their leadership role as administrators of Muslim K-12 schools? To describe principal leadership from the lived experience and perceptions of the research participants, the sub-categories listed below were examined and analyzed.

1. The reasons for becoming a principal of an Islamic K-12 School

2. Actual professional responsibilities versus perceived expectations of the job

3. Leadership role of principals in Islamic K-12 schools

4. Leadership role from an Islamic perspective.

In asking the reasons why the participants took up their positions as principals of Islamic K-12 schools, they offered several motivations that were analogous and a few goals that were divergent. The intentions of similarity included:

1. Call to service to please Allah

2. Belief in the mission and vision of the school

3. Provide guidance and support to students

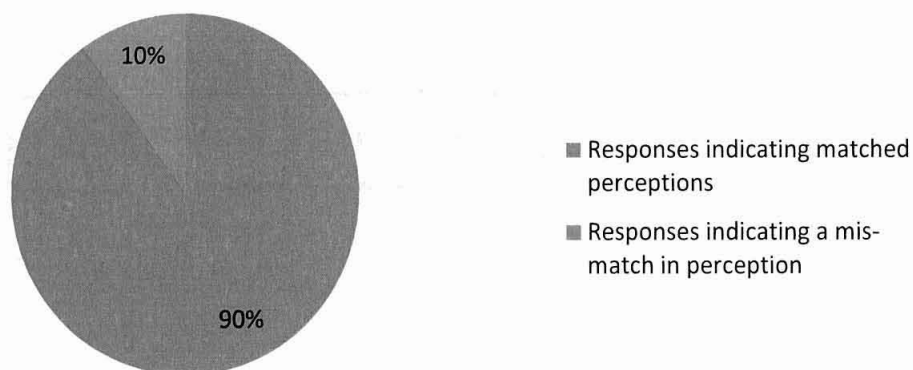4. To ensure that students receive a quality academic and religious education.

The areas of variance included:

1. Difficulty in maintaining career in higher education after 9/11

2. Help Islamic schools grow and expand

3. Encourage schools to adopt best practices.

The participants were asked to consider how closely their professional responsibilities of being a principal in an Islamic K-12 school correspond to the perceived expectations of their role prior to accepting the position. The results are detailed below in Figure 3.

Figure 3.

How closely do the professional responsibilities of your current principal position match the perceived expectations of the role prior to accepting the job?

10%

90%

■ Responses indicating matched perceptions

■ Responses indicating a mis-match in perception

5 responses indicating perceived and real expectations matching due to:
A. Past experiences as a public school principal
B. Instructional leader in the past
C. Daily responsibilities are manageable, and thought the job would be more difficult
D. Knew fully what the position entailed prior to accepting it
E. Previously served as a principal for 4 other Islamic schools

2 responses indicating mismatch in perceived and real expectations due to:
A. Needed multiple skill sets beyond being the academic leader of the schools (i.e., business, DFO, marketing, etc.)
B. Unprepared for the politics and backbiting

In describing the leadership role of Muslim principals, there emerged several commonalities as expressed by the participants. Consistently, the principal position was described as complex and multi-layered. Many factors have to be considered, such as the maturation of the school, funding and staffing. The makeup and experiences of the school board were also deemed influential, as well as the support from the local community. These factors contributed directly to the leadership capabilities and roles the principals had to play. Schools that lacked funding and adequate staffing translated to administrators overseeing all aspects of the institution. In this situation, the participants had more of a business manager role. With increased maturation, funding and protocols in place, the principals were able to focus more on the academic side of the position. Other common characteristics of principal leadership identified by the participants included:

1. Being an instructional leader

2. Being of service/servant leader

3. Amanah (Trust)

4. Safeguard and carry out the mission and vision of the school

5. Strive for or maintain accreditation status

6. Develop civic and leadership qualities in students.

In addition to the commonalities of principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools as reported by the participants, some areas of divergence were also conveyed. These items included:

1. People are resentful of success and want to see failure

2. Address discipline issues

3. Focus on student recruitment

4. Difference between management and leadership

5. "Looked the part" due to being an American.

When asked to describe school leadership from an Islamic perspective, the unifying themes reported by the participants included:

1. Follow the tenets of Islam

2. Follow the ways and examples of the prophet Mohammed (PBUH)

3. Have values, ethics, and a strong moral character

4. Make decisions by shura, or collaboration.

Also discussed with the participants were skill sets and leadership characteristics that contributed to their success as school principals. The common themes that emerged were as follows:

1. Being professionally competent

2. Having a positive personality

3. Being a listener

4. Being of service to others and following Allah's will

5. Having a passion for the profession

6. The ability to compromise

7. Learning from past experiences.

The areas of divergence reported on this question include:

1. Forming partnerships with parents

2. Strategic planning

3. Fostering an Islamic identity beyond Qur'an, Arabic, and Islamic studies.

Results for Research Question 2:

The second research question that guided this study was: What impact does the school board have on the leadership role of principals in Islamic K-12 school settings? The starting point to answering this question was explaining the purpose and function of Islamic school boards in general. As expressed by the participants in this study, the primary obligations of Islamic school boards are to:

1. Establish the mission and vision of the school

2. Create school policies

3. Hire the school principal to implement the vision and carry out established policies

4. Financially support the school

5. Establish school governance structures

6. Strategic planning.

The other important premise that emerged from the conversations with the principals is that the actual purpose and function carried out by boards depend heavily on the maturation of the school. In the early phases of operation, the board may be more hands-on in the day-to-day operations of the school. When schools progress to adopting

more professional practices and protocols, then school boards tend to evolve to more policy and strategic planning roles.

In discussing how Islamic school boards impact principal leadership with the participants, five major themes evolved from the data. These included:

1. Islamic school boards have tremendous influence on the principal position as they are tasked with hiring the administrator to run the school.

2. If there is an ideological, professional and practical fit between the principal and board, then more than likely success in carrying out the mission and vision will be the end result. The converse is also true.

3. If principals are to move schools forward, they need professional and financial resources from the board.

4. The relationship between the principal and the board chair plays a major role in determining the success or failure of the administrator in running the day-to-day operations of the school.

5. Politics is always present. In order to be effective leaders, principals must know how to work around the politics to carry out their everyday functions.

Summary of Results

Moustakas (1994) described the empirical phenomenological approach as "a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (13). Furthermore, Groenewold (2004) stated the following:

The operative word in phenomenological research is described. The aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining

from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts. The phenomenologist is concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomenon from the perspective of people involved (p. 5).

For the purposes of this study, the phenomenon under investigation has been principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools located in the United States. To accurately describe the experiences and perceptions of this phenomenon from the perspective of the participants, a textual description utilizing horizontalization of data is offered below. Providing a textual description via data analysis is the end goal of a phenomenological study (Cresswell, 2007).

Part one of the textual descriptions highlights religious overtones, details personal attributes of effective administrators and explains the most essential leadership functions of Islamic school principals. The second component of the textual description summarizes the influence of Islamic school boards on principal leadership.

Muslim principals tend to take on their respective positions in leading Islamic K-12 schools in order to please Allah, to follow the ways and examples of the prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and because of Amanah (trust to do good deeds). The notion of being of service to Allah, to students and families, the larger community and all stakeholders are also important to Muslim principals. Personal attributes that contribute to leadership success include having a passion for education, being professionally competent, having a positive attitude and learning from past mistakes. Two other qualities identified include being a good listener and possessing the ability to compromise. By embodying these traits, Muslim principals strive to be effectual front-runners in carrying out the most important leadership functions of their position. These

utilities include being adaptive and evolving as a professional based on the needs and maturation of the school, embracing servant leadership principles and being an instructional leader. Fostering the notion of Amanah in all aspects of school operations, promoting the mission and vision of the school and modeling the concept of Shura in the decision-making process are other key roles for Muslim principals to carry out. Finally, administrators of Islamic schools strive to provide a quality academic and religious education for learners, develop civic and leadership attributes in students and to lead the school to formal accreditation.

A major player that greatly influences the leadership role of Muslim principals is Islamic school boards. Logistically, the school boards directly impact the principal position because they hire administrators and create the job descriptions. The boards also establish the mission and vision, governance structures, policies and protocols of the school. Ultimately, the financial health of the organization and strategic planning initiatives fall under the purview of the school boards, as well. Muslim principals are hired to implement and carry out the policies and stratagem as created by the boards. Consequently, the most important factor that determines how successful principals are in managing day-to-day operations of the school is the quality of the relationship that exists between the administrators and boards. The relationship between the principal and board chair is also important here. Along with this point, professional and financial support are also key factors that contribute to the success or detriment of principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand and describe how Muslim principals of Islamic K-12 schools perceive their leadership role and to depict the impact school boards have on their position. Using a phenomenological study design, this researcher sought to explore, comprehend and explain the lived experiences of those individuals who have undertaken the phenomena being studied. The results of the investigation were organized into three parts. Part one focused on demographic information. Part two explored the human element of the topic. Part three focused on directly answering the research questions. In this section, there were two themes driven by the research questions. Theme one centered on principal leadership, while theme two focused on Islamic school board impact on the principal position.

Results of the Study

The results of this study revealed that there are three primary internal motivators that influence the leadership role of Muslim principals in Islamic K-12 schools. These elements include religious purposes, professional competencies and personal attributes. Striving to please Allah, following the ways of the prophet Mohammad (PBUH), and embracing Amanah are the primary religious factors that inspire Muslim school leaders to take on the principal position. For professional competence, being adequately prepared, knowing how to navigate politics, working with stakeholders and leading together with the school board are important skill sets needed as a school administrator. Personal

characteristics, such as effective communication skills, the ability to compromise and being patient also play a role in being successful school administrators.

Finally, the Muslim principals in this study described their primary leadership functions as:

1. Being adaptive to meet the needs of the school

2. Have a call to serve others

3. Be the instructional leader of the school

4. Promote Amanah in all aspects of school operations

5. Support and live out the mission and vision of the school

6. Utilize Shura in the decision-making process

7. Ensure a quality religious and academic education

8. Foster civic and leadership abilities in learners

9. Strive for and maintain accreditation status for the school.

Islamic school boards directly impact the principal position because they hire the school administrator, create the job description and develop institutional policies. The job of principals are to carry out the protocols as established by the boards. The quality of relationship between principals and boards and the level of professional and financial support administrators receive from boards go a long way in determining success or failure in accomplishing school goals.

Discussion of Findings and Implications for Practice

Detailed below is a discussion on the impact of the findings of this study for Islamic K-12 education in the United States.

1. The events of September 11, 2001, along with the growing Muslim population and the expansion of Islamic K-12 schools in the United States, have sparked an interest in researching topics related to Islam in America. This intellectual curiosity has inspired some academics to be more specific and investigate matters related to Islamic education in the United States. However, the literature is limited in this area. When focusing specifically on principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools and the school board influence on the principal position, scholarly investigation is restricted even more. This phenomenological investigation serves as a foundational, scholarly study on Muslim principal leadership in the United States. Furthermore, the results of this investigation could possibly be used as a starting point to encourage more in-depth research on related topics.

2. The results of this study provide some insights into the religious motivations, professional skill sets and personal attributes that contribute to the success of Muslim school principals. Acumens are also provided on the primary leadership roles embraced by Muslim principals. Additionally, it was found that Islamic schools boards do impact the principal position by setting policies and being responsible for the financial well-being of schools. While the results of this research are foundational in nature, additional research should be conducted to measure further growth of Islamic schools in the United States, and to determine areas of improvement.

3. When pursuing Islamic publications, attending conferences geared toward Muslim school leaders and getting views from the larger Muslim community, there is often the perception that the academic quality of Islamic K-12 schools is lacking and that school leaders are unprepared and unqualified for their positions. The results of this

research present some data to challenge these notions. First, information is presented that verifies twenty-three Islamic schools have been in existence for over twenty years, many of which are accredited; four of the seven Islamic K-12 schools represented in this study maintain full accreditation. One school is currently going through the process. The principal who now has a consultant company works with both accredited and non-accredited schools. When private schools elect to go through the accreditation process, established educational benchmarks must be achieved.

Furthermore, four of the seven Muslim principals in this study have doctorate degrees, one participant has a degree as an educational specialist and the remaining two individuals have master's degrees. This information shows that the top leadership position in the school is receiving formal, academic training to lead their respective institutions. While the results of this study cannot be generalized to all Islamic, K-12 schools in the United States, it does shed some light on signs of improvement and the possibility that Islamic education in America is becoming more professionalized. More research is needed to determine the actual level of success and advancement made by Islamic K-12 schools in American society.

4. As the Muslim population continues to expand in the United States and more Islamic K-12 schools open their doors to meet community demand, the concern over school operations and practices in a western country is often questioned. Should Islamic schools promote religious principles and practices within the context of the larger society or as a separate entity independent and, in some cases, contrary to the American civic and political systems? The results of this study indicate that civic responsibilities and considering the context of American society is central to the mission and vision in the

schools represented in this research. Such an approach is needed to ensure future success of Muslims in the United States and for the betterment of society at large. Also, five of the seven principals who participated in this study were born in the United States and all of the participants have earned at least a master's degree or higher in this country. While these statistics do not lend themselves to causation on this topic, there could be a potential correlation between country of birth and location of academic training and considering the larger society in the context of educating youth. Further studies would be needed to determine if such correlations exist.

Generalizability of Study Results

When undertaking a phenomenological investigation, there are some circumstances to consider when it comes to generalizability of research findings. As explained by Thomas and Pollio (2002):

> The case for what might be called phenomenological generalizability is different than that used in quantitative methods. Here, "proof" does not depend solely on purity of method, but also upon the reader of the research report. In this case, when and if a description rings true, each specific reader who derives insights from the results of a phenomenological study may be thought to extend its generalizability. Unlike other research methods where the researcher establishes generalizability on the bases of statistical and experimental procedures, phenomenological research is "validated" by its readers (p. 42).

Additionally, Myers (2000) asserts that despite "the many positive aspects of qualitative research, these studies continue to be criticized for their lack of objectivity and generalizability. The word 'generalizability' is defined as the degree to which the

findings can be generalized from the study sample to the entire population" (para. 9).

These points are valid critiques of phenomenological investigations. Compared against

the backdrop of quantitative studies, it is much more difficult, if not impossible, to apply

the results of phenomenological studies to the larger population. On the other hand,

quantitative studies often lack the in-depth information and human side of topics being

researched (Myers, 2000). Despite the challenges to generalizability of

phenomenological studies, there are circumstances when such studies are greatly

warranted. As Myers (2000) stated, the goal of such a study "may be to focus on a

selected contemporary phenomenon…where in-depth descriptions would be an essential

component of the process" (para. 9). The author further suggests that "in such situations,

small qualitative studies can gain a more personal understanding of the phenomenon and

the results can potentially contribute valuable knowledge to the community" (para. 9).

The perspectives offered by Myers apply directly to this phenomenological investigation.

Recommendations for Further Research

As documented in this study, there is a lack of statistical, baseline data on Islamic

education issues in American society. When focusing exclusively on Muslim principal

leadership and Islamic school board influence on the principal position in the United

States specifically, the literature is almost non-existent. As such, there needs to be a

starting point. In these situations, a phenomenological study design is very appropriate

(Cresswell, 2007). The phenomenological study carried out by this researcher

contributes to this end. Moreover, the literature review showed that the Muslim

population is growing in the United States, as well as the growth of Islamic K-12 schools.

Consequently, there is a need to conduct further research on these topics to assist Muslim

school leaders in improving their schools and to broaden the understanding of Islamic education for the general public.

Additional research is recommended for principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools by grade level in American society. This researcher did not focus exclusively on the elementary grades, middle school or secondary education. Focusing investigations on specific grade levels may shed more light on similarities and differences in principal leadership practices. Such data may prove valuable when trying to meet the needs of relevant stakeholders. Also, more in-depth studies are needed qualitatively to deepen our understanding of principal leadership in Muslim schools and quantitatively to establish baseline data so that results can more generalizable to Islamic schools in the United States.

In addition to grade level focus, more research is needed from different vantage points. The research conducted by this investigator focused on leadership from the perspective of Muslim principals in Islamic K-12 schools. While this focus is required and necessary given the research questions that guided this study, there are many factors that influence principal leadership. To offer a more complete composite of principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools, other viewpoints and circumstances must be considered. Some possible stakeholder perspectives include school boards, parents, students and the larger Muslim community.

Lastly, it is essential to conduct more investigations on all other aspects of Islamic education in the United States to strengthen the literature. It is the hope of this researcher that more studies are conducted to improve all aspects of Islamic education in the United

States. This investigation does not claim to be the end point, but only the genesis to build off of for further, scholarly investigations.

Limitations of Study

There are two primary limitations of which to take note in this study. First, the results of this research cannot be directly applied to other K-12 schools that are not Islamic in nature. Principal leadership in Islamic K-12 schools in the United States was the delimitation. Second, the results of this study cannot necessarily be generalized to all Islamic K-12 schools in the United States. More studies that contain a larger sample size and address contextual considerations are needed.

Summary

Chapter Five provided a recap of study results, followed by a discussion on the importance of the finding and implications for practice. The issue of generalizability was discussed together with the recommendations for further research. Finally, the limitations of the study were presented.

REFERENCES

AdvancEd (n.d.). *What* is accreditation? Retrieved from
http://www.advanc-ed.org/what-accreditation

Alghorani, M.A. (2003). *Identity, acculturation, and adjustment of high school Muslim Students in Islamic schools in the U.S.A.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Texas, Austin.

All Things PLCs (n.d.). About PLCs. Retrieved from
http://www.allthingsplc.info/about/aboutPLC.php

Anderson, P., Tan, C., & Suleiman, Y. (2011, April). *Reforms in Islamic education.* Paper presented at the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center of Islamic Studies Conference, Cambridge, UK.

Ather, S.M., & Sobhani, F.A. (2008, April). Managerial leadership: An Islamic perspective. *IIUC Studies, 4,* 7-24.

Bagby, I. (2012). The American Mosque 2011: Activities, administration, and vitality of the American Mosque. *Islamic Society of North America.* Retrieved from www.hartfordinstitute.org/The-American-Mosque-Report-2.pdf

Ballard, K., & Bater, A. (2008). Making a connection between student achievement, teacher accountability, and quality classroom instruction. *The Qualitative Report, 13*(4), 560-580.

Beekun, R.I., & Badawi, J. (1999). *Leadership an Islamic perspective.* Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications.

Branch, G.F., Hanushek, E.A., & Rivkin, S.G. (2013). School leaders matter. *Education Next 13*(1), 63-69, Retrieved from http://educationnext.org/school-leaders-matter

Chaudhry, Z.W. (2014, March/April). Pioneering Islamic schools. *Islamic Horizons 43*(2), 13-24.

Chemers, M.M. (n.d.). Leadership, change, and organizational effectiveness. *University of California, Santa Cruz.* Retrieved from
http://www.almaden.ibm.com/coevolution/pdf/chemers_paper.pdf

Ciulla, J.B. (n.d.). What is good leadership? *Center for Public Leadership.* Retrieved from
http://dspace.mit.edu/bitstream/handle/1721.1/55929/CPL_WP_04_07_Ciulla.pdf?sequ

Clauss, K., Ahmed, S., & Salvaterra, M. (2013). The rise of Islamic schools in the United States. *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal, 18*(1), 1-13.

Cook, C.J., & Fine, C.S. (1997). Critical issue: Evaluating professional growth and development. *North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.* Retrieved from http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/profdevl/pd500.htm

Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

DuFour, R. (2007). Professional learning communities: A bandwagon, an idea worth considering, or our best hope for high levels of learning? *Middle School Journal, 39*(1), 4-8.

Elbih, R. (2012). Debates in the literature on Islamic schools. *Educational Studies, 48*: 156-173.

Feger, S., & Arruda, E. (2008). Professional learning communities: Key themes from the literature. *The Education Alliance at Brown University.* Retrieved from http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/pd/pbs_plc_lit_review.pdf

Gardner, H. (2008). *5 minds for the future.* Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Publishing.

Groenewold, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 3*(4), 1-26.

Grossman, C.L. (2011, January 27). Number of U.S. Muslims to double. *USA Today.* Retrieved from http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/2011-01-27-1Amuslim27_ST_N.htm

Haddad, Y.Y., & Smith, J.I. (2009). Introduction: The challenge of Islamic education in North America. In Y.Y. Haddad, F. Senzai, & J.I. Smith (Eds.), *Educating the Muslims of America* (pp. 3-19). New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Huus, K. (2011). Islamic schools on the rise in US, struggle for acceptance. *NBC News.* Retrieved from http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43331744/ns/us_news-life/t/islamic-schools-rise-us-struggle-acceptance/#.UB8IJ01lROR

Imam, S. (2007). Islamic schooling in America: The way ahead. *Al Jumuah 19*(1), 24-34.

ISNA (2013). Islam. Retrieved from http://www.isna.net/islam.html

Jago, A.G. (1982). Leadership perspectives in theory and research. *Management Science, 28*(3), 315-336.

Keyworth, K. (2011). Islamic schools of the United States: Data-based profiles. *Institute for Social Policy and Understanding.* Retrieved from http://ispu.org/pdfs/609_ISPU%20Report_Islamic%20Schools_Keyworth_WEB.pdf

Kleiman, S. (2004). Phenomenology: To wonder and search for meanings. *Nurse Researcher, 11*(4), 7-19.

Kurzman, C., & Ernst, C.W. (2012). Islamic studies in U.S. universities. *Middle East Studies Association 46*(1), 24-46.

Lamb, L.F., & McKee, K.B. (2004). *Applied public relations: Cases in stakeholder management.* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Eribaum Associates. Routledge.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K.S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. Review of research: How leadership influences student learning. *The Wallace Foundation.* Retrieved from www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school leadership/keyresearchdocuments/how-leadership-influences-student-learning.pdf

Linder, R.A., Post, G., & Calabrese, K. (2012). Professional learning communities: Practices for successful implementation. *Professional Development,* 13-22.

Louis, K.S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K., & Anderson, S. (2010). Investigating the links to improve student learning: Final report of research findings. *The Wallace Foundation.* Retrieved from www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/schoolleadership/key research / Documents / Investigating-the-Links-to-Improved-Student-Learning.pdf

McEwan, E.K. (1994). *Seven steps to effective instructional leadership.* New York: Scholastic, Inc.

Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merry, M.S., & Driessen, G. (2005). Islamic schools in three western countries: Policy and Procedure. *Comparative Education, 41*(4), 411-432.

Merry, M.S. (2007). *Culture, identity, and Islamic schooling: A philosophical approach.* New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Merry, M.S., & Driessen, G. (2009). Islamic schools in the US and Netherlands: Inhibiting or enhancing democratic dispositions? In P. Woods, & G. Woods (Eds), *Alternative education for the 21st century* (pp. 101-122). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Myers, M. (2000, March). Qualitative research and the generalizability question: Standing firm with potus. *The Qualitative Report, 4*(3/4).

Northouse, P.G. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Omar, R. (2011). *The servant leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).* Paper presented at Islamic Center of Michiana, South Bend, IN.

Orr, M.T. (2013). Review of two articles on principal effects. *National Education Policy Center.* Retrieved from http://nepc.colorado.edu/thinktank/review-estimating-effect-principals

Ozgur, N. (2014). *Developing an exceptional board: Moving from a working board to an exceptional board.* Paper presented at the Islamic Society of North America Education Forum, Chicago, IL.

Patton, M.Q. (2001). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Popham, W. J. (1999). Why standardized tests don't measure educational quality. *Using Standards and Assessments, 56*(5), 8-15.

Qadri, Y., & Qadri, K. (2002). *Successful Islamic schools leading the way to successful communities: Model of administrative and financial structures.* Paper presented at the Islamic Society of North America's Education Forum, Chicago, IL.

Qadri, Y. (2002). *Leadership in the 21st century: New challenges for Islamic school principals.* Paper presented at the Islamic Society of North America's Education Forum, Chicago, IL.

Qadri, Y. (2009). The school board handbook. Retrieved from http://www.edconsultations.com/access/

Quran (n.d.). Search the Qur'an. Retrieved from http://search-the-quran.com

Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. (n.d.). What is servant leadership? Retrieved from https://greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/

Rowe, W.G., & Guerrero, L. (2011). *Cases in leadership* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sacks, P. (2001). *Standardized minds: The high price of America's testing culture and what we can do to change it.* New York, New York: Perseus Publishing.

Saleh, M.E. (2000, May). Holding onto our administrators. *Islamic Horizons, 29*(3), 34.

Senzai, F. (2009). The outlook for Islamic education in America. In Y.Y. Haddad, F. Senzai, & J.I. Smith (Eds.), *Educating the Muslims of America* (pp. 253-268). New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Shah, S. (2006). Educational leadership: An Islamic perspective. *British Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 363-385.

Siddiqui, R.N. (2001). Appraisal of outgroup in the context of intergroup relations: Role of personal and collective identity *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research, 26*:167-182.

Sigurdardottir, A.K. (2010). Professional learning community in relation to school effectiveness. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 54*(5), 395-412.

Smith, J., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretive phenomenological analysis: Theory, methods, and research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sokolowski, R. (2000). *Introduction to Phenomenology.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Spears, L. (2010). Character and servant leadership: Ten characteristics of effective, caring leaders. *The Journal of Virtues & Leadership, 1*(1), 25-30.

Speck, M. (1999). *The principalship: Building a learning community.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Stanton, B. (1989). *Trustee handbook* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: National Association of Independent Schools.

Syed, I.B. (2006). Educating Muslim children: Challenges and opportunities. *Islamic Research Foundation International, Inc.* Retrieved from http://www.irfi.org/articles/articles_1_50/educating_muslim_children.htm

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (2011). The future of the global Muslim population. Retrieved from http://features.pewforum.org/muslim-population-graphic/#/United%20States

Thomas, S.P., & Pollio, H.R. (2002). *Listening to patients: A phenomenological approach to nursing research and practice.* New York: Springer.

United States Census Bureau (2012). Population: Religion. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/population/religion.html

Vecchio, R.P. (Ed.). (2007). *Leadership: Understanding the dynamics of power and influence in organizations.* Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

Vogan, P. (2006, April 17). 5 key traits of great leaders. *Entrepreneur.* Retrieved from http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/163590

The Wallace Foundation (2012). The school principal as leader: Guiding schools to better Teaching and learning. Retrieved from www.wallacefoundation.org

Wertz, F.J. (2005). Phenomenological researcher. *Methods for Counseling Psychology, 52,* 166-167.

West, C. (2011). Action research as a professional development activity. *Arts Education Policy Review, 112,* 89-94.

Wheeler, D. (2012). *Servant leadership for higher education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Yukl, G. (2006). *Leadership in organizations* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson-Prentice Hall.

Zain, M. (2011). Islamic education in the U.S.: Its growth, demand, and developments. *Dinar Standard Growth Strategies for Emerging Muslim Markets.* Retrieved from http://dinarstandard.com/challenges/islamic-education-in-the-us-its-growth-demand-and-developments

Zaytuna College (2014). Why Zaytuna College. Retrieved from http://www.zaytunacollege.org/about

Zubrzycki, J. (2013, January 20). Principals to be rated on school Progress. *Education Week.* Retrieved from www.edweek.org

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Demographic Survey

School: Lynn University in Boca Raton, FL

Dissertation Title: A phenomenological study on principal leadership in Islamic k-12 schools

Investigator: Allen Farina

Date of IRB Approval: November 18, 2014

IRB Number: 2014-077

Instructions: Please complete the demographic survey below and return to Allen Farina via email at ███████████████. Your name is not being used in the study. A case number is assigned for privacy and confidentiality purposes.

Demographic Survey – Case Number x	
Question	**Response**
What is your sex (male or female)?	
What is your country of origin?	
List all degrees earned.	
List any relevant certifications.	
How many years have you been principal at your current school?	
How many years have you been a principal in general?	
Do you have K-12 teaching experience? If yes, how many years and what grade levels? Public, private or Islamic schools?	
Your school is located in which state?	
Is your school affiliated with a Mosque or independent?	
What are the grade levels for your school? How many years has the school been in operation?	
For the 2014-2015 academic year, how many students are enrolled in your school?	
What is the accreditation status of your school?	
How many members are on your school board? How many board members are	

Demographic Survey – Case Number x	
Question	**Response**
men? How many board members are women?	
Are school board members appointed or elected? How many years are board members allowed to serve?	
What is the work/professional background of school board members?	

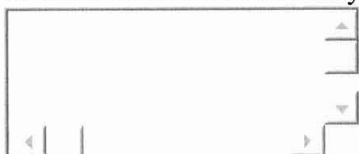**Appendix B – Online Open-Ended Survey**

Link for the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JCHT3HK

Dissertation Research

A Phenomenological Study on Principal Leadership in Islamic K-12 Schools

Please answer the ten survey questions below by providing as much detail as possible. Names are not recorded for confidentiality purposes. Additional information on the research process will be sent via email. Thank you.

-Allen Farina

1. What factors influenced you to become an Islamic school principal?

2. How closely does the professional responsibilities of your current position match the perceived expectations of the role prior to accepting the job?

3. How has your didactic leadership style changed since you first began your role as principal?

4. What is the mission and vision of your school?

5. How would you describe school leadership from an Islamic perspective?

6. How what you define Islamic leadership compared to Islamic supervision or management?

7. In your experience as an educator and principal steeped in the Islamic faith tradition, how would you say your school board has helped shaped your approach to leadership?

8. In your experience as an educator and principal steeped in the Islamic faith tradition, how could your school board better support your pedagogical approach?

9. Describe an instance when you felt your leadership style was in conflict with the needs of the school board. How did you resolve the situation?

10. How is your leadership style reflected in the governance structure of your school?
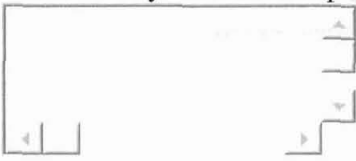
Appendix C – Interview 1

1. Let's discuss your professional background. Tell me about your career path, years of principalship, and experiences as a school administrator.

2. Describe the school you are leading (or the schools that you led). Feel free to elaborate on the number of students, teachers, school population, and any other significant characteristics that you feel are important.

3. How would you describe your leadership role as a principal of an Islamic K-12 school?

4. Based on your experiences, describe the skill sets and tools of leadership and administration that has contributed to your success as a school principal? What have been your challenges?

5. What contexts or situations have influenced or affected your experiences in being a principal of an Islamic K-12 school?

6. Are there any other aspects of your story of principalship that you wish to share?

Appendix D – Interview 2

1. From your perspective, what is the purpose and function of Islamic school boards?

2. Explain what you consider to be the primary responsibilities and functions of Islamic school board members.

3. What impact does the school board have on the leadership role of principals in Islamic K-12 settings?

4. From a principal's point of view, how do you navigate working with school boards?

5. Are there any other points regarding Islamic School Boards that you wish to share?

Appendix E – IRB Approval

LYNN UNIVERSITY

3601 North Military Trail Boca Raton, FL 33431-5598

Allen Farina
Sent by email 11/18/14

IRB #2014-077

Dear Allen Farina:

The proposal that you have submitted, "A phenomenological study on principal leadership in Islamic k-12 schools" has been approved by the Lynn University's Institutional Review Board. You are responsible for complying with all stipulations described under the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 (Protection of Human Subjects). This document can be obtained from the following address:
http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm

Form 8 (Termination Form)
https://my.lynn.edu/ICS/Portlets/ICS/Handoutportlet/viewhandler.ashx?handout_id=b1e2f159-ce0f-4774-b727-3dd56c4bfb34 needs to be completed and returned to Macey Cooper
██████████████████) when you fulfill your study. You are reminded that should you need an extension or report a change in the circumstances of your study, an additional document must be completed.

For further information, please click on the following
http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/anprmchangetable.html

Good luck in all your future endeavors!

Warmest regards,

Farideh Farazmand

Farideh Farazmand, PhD
IRB Chair
Cc: Dr. Gregg Cox

File 2014-077

Appendix F – Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE: A Phenomenological Study on Principal Leadership in Islamic K-12 Schools

Project IRB Number: 2014-077. Lynn University 3601 N. Military Trail Boca Raton, FL 33431

I, Allen Farina, am a doctoral student at Lynn University. I am studying Educational

Leadership in the Ed.D. program. One of my degree requirements is to conduct a

research study.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANT

You are being asked to participate in this study. <u>Please read this carefully</u>. This form provides you with information about the study. The Principal Investigator, Allen Farina, will answer all of your questions. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age, and that you do not have medical problems or language or educational barriers that precludes understanding of explanations contained in this authorization for voluntary consent.

PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY: The study is about the lived experiences and perceptions of principal leadership from the point of view of Muslim principals in Islamic K-12 schools in the United States. A phenomenological study design is being utilized for this research effort. There will be six people invited to participate in this study. Criterion sampling will be used. The participants will be selected by having dissimilarities in the following characteristics:
1. Sex: Three men and three women will participate in the study.
2. Country of Origin: Three principals born in the United States and three principals not born in the United States will participate in this study.
3. Education Level: Four principals will have doctoral degrees and two principals will have master degrees.
4. School Mosque Affiliation: Three principals will come from a school affiliated with a mosque, and three principals will be from independent Islamic schools.

PROCEDURES:
1. Using Survey Monkey, there will be a 10 electronic survey to complete. The questions center on collecting demographic information and principal leadership. A link will be sent to your email address. Names are not recorded. Case numbers are used to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Research participants will be given three weeks to complete this survey.

2. The next step in the process involves conducting two semi-structured interviews and conversations. The interviews will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes to complete pending the flow of the conversation.

3. After interview 1 and interview 2, this researcher will write up a summary of data collected. This information will then be sent to the research participants to review for accuracy via email. The principals will have three weeks to confirm the validity of the data collected. In reporting the information for research purposes, case numbers will be used to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

4. After gathering all of the information, this researcher will analyze the data by taking the following steps:

A. Identify statements that relate directly to the research questions. Irrelevant information will be discarded. Relevant data will then be linked into segments that reflect specific thought patterns.

B. Group the segments into various categories that reflect the meaning of the phenomenon experienced.

C. Divergent perspectives will then be considered.

D. A composite will be constructed detailing the phenomenon of principal leadership in full time Islamic K-12 schools as typically experienced by Muslim principals.

POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORT: This study involves minimal risk. You may find that some of the questions are sensitive in nature. In addition, participation in this study requires a minimal amount of your time and effort.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS: There may be no direct benefit to you in participating in this research. But knowledge may be gained which may help to promote further research that is needed in the areas of Muslim principal leadership specifically and Islamic education matters in general.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS: There is no financial compensation for your participation in this research. There are no costs to you as a result of your participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Names will not be used in this study. Each participant will be assigned a case number to ensure confidentiality.

The results of this study may be published in a dissertation, scientific journals or presented at professional meetings. In addition, your individual privacy will be maintained in all publications or presentations resulting from this study.

All the data gathered during this study, which were previously described, will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Data will be stored under encrypted and password protected files and will be destroyed at the end of the research. All information will be held in strict confidence and will not be disclosed unless required by law or regulation.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: You are free to choose whether or not to participate in this study. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS/ACCESS TO CONSENT FORM: Any further questions you have about this study or your participation in it, either now or any time in the future, will be answered by Allen Farina (Principal Investigator) who may be reached at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ and Dr. Melita, faculty advisor who can be reached at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. For any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may call Dr. Farazmand, Chair of the Lynn University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of

Human Subjects, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ If any problems arise as a result of your participation in this study, please call the Principal Investigator, Allen Farina, and the faculty advisor, Dr. Melita, immediately.

A copy of this consent form will be given to you.

AUTHORIZATION FOR VOLUNTARY CONSENT:

I have read and understand this consent form. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been assured that any future questions that may arise will be answered. I understand that all aspects of this project will be carried out in the strictest of confidence, and in a manner in which my rights as a human subject are protected. I have been informed of the risks and benefits. I have been informed in advance as to what my task(s) will be and what procedures will be followed.

I voluntarily choose to participate. I know that I can withdraw this consent to participate at any time without penalty or prejudice. I understand that by signing this form I have not waived any of my legal rights. I further understand that nothing in this consent form is intended to replace any applicable Federal, state, or local laws. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form.

_____
Participant's printed name

_____
Participant's signature

_____
Date

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT: I have carefully explained to the subject the nature of the above project. The person participating has represented to me that he/she is at least 18 years of age, and that he/she does not have a medical problem or language or educational barrier that precludes his/her understanding of my explanation. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who is signing this consent form understands clearly the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation and his/her signature is legally valid.

_____Allen Farina – Electronically
Signed_____
Signature of the Investigator

_____November 18, 2014_____
Date of IRB Approval