# A Study on The Awareness of Managerial Control Among Kuwaiti Teachers in Kuwait Schools

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**Abstract:** The main goal of this paper is to apply management control system as a method to improve schools and human performances in order to reach their goals. This research paper was conducted in Kuwait, and is expected to benefit school managements in finding a suitable control system that fits the teaching processes and other tasks in schools. The method applied is based on data collections that summarized Qualitative research methods were used, where data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The results showed that teachers have no information about the system used in their school, and that they have difficulty in balancing their work assignments with the work flow and have problems in completing their tasks and assignments. Results also indicate that school managements cause a lot of stress and complications for their teachers. The main recommendations of this study are to implement management control in Kuwaiti schools and evaluate the work load that involves teaching assignments for better performance.

**Keywords:** Teaching Assignments, School Performance, Teacher Performance, School Management Control.

## 1. Introduction

Stress on teachers in Kuwait's educational systems comes from the lack of knowledge that teachers have, when it comes to management control systems that are implemented at the schools they work at. When asked about problems in the school, all school teachers see existing management problems. These management problems affect their annual evaluation reports and lead them to struggle in balancing their work load with an interrupted, hindered work flow, which is continuously interfered with by the management, throughout the school year. Below are recommendations from the researchers on how to improve the MCSs in order to balance the work load, allow the work flow to become more efficient, and solve several of the management problems that teachers are facing on a daily basis.

This study discusses the awareness of management control system (MCS) in Kuwait schools and whether teachers know about this system, if they do what is the management control system that is being implemented, is it effective or not, to identify what management control system is (Arrow, 1974, Ashton, 1995, Ashton, 1982, Bowen and Lawler 1992, Kaplan and Norton, 1997, Baker, 2000, Porter, 1998), this study reviews the literature on MCS (Taylor, 1929, Simons, 1995, Kwak, 2005) and evidence of using this system to help to understand the meaning of management control system and the result based on its application. Despite the fact that these studies are not directly related to the education sector, they represent good starting points for the current study.

This study doesn't concentrate on measuring performance, but on how to control

the behavior of teachers by empowering and motivating teachers to work for the interest of their schools, by implementing the best MCS in Kuwaiti schools. To do this, teachers should be aware of what MCS is being implemented in their schools. This MCS should be efficient and should encourage teachers to do the best of their schools, eliminate any self-interest and help increase their motivation,. Providing information, decentralization or delegation work can prevent any personal limitations on teachers.

## 2. Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to discuss the application of the management control system for schools in Kuwait, and find out the current management control in use and to see if there is an effective management control system in Kuwaiti schools. Research discussed the outcomes that can be produced (which can be positive and/or negative) for each of the forms of control, and the factors that lead managers (leaders) to choose one control system over another.

After surveying the literature and examining the different theories and systems in management control, this paper presents the research methodology or "the theory of how research should be undertaken" (Saunders *et al.*, 2007, P.117). To be able to answer the research questions, this paper starts with research questions, research design, the population and sample of the study, methodology, and strategy. It also analyses the data and discusses the results.

### 2.1. Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives stated, the following research questions need to be answered:

• Are the teachers aware of what management control systems are being implemented in Kuwaiti schools?

• Can teachers strike a balance between their work assignment and improving the curriculum taught in Kuwaiti schools?

• How does the work flow for school teachers?

• Is there a management problem in Kuwaiti schools?

## 3. Research Design

In this study, we aimed at conduct a cross-sectional study of the data collected from the participants involved in the management control system used in Kuwaiti schools. A cross-sectional research is an approach that can be used often in developmental psychology, but also utilized in many other areas including social sciences and education. This type of study utilizes different groups of people with different variable of interests, but shares other characteristics such as socioeconomic status, educational background, and ethnicity. That's why it is more suitable than a longitudinal research since this type of research method is used to probe into relationships between variables that are not related to various background variables. Observational research is a technique that involves studying the same group of individuals over an extended period of time (Kendra Cherry, About.com). The reason for choosing a cross-sectional design for this study is a consequence of time limitations and its aims to describe variables and patterns of a certain system at a particular time (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

### 3.1. Population and Sample of the Study

This study is carried out in six different schools in six different areas in Kuwait. Thus, the population of this study is teachers from different school levels. Samples were selected randomly. The sample contains a total of sixty teachers selected- one teacher from each school.

### 3.2. Research Methods

Qualitative research methods are used to collect the data semi-structured interviews and analysis of previous studies on management control systems. The only instrument used to conduct this research is a voice recorder, which is used to record the interviews. In order to conduct interviews, convenience sampling is used. While many consider this type of sampling not to be ideal, it is useful for this study for many reasons. First, it is convenient in terms of the data collection in the country of study. Second, it allows for the collection of data from random, willing participants without premeditated answers. This method has the outcome of a rich

dataset and adds to the validity of the results of the study.

### 3.2.1. Semi-structured Interviews

"The choice of semi-structured rather than structured interview is because semi-structured interviews offer sufficient flexibility to approach different respondents differently while still covering the same areas of data collection. It also brings new ideas or new questions during the interview, while structured interviews are direct and cannot divert from the questions" (Noor, 2008, 1604). On the other hand, in semi-structured interviews, participants' answers provide more helpful information if they are not direct yes or no answers. This type of interview allows participants to talk for long periods of time. This also helps the researcher avoid leading questions and get the most of how the participants think and feel towards the subject. This leads to findings that are valid and reliable because of their unguided nature.

Semi-structured interviews are known to "explore respondents' opinions, clarify interesting and relevant issues, elicit complete information and explore sensitive topics within each interview" (Louise & While, 2006). Interviews also allow the participants to be comfortable as well as conversations to be informal, especially when the setting is also extremely familiar to the interviewees (Louise & While, 2006).

### 3.2.2. Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations inherent in this study are related to the interviews. The researcher went through the University's ethical approval procedure. During the data collection stage in Kuwait, the schools and interviewees were granted verbal approval for conducting the interviews and informed consent was given before the administration of any interview. All participants were assured that their participation was voluntary and no penalty would be imposed if they opted not to participate. The participants were also assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their participation and any findings within the study.

### 3.3. Participants

All participants are teachers of various subjects and details can be found in the table below.

**Table 1**
**All participants are teachers of various subjects and details**

| Participant No. | Details |
|---|---|
| Participant 1 | Female middle school science teacher, public school |
| Participant 2 | Female middle school IT, public school |
| Participant 3 | Female kindergarten teacher, public school |
| Participant 4 | Male middle school social studies teacher and head of department, private school |
| Participant 5 | Male elementary math teacher, private school |
| Participant 6 | Male high school English teacher, private school |

### 4. Assumptions

The study was carried out based on the following assumptions:

- Participants talk about the management control system used in their schools during the interviews.

- Participants explain the management system and their workload, task assignment, and work balance as school teachers.

- Participants' perceptions towards management strategies differ in keeping them satisfied in order to achieve the school goals.

### 5. Data Analysis

A thematic approach is used to analyse the interviews. Boyaztis (1998) explains that thematic analysis is a process of analysing data using a list of themes and indicators. This approach is used to analyse the interviews and extract any repeated themes that can be found in most or all of the participants' opinions. The researcher uses this method to identify themes within the interviews in order to draw out main

themes revolving around the management control system implemented in Kuwaiti schools and its effect on teachers' productivity and satisfaction. This allows the researcher to organize the data and single out individual themes.

The steps to undertaking thematic analysis allow a systematic routine for analysis. The first step is to collect the data and categorize it according to participating teachers in Kuwaiti school. The second step involves listening to the audio files of the interviews as many times as it takes to identify the themes. The third step is to develop a coding framework through noting down and organizing and sorting items of interest or indicators into potential themes, examining these potential themes and attempting definitions and descriptions for these themes. The researcher listened to the interviews again to examine the interviews carefully for any additional information that is relevant to the themes, and finalized the recurring themes for the presentation of findings and discussion of results.

## 6. Finding and Results

This section reports the results of the answers of the research questions of the thematic analysis of the interviews.

### 6.1. Teachers' Awareness of Management Control System Implemented in Kuwaiti Schools

Participant 1 does not believe that there is a specific management control system since the management only sets a flexible guideline on how to prepare lesson plans, while participant 2 has no awareness of a management control system although they are doing work that is handed to them from the school's management. Participant 3 thinks that when technology is used in school it aids management to enhance and increase good performance for students and teachers. Participants 4, 5, and 6 have no awareness of the management system in the school, but display good knowledge of the teaching methods implemented at the school.

### 6.2 Balancing Work Assignment and Improve the Curriculum Taught in Kuwaiti Schools

Because teachers are being evaluated based on non-teaching work aside from their teaching requirements, teachers are forced to improve their administrative knowledge and experiences through earning more qualifications. This makes them face the daily challenge of trying to strike a balance between teaching and satisfying their upcoming evaluators, according to Participant 1.

Participant 2's main struggle in balancing is mainly in the disorganization of task assignment since teachers are not given fixed tasks with deadlines. They are, instead, being asked to do things on the spot or given too much to do at once through tasks like proctoring, grading, and using technology while teaching. Being an IT teacher, this participant is also asked to do non-teaching IT work such as updating the school's website.

There is no way to create a good balance between classroom and management work for Participant 3, especially since the management interferes with teacher's lesson plans even though it is the teacher's sole responsibility to come up with a lesson plan and teach since there is no stated curriculum. Although Participant 4 sees no reason for balancing his work load, he believes that many other teachers are struggling to create that balance. He knows this because they have an online computer school network system where teachers log on to work, and when logged on, a teacher can see which other teachers are online working, too. Participant 4 explains that even if he logs on in the middle of the night or on weekends, there are always teachers logged on and working. He also explains that even though the work load is not heavy for him compared to other co-workers, he still spends the weekends mostly working. Participant 5 believes that the work load is there because of the new inclusion teaching system that is being implemented in the school, and it can be balanced if teachers are trained properly in how to implement the system on a daily basis. The work load for teachers in the

school is again described as heavy by Participant 6. This participant believes that the work load is never-ending and hard to balance since he takes all his grading work home because there is no time to finish all that work during working hours at school.

## 6. 3 Work Flow for School Teachers

The work flow is hindered in several ways. According to Participant 1, the new science curriculum is a bit too difficult for the students and, therefore, the teacher needs time to prepare and find ways to teach the curriculum in a way that helps the students absorb more of the content. Participant 2 believes that the work flow is not smooth because the amount of work assigned to the teacher cannot be done within working hours, especially with the management requirements, which can be seen to be parallel to Participant 1's statements. Participant 3 notes that the work flow is affected by administrative work since the work flow in the classroom is close to perfect. Participant 4 explains that the work flow is definitely hindered by the load assigned to teachers in terms of administrative work. It is also hindered because the curriculum does not match the teaching objectives; therefore, the teachers have to create a lot of their own materials rather than use ready content from textbooks. The paperwork that teachers are required to do is mainly what interrupts the work flow since the school is new as explained by Participant 5. Participant 6 believes that the first priority is teaching the students. This is why he does the teaching at school and the rest of the work at home in orders not to interrupt the teaching work flow and have it run smoothly.

## 6.4 Management Problems in Kuwaiti Schools

Participants 1, 2 and, 3 noticed management problems in their schools. Participant 1 stated that the problem lies in the many different responsibilities where teaching should be the main focus of her job. She struggles to satisfy the students, management, and ministry requirements. Most of the time, the teacher is forced into time-consuming administrative work that takes away from her responsibility as a teacher and reflects on the students' learning process. According to Participant 2, if a teacher does not cooperate with the management, she/he would be risking being picked on by the management. Therefore, they are left no choice although there is no rule that requires teachers to do administrative work. For Participant 3, the biggest problem is the interference of the management without having a set curriculum for the younger, early learners (kindergarten).

Although participant 4 thinks the online system to be great, it is too time consuming for teachers to continuously update their accounts. However, the teachers are required to do so and are e-mailed a lot of small things to do on the online system, which add up to a long list of things that have to be done using both papers and files and the online system. However, Participants 5 and 6 believe that the management has a problem in task assignment in a way that breaks down the work load for the teachers. They also point out that this is the reason for work load pressure for teachers.

## 7. Conclusions

Findings and results show that the participants have no idea about the management control used either in their schools and they show there stress in balancing their work load with non-teaching tasks, on other end participants agreed that work flow is not smooth in light of the amount of administrative requirements, which led to the conclusion that there is a management problem.

## 8. Suggestions for Future Research

The main recommendations from the research are to implement management control system in order to base teacher evaluations on outcomes of organized task assignment and balanced workloads. This system can be used in the educational sector in Kuwait with numerous advantages.

- Implementing a management control system that focuses on the development of the student

- Lessening the management's non-teaching require-ments in order to relieve pressure and smooth out the work flow

- Implementing a management control system that allows teachers to manage their resources so that they do not have to be lacking in their lives outside of the workplace

- Lessening the administrative work load in order to enable teachers to put students first and invest more time in preparing to teach their students

- Revising and improving curriculums continuously in order to make the work load and work flow more efficient

- Providing teacher training in how to implement teaching management control system and manage administrative work

- Evaluating teachers for their work load in a much more concrete way whether their work load involves non-teaching tasks or not.

- Providing guidance on how much non-teaching work can be given to teachers without affecting the teaching aspect of their job.

- Assessing teachers' performance throughout different conditions like curriculum changes, introducing new teaching methods, adding a technological factor to teaching, etc.

- School managements can see clear results of how different management strategies are affecting teachers' performances.

- School managements can also assign tasks and increase or decrease workloads in a more balanced way.

The next step after this research is to conduct a study where MCS is implemented across different schools that have different educational systems. This allows researchers to assess and predict the degree of success MCS can have in the education field. A comparative, longitudinal study, where an MCS is implemented in one school but is not implemented in another type of school to study management and teacher performance, is also recommended to further advance the recommendations made in the field of this study. In addition, an ethnographic research that studies management and teacher perception of MCS within a school can also give insights on how the MCS is perceived and how it can be improved to accommodate different needs of different schools and their systems.

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## Appendix A

### Research Questions

### Semi-structured interviews

- Is the employee aware of what management control systems are implemented in Kuwait schools?

- Can employee balance their work assignment and improving the curriculum taught in schools in Kuwait?

- How is the work flow for school teachers?

- Is there a management problem in Kuwait schools?

## Appendix B

### School name and location

Meskan kindergarten location Qyrawan area

Alyaqout kindergarten location Mishref area

Nebras school location Abdullah al mubararak area

Fahaheel highschool location on Fahaheel

Bayan highschool Location in Bayan area

Fatma abdulmalek location Subah Alsalem

## Appendix C

### Data collecting in the interview

**Participant 1:**

Q1: Are you aware of what management control systems implemented in Kuwait schools?

A1: There are no particular system, that we know about that can guide us to set goals or ways to evaluate student, but in my point view I don't follow the exact assessment, and I often do it on my own style and I keep under consideration that this style is easy for me and the information that I deliver for the student are easy.

Q2: Can you balance the work assignment and improve curriculum?

A2: I like my work as a teacher, but the extra work is a burden for every teacher, if teaching was the only job, it will be accepted but other administrative and teaching together will affect the teacher performance specially when administrative added to the performance measure teacher evaluation will be low. Add to that pressure student will not be the center of teachers concentration.

Q3: How is the work flow?

A3: Science curriculum is not related to Kuwait reality, beside that curriculum is difficult for this

stage of group phase this curriculum used to be thought for higher group phase. So it was difficult for teachers to deliver information that is higher than the mantel level for this group phase, this curriculum was used for four years, which is a French curriculum and the translation was literal, not easy for student to understand, we tried to revise it but still need more revision, on the other hand, curriculum is not related to Kuwait environment and student have hard time to understand and imagine something that not related to his environment, when the old curriculum was a mimic of Kuwait environment. Note that in the end of the year we have a questionnaire to assist the approach to develop and improve the curriculum.

Q4: Is there any management problem?

A4: Beside the extra administrative work that school assign the teacher, teacher always think for the interest of the student, and the teacher do the best that he could, but in reality teacher get evaluated not only on his work as a teacher do but also for his administrative work, if only the teacher do his only work which is teaching then the teacher could be more inventive in his teaching performance. Now recognition for teacher preformed comes from his administrative work not from teaching student were student comes next.

**Teacher opinion**

There will be no balance between teaching and administrative work where the teacher going to live in a loop between student, teaching and administrative work, in the end it will affect his life and his home, the only thing to do is to make student is the center of teacher job.

**Participant 2**

Q1: Are you aware of what management control systems implemented in Kuwait schools?

A1: For the state of Kuwait especially kindergarten there is no fixed system, rely on curriculum improving, usually teachers plan for how to improve and perform the way that teacher see adequate.

Q2: Can you balance the work assignment and improve curriculum?

A2: Regard the amount of work this recant semester, usually work in the class divided between two class teachers but to reduce the amount of work, management assigned one more staff teacher to help and dived work in three, as for administrative work, will!!! Still there is no balance in work and teachers suppose to bear this burden and do it in timely manner.

Q3: How is the work flow?

A3: First of all, teacher should have a unified curriculum for this stage level. Second of all, teachers performance measure and evaluation based on teacher performance in class not based on the administrative work, because teachers work is teaching the student

Q4: Is there any management problem?

A4: The supervisor Director-oriented always limits the ability and the creativity of a teacher, by adding restrains to curriculum that been taught in schools.

**Teacher opinion**

Appoint the current situation, there should be a clear and easy plan regard the curriculum practiced in schools.

**Participant 3:**

Q1: Are you aware of what management control systems implemented in Kuwait schools?

A1: Educational technology is one on the system that been added to our schools now teachers and student should study and practice by using this technology such as I pad and smart blackboard. Add to that one of the system implemented is to provide and have an educated environment a school designed a website to help teachers and student for guide and counselling

Q2: Can you balance the work assignment and improve?

A2: Pressure has grown and the teacher always feels under pressure from responsibility between teaching and administrative test supervision  responsibilities.

Q3: How is the work flow?

A3: Computer class is easy and beneficial for students, but we still carry our school work home.