The Effectiveness of Teamwork of National and Expatriate Kg Teachers in Al Ain Schools: A Qualitative Study

Maitha Khalifa Ali Al Mansouri

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United Arab Emirates University
College of Education
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Master of Educational Leadership Program

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEAMWORK OF NATIONAL AND EXPATRIATE KG TEACHERS IN AL AIN SCHOOLS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

By
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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEAMWORK OF NATIONAL AND EXPATRIATE KG TEACHERS IN AL AIN SCHOOLS:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate teamwork effectiveness of national and expatriate teachers in Al Ain KG schools. The study was guided by one main research question and three sub-questions and used the qualitative phenomenological research method. Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted in five KG schools with ten teachers: five national and five expatriate teachers. Data collected from the interviews had been recorded as audio files. Then, data were cleaned, checked for completeness, coded, and analyzed using the Nvivo program version 10. The findings highlighted the awareness of teachers of the importance of teamwork and its advantages for both national and expatriate teachers. Moreover, the findings confirmed teamwork's positive effect on student learning especially in helping students gain new language. In addition, the findings identified the factors that contributed to enhancing teamwork effectiveness and the barriers that hindered it. Teachers shared their experiences in working in teams and mentioned many real-life examples. They provided many suggestions to improve the effectiveness of teamwork and overcome the barriers to its effective implementation. After an analysis of these suggestions, the study recommended providing more professional development training for teachers and the administrative staff on teamwork, communication, and English language proficiency. In addition, the study revealed the need for a standardization of teamwork practices or procedures to unify the efforts and results in ways that improve student learning. Finally, the study provided recommendations for conducting more in-depth qualitative research and experimental studies on teamwork effectiveness and strategies in teaching subjects such as English and Arabic.
DEDICATION

This thesis is lovingly dedicated

To the love of my life, my father, who encouraged me to continue my study and supported me during the master study
To my beloved husband who encouraged me to achieve my goals and supported me in each step on the way
To my children who fill my life with happiness and delight
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

For a long time, education has been referred to as the key to a better life. Proponents of this opinion base their arguments on the ability of education to empower individuals to be able to take up various opportunities in the world, to better their lives, and the future of their societies.

In essence, education can be seen as happening through formal and informal channels. Informal education is normally the responsibility of the society, which takes the responsibility of passing its values, beliefs, and practices to the citizens. This is generally known as the culture of society, which is carried from one generation to the other. On the other hand, formal education is carried out at schools and is normally managed by an official authority. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), formal education is offered in public and private schools. Private schools are sponsored privately while public schools are funded by the government. Education in the UAE starts from preschool to graduate levels at different universities. Public schools or government-sponsored schools develop their education programs nationally through the Ministry of Education or the educational councils such as Abu Dhabi Education Council.

In the wake of increased globalization, increased industrialization, and a rapidly growing economy, the UAE has been in dire need of highly skilled, competent, and knowledgeable workforce to sustain its competitiveness in this changing world. As the UAE strives to maintain its status as a regional and global economic powerhouse, it has sought to recruit non-UAE citizens to meet its labor requirements. This trend is not sustainable and stands to destabilize the cultural and
economic model of the UAE. This calls for a strategy in which the country can be able to increase its internal capacity to provide its economy with the required skilled and knowledgeable human power. Therefore, it is worth acknowledging the fact that owing to the rapid changes in the region and the country, the future success of the UAE depends upon an educated workforce and high quality higher education system (Warren, 2007). Moreover, bearing in mind that UAE nationals do not constitute the majority of the population in the country, it is commonsense that the UAE citizens should have high levels of education to be able to provide leadership for the country. With regard to this point, the educational system has made outstanding progress providing education from basic education to higher education, thus expanding possibilities and providing quality education for all citizens (Al Ateeqi, 2009).

However, there lies an opportunity for enhancing education in the UAE by enhancing teamwork in education. Teamwork in the education sector ensures that all the stakeholders are involved in working together towards achieving a common set of goals.

In 2008, Abu Dhabi government launched its vision 2030 and one of the main foundations for this vision was education. The agenda in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi was to develop the education system through Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) and to be one of the best in the world through a 10-year strategic plan that introduces reform after identifying key areas for change (Abu Dhabi Education Council, 2014).

Abu Dhabi schools aim at producing responsible, reflective, respectful, and independent learners. The schools also aim for students to acquire global citizenship skills such as developing an appreciation of lifetime learning. Their purpose is to offer quality education enabling children to reach their full potential. Teachers in Abu
Dhabi act as role models and learning is offered in ways leading for individual success.

Based on the article "The new model school" Dr. Al Khaili observes that, the goal of this revolutionary approach is to improve learning experiences and to raise the academic standards of Abu Dhabi students to a competitive level so they can be able to achieve the "Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030." These improvements in the education sector will develop stronger Arabic and English literacy and numeracy; improve critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity skills. Besides, it will continue to emphasize cultural and nationwide distinctiveness of Abu Dhabi students (Abu Dhabi Education Council, 2014).

Additionally, part of ADEC's plan is to hire 600 new English teachers, as well as make nursery school classes bilingual. It will also enforce longer working days for school teachers and obligatory training on the new model. This model has been applied since September 2010 in 171 KG and cycle one schools including grades one to three, and all grade levels should be transitioned into it by 2016 (Abu Dhabi Education Council, 2014).

ADEC has integrated the bilingual education system by employing Lead Teachers (LTs) since August 2009, in order to teach English and numeracy. Having native English speaking teachers from different countries poses one of the main challenges to the education system reform. LTs are teachers who have a wide range of experience in education in addition to having great leadership skills, which enable them to lead other teachers towards achieving excellence in education (Donahoo & Hunter, 2007). The introduction of LTs in ADEC's new model schools (NMS) posed many challenges to school administrators. Teamwork effectiveness has become an important issue that needs to be handled carefully, since teams now are composed of
both national Arab Emiratis and native English speaking teachers with varying cultural backgrounds.

In recent years, researchers have repeatedly stated that teamwork effectiveness is vital to both public and private organizations (Maginn, 1995). In his book “Effective Teamwork,” Maginn (1995) defined the term team as any group of people who interact dynamically, interdependently, and cooperatively, in order to achieve shared and valued objectives.

Teams can be created either for long or short-term purposes. Furthermore, teams and groups do not mean the same thing, because being in a team means that all individuals will interact dynamically. In contrast, groups are created for a specific purpose and they might not have leaders as in teams. Schools need an effective leader who can offer direction and can effectively coordinate the work of a team to ensure that the goals set are achieved (Maginn, 1995).

Teams are becoming increasingly important in today’s organizations. In many places of work today, team-based structures are gradually replacing traditional hierarchical structures. This change has increased demands for team-training activities to enable employees to develop their knowledge and skills to make them more productive (CIPD, 2013).

On examining the opinions, attitudes, and beliefs that people hold for communication, one observation is that communication is an important aspect of culture. Culture includes the traditions, values, and long-established practices that have become customs for interrelating and solving problems.

As mentioned above, a team is a group of people who may be coming from different backgrounds and having different cultures. However, they are to work on a single task despite the fact that they uphold different opinions. In other words, in a
workplace environment, different people who come from different places and might have different cultures should work together as a team to achieve a shared purpose. In the case of Al Ain schools, the teams are composed of teachers who come from different places, but should work together with a cooperative spirit to achieve the goal of teaching students in the school.

In an effective team, members act differently than those on a less-effective team. Although many things happen in a team meeting, discussion occurs over events and people or what has happened recently or should have happened, opinions are expressed about who should do what, when and the like. For this process to succeed, the teams depend on the school principals to help define their range of activities and troubleshoot any problems. Being in a team requires one to open the mind to new points of view and solve the problems based on different input from the team members. Effective teamwork is achieved when the members of a team work towards achieving a common goal or set of goals and to overcome any challenges (Tarricone & Luca, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Teamwork has become an essential element in every organization. In a team, all the members collaborate, respect each other's point of view, participate extensively in decision making, and use their experience to contribute to the success of the organization. On the other hand, various changes happen among the members of the team. Initially, the group members work as individuals and they might not work towards the same goal. However, this changes when time passes and as individuals collaborate to work together as a team. In the formation of teams, the school
administration ought to consider the opinions of all the stakeholders involved in the school to channel their efforts towards enhancing education.

Prior to the introduction of English native speaking teachers in Abu Dhabi schools, students and teachers used Arabic language as the language of instruction. After the establishment of ADEC, English teachers were employed in public schools starting with Kindergartens (KGs), after which bilingual education was gradually introduced to other schooling levels. In bilingual instruction, the teachers plan their work together. They share classes and work together inside the same class. In addition, they interact for long times outside the classroom. This is specifically so in kindergartens as other schooling levels are associated with lesser interactions between teachers.

Teamwork is an important element, which influences the efficiency of the work done. It creates a favorable environment for the free flow of information in addition to a smooth flow of work leading to enhanced performance. It should be noted that communication is an important aspect, which influences the efficiency of teamwork. According to Koehler and Cortina (2009), communication underlines all team interactions and affects all team processes. Typically, effective team working among teachers in the kindergarten schools will facilitate combination of unique skills. This will enable increased creativity among the teachers since it facilitate unity and strengthen relationships (Garner, 1995).

Communication is critical because enhancing communication contributes to increasing job satisfaction. Teachers will ultimately develop a sense of responsibility when there is teamwork since team members co-depend on each other. This should create interdependence between the team members, which should be enhanced by increased interaction between the teachers. Owing to the diversity of the teachers,
instances of teachers not collaborating with each other is due to come up. This may be
due to communication barriers arising from differences in the languages spoken by
the Arab and LT teachers. However, effective team management skills should enable
the school management to counter this.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of teamwork of
national and expatriate KG teachers in Al Ain schools. This has been occasioned by
the introduction of expatriate teachers who introduced new experiences into the NSM
system and into the processes affecting teamwork dynamics.

Research Questions

• How effective are teams of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain
  Schools?

  a) What are the perceptions of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain
     schools of their teamwork?

  b) How do expatriate and national KG teachers see the barriers to having
effective teams in Al Ain schools?

  c) What are the lessons to be learned when forming teams of expatriate and
     national teachers in Al Ain KG schools?

Assumptions of the Study

• The study assumes that teamwork increases the productivity of teachers and
  motivates them toward more quality of teaching.
• Teamwork effectiveness affects the school atmosphere, which makes it positive and more collaborative.

• Teamwork helps teachers to exchange new ideas and help them to solve any conflict by cooperating as a team and finding a solution of any problem.

• Teamwork supports teachers to improve their teaching and increase the quality of implementing the curriculum.

• Teamwork increases the motivation to learning among teachers.

Significance of the Study

This study adds to the literature by addressing the issue of teamwork effectiveness and barriers of teamwork in education. The study will help provide suggestions on how to create an environment for effective teamwork in KG schools. In addition, the study will help principals be aware of the importance of their role in encouraging teams, providing opportunities for team formation, producing procedures and policies that organize the work among team members, and making these policies clear to all teachers so as to standardize the work of teams in all KG schools. The study will be shared with school administrators and teachers and this will help apply the results and have them put into practice. Finally, the study is significant because no research has been done on the relationships between national and expatriate teachers in general and particularly in the new model schools of Abu Dhabi and Al Ain. Thus, this study opens up an area of research for future interested researchers.

Limitation of the Study

The study is limited to five kindergarten schools in Al Ain city, in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The study was conducted on classroom teachers of which five were
national teachers and five were expatriate teachers. All the teachers were female as all teachers in the KG schools are female. The validity of the study depends on the extent of and trustworthiness of the data collected through the qualitative interviews.

Validity of these study findings also depends on the willingness of teachers to share their opinions openly and honestly and the ability of the researcher to gain quality descriptions from teachers. In some interviews, this was not achieved in the best manner. Some participants might not have been open enough or have been somewhat conservative in their views. This study was limited by time and was conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2013/2014. There was not follow-up to insure that the opinions of participants did not change.

Terms & Acronyms

- Teamwork: a group of members working together collaboratively to reach the organization goals.

- ADEC: Abu Dhabi Education Council. ADEC seeks to develop education and educational institutions in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, implement innovative educational policies, plans, and programs that aim to improve education, and support educational institutions and staff to achieve the objectives of national development in accordance with the highest international standards.

- Expatriate: teachers who have international teaching certificates, which allow them to teach in any place in the world.

- NSM: The New School Model is a new reform policy set by ADEC and is based on a student-centered learning approach, where students learn in a resource and technology-rich environment with modern teaching facilities. In the NSM, a wide
variety of learning activities are catered to the different learning styles of all students.

- SIP: A School Improvement Plan is used in schools to plan the annual goals and what the schools aim to accomplish during the year.
- AEO: Al Ain Education Office is part of ADEC. It is an office located in Al Ain city.
- KG: Kindergarten school is a preschool with an educational approach based on playing, singing, practical activities, and social interaction as part of the transition from home to school. The KGs teach student between 4-5 years within a mixed gender environment.

Conceptual Framework

There have been numerous previous studies about teamwork effectiveness. Teamwork has an essential role within any school district. This study followed the framework of Tuckman's model of teamwork.

The study was guided by how the model was implemented in the education system especially among teachers. The following figure presents the various processes or stages of teamwork building according to Tuckman's model.

![Figure 1: Tuckman's model team development.](image-url)
The model shows an orientation phase (forming), which runs through to personal conflicts and address (storming). The subsidence of the storm indicates that the rules of behavior have been achieved. Team efforts then become directed towards tasks (performing). Finally, in (adjourning), the team reaches some kind of termination through task completion, or membership disruption. At the core of the model is the implication that teams pass through several development stages prior to effective performance. The assumption is that intra-personal and interpersonal needs have to be addressed before behavioral norms are established. Only then can task effectiveness be achieved (Todor & Susan, 2000). In-depth explanation of the stages and of the model of Tuckman team development is discussed in the literature review.
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CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In order to understand the meaning of the term teamwork and the effectiveness of teamwork in education, literature was reviewed. This review included the origin of the word team, the concepts related to teamwork, the different stages of team development according to Tuckman's model, and the benefits and types of teams. Finally, the literature review provided a discussion on the role of teamwork in schools and the effectiveness of teamwork in education.

Origin of Teams

In the past decades, people used to work as individuals, with their own philosophy and rules. The interaction with others was limited to the business they were doing. Each member has been working individually without having common goals or values for the organization. Then a transformation from this self-directed activity occurred, as the owners of business have expanded their work and it was harder to achieve the expansion as individuals. The need for more individuals working together has been established and the concept of teamwork has become widely known. As part of this development and to catch up with globalization, teams became integral to every organization,

Prior to the development of the concept of teamwork, employees used to work individually where each individual in an organization had clearly defined tasks and goals which had to be achieved individually (Betty et al., 1997). To this end, everybody had a clear definition of duties. However, in the recent past, the concept of
teamwork has been applied in virtually all organizations, effectively replacing the traditional individual work setting. This trend was motivated by technological advancement and the necessity to merge individual creativities to achieve a common goal in the organization.

In today’s world of work, organizations encounter a complex need to change the traditional way of work to be more dynamic through teamwork. This, in turn, will have dramatic benefits for the organization to match the requirements of globalization of business. The concept was first applied to management issues in the 1960s in the USA (Betty et al., 1997). The team is not just a collection of individuals and actions preferred over individual behaviors. It is more than this literal explanation. We cannot give a group of individuals the title of a team and expect them to perform as a team (Bass, 1980). The point here is that a team is not only a small group of people working together; it is connected more to behaviors, interactions, collective contribution to decision-making to achieve common goals and solve problems.

Teams

The human nature is always looking for socialization with groups of people surrounding them. DuFour, DuFour & Eaker (2008) define the team as a group of people working interdependently to achieve common goals for which members are held mutually accountable. Paris, Salas & Cannon-Bowers (2000) stated, “teams are more than collections of individuals and teamwork is more than the aggregate of their individual behaviors” (p. 1). Working in teams helps to achieve the goals and accomplish the tasks in shorter time than expected when the work is done individually. Being in a team has many advantages such as having quick problem solving abilities and creating a learning community to achieve the goals of the district
or the organization. Teamwork has become an important part of the school; it helps to increase the performance of the teachers because working in groups or in teams helps the teachers to develop their skills by interacting with different teachers and getting new knowledge and experience from their varied experience and backgrounds.

**Teamwork**

Teamwork is the process of working in collaboration with each other in a group to achieve a common goal. Teamwork can also be defined as the work done by many members with each member doing a part while still subordinating personal interest for the success of the whole. In this context, it is important for members to be supportive of one another in order to get to a shared goal accomplished. Teamwork is also a group of people working well together.

Teamwork entails collaboration of several individuals to achieve a common goal, whereby each team member has a role to play in contributing to the team's ultimate goal (CIPD, 2012; Betty et al., 1997). In large organizations, there are teams that interact with each other to achieve common goals. Teamwork is a vital way of gathering input of an organization as members become involved in pursuing the organization's goals.

Teamwork is working together in a group in order to divide the work and increase productivity, achieving common goals of the organization, and contributing to solving any conflict by decision-making within the team. In education, teamwork has a positive impact on the learning process. It helps teachers to interact together to improve the learning of students. Being able to collaborate with other teachers and to work in teams will help the school community to be more productive and the goals of the school to be achieved in a shorter time span.
The Stages of Team Development

Teams develop when a number of groups begin to work together as a well-matched whole. Then, they look at the aim of what they intend to do. Next, they should look at the outcome or the result of their collaboration. Finally, the members should discuss the issue of the available resources to assist them in realizing their objectives.

Tuckman's Model of Team Development

With the increasing need to achieve organizational objectives, a number of companies have resorted to the use of teams to articulate innovation among its workforce. A team is a constitution of people who work directly towards achievement of a common purpose. As such, organizations have adapted team strategies with the aim of enhancing innovation. Through the creation of effective teams, the organization can nurture its innovation capabilities. This can be achieved in a number of ways. One of them is through technical expertise. The teams' formulation is based on technical capabilities of team members. This stage creates an opportunity for members with the same technical skills to brainstorm on various ways to ensure product development and promotion. This ensures innovation and improvement (Larson and Frank, 1989), a point which attributes great importance to the development of this step.

In 1965, Tuckman established a team development model that has five stages. These stages became well known as "form, storm, norm, perform and adjourn" and in this same sequence (Todor & Susan, 2000).

Forming is the first stage and is characterized by working out the composition of members in the team. Storming happens when with interactions with external
groups and other organizational levels. Norming happens when the team has stabilized and members can work collaboratively. Performing occurs when the team is highly flexible and functional. Mourning happens when the team is dissolved after achieving the set goal(s) (CIPD, 2012).

**Development Stages**

**Forming stage**

In the earlier stages of group development, formation constitutes the first stage. Groups are normally formed by individuals who share the same relationships or problems (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). The constant interactions between members make the members close to each other. This bond becomes stronger by the number of times group members interact and associate according to their commonalities and similarities. This stage also highlights dependence of members on each other (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). At this stage, team members try to learn about each other and about fitting together in this new atmosphere. This should include feelings of acceptance and safety.

Formation of a group brings to light different expectations of group members. Different members of the group have different characteristics that influence its formation (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). In fact, as a leader of the group, during group formation, it is necessary for one to evaluate members' behaviors toward each other. This would contribute to avoiding conflicts and promoting relationships among the members (Lipnack & Stamps, 1997). At the end of this stage, the team should be formed by assembling new members who work together. Members now accept each other and feel safe with guidance and directions from the leaders.
**Storming stage**

In order to avoid conflicts among members of the team, it is vital to enhance their personal relationships. Promoting personal relationships plays a prominent role in bolstering cohesiveness through understanding and communication (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). According to Tuckman's stages of teamwork development, this is achieved in the Storming Stage. During this stage, different members of the group confront each other's perspectives and notions. This is healthy to building effective relationships among group members. In fact, this is the most famous and important stage of group formation. This is the stage where members get to know each other and share their personal experiences and individual information. As described earlier, the storming stage brings about personal reflections and sharing of information (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

During this team building stage, members learn new strategies, prospects, and ways of solving disputes. Thus, as a leader of the team, this stage presents a clear opportunity to establish good relationships with the members of the team. The storming stage brings out leadership qualities of a leader such as conflict resolution and interpersonal skills of courageousness and straightforwardness. At this stage, the group leader may motivate its members towards achievement of various tasks required by the school. This clearly indicates that when group members come to know each other, the cohesiveness between them slowly progresses into stronger bonds (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Members learn to share their day-to-day responses and activities. Through this, they articulate a problem-solving norm in the team, which is significant towards the solidarity of the team (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). At this stage, members work together and storm ideas. Conflict may occur at this stage and the competitions may happen to identify the best among team members.
**Norming stage**

The ability to conduct tasks together is built on the cohesion among members of any team. Norming or reaching common norms promotes solidarity since it provides a platform to engage in activities together. During the norming stage, tasks give a chance to members to share their experiences and allows for setting the rules of conduct. At the same time, creativity is heightened during the norming stage. In other words, while rules of conduct are to be reached, there is space for creative ideas to appear.

At this stage, members are willing to change their perceptions, notions, and ideas because of listening to and discussing the ideas and notions held by other members of the team. Leadership is extensively conducted at this stage and in-group associations are dissolved largely to promote team cohesion and group dynamics (Manz & Sim, 1993). One characteristic of this stage is an increased level of candidness and sharing of information. As a leader of the team, this stage provides a chance to trust members of the group. Trust is only achievable through establishing proper relations among members of the group. This is also a means of improving cohesion among members.

**Performing stage**

This stage is achieved when members grow over the stages to true independence. The stage presents situations where team members may develop further personal relations. Group members seek to know the inner circles of their members (Tuckman, 1965). They participate cohesively in tasks and duties assigned to them. For a team leader, this stage should provide productive results of tasks performed. The success of tasks and duties further enhances cohesion between team
members. Solidarity and cohesion among members is witnessed through the task orientation they hold (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). At this stage, caring among group members and inter-dependency are witnessed. Another notable characteristic among members of the team is having a unique identity and personality for the team.

_Adjourning stage_

At this stage, the team comes to an end and the members' engagement in tasks and duties stops, as the work should be done. This stage provides an opportunity for members of the group to end their personal relations (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). The cohesion that existed in the earlier stages ends with the end of this stage. Among the notable characteristics is also disengagement in tasks as the members should have completed all of the required work. Team members are recognized for the achievement of the whole group. In some occasions, the stage connotes a sense of disentanglement experienced by team members.

_Benefits of Teamwork_

The benefits of teamwork include improvement in productivity because of collaboration, member's flexibility and growth, speedy accomplishment of tasks, increased motivation of the staff team, and general improvement in the quality of products and/or services provided. This underscores the importance of teamwork and team-teaching in kindergarten schools whereby teachers exchange their knowledge and skills leading to improvement in their teaching practice and the success of children (Barnes, 2001).

Teamwork is an extremely fundamental aspect of any organization. This is because it is difficult to realize the objectives of any organization without working as
groups and in teams. Teamwork effectiveness depends on principals and teachers. Principals should provide exemplary leadership aimed to enhance the effectiveness of teamwork dynamics among teachers.

**Benefit of Problem Solving**

The teamwork follows a process in solving problems. First, they define a problem then decide the process to use. Then, they gather information, which helps them to make a decision. After making a decision, the team members should make an action plan. After solving the problem, they review and evaluate the decision made and the process followed. The process ends in sharing the experience of solving the problem.

Teams have become an essential element in problem-solving and in helping businesses move forward toward the future (Conti & Kleiner, 1997). Research on multicultural teams by Crotty (2009) shows that cultural diversity within the teams impact performance. Schools have been adopting the idea of having teams in schools and teamwork has become the key to staff development. Beal (2003) found that being a member in a teamwork helps people to improve their own and their teammates performance. This happens through the engagement in solving the problems faced by the team members.

**Benefit of Collaboration**

Collaboration facilitates the use of individual talents and makes knowledge to flow effectively within an organization. Collaboration stimulates members as well as provides intellect companionship to members sharing the same specialty (Wallace
Individuals who are engaged in teams are able to widen their personal networks as well as widen their credibility through collaboration.

Team-teaching, or teaching using the teamwork technique, fosters collaboration among teachers and helps disseminate knowledge and skills to the learners. Through this technique, teachers engage in collaborative content planning and exchange of teaching strategies. This interactive teaching approach ensures sharing of responsibilities and professional and personal growth for teachers (Polana et al., n.d). More importantly, the approach supports educators and raise their capability to respond to the learners' psychological and educational needs. The result is improved performance for both the teachers and learners.

Stakeholders of a school are people who possess an interest in the results of the school. There are several advantages of including stakeholders in decision-making as they offer unique insight into organizational issues. They make transparency an achievable objective and help to make wiser decision. Therefore, having a high team efficacy in problem solving and decision making depends also on the levels of stakeholders' engagement and development.

The cultural background has a great impact on the teamwork effectiveness. The diversity in the team and having different backgrounds should enhance reaching creative and open-minded ideas and solutions to achieve the main aim of the organization harmoniously.

Types of Teams

Teamwork is a process where groups of people achieve common goals. The goals are defined and a timeline is developed to achieve those goals. All members should participate towards achieving the goals. A team comprises of a small number
of people who have skills to complement one another. The team members are committed to achieving a common objective. Thus, they have a common approach in the way they perform their duties (Griffin & Moorehead, 2010).

Institutions use four main types of teams to achieve their goals. These types are the cross-functional team, the problem solving team, the self-directed team, and the virtual team. They are grouped according to the functions they undertake in the organization. The following is an analysis of these teams and their roles in an organization.

**Cross-functional**

Cross-functional teams are groups of people with different functional expertise working toward a common goal (Krajewski, 2005). A cross-functional team may have individuals from different departments of the organization. It may include representatives from the departments or divisions of finance, marketing, operations, and human resources. In general, it includes employees from all organizational levels. Members may also come from outside the organization such as salespersons, stockholders, and businesspersons.

A standard cross-functional team, which conducts an evaluative task, for example, is composed of those individuals from departments within the firm whose competencies are essential in achieving an optimal evaluation. Successful teams combine skill-sets, which no single individual in the team possesses alone (Glenn, 2003). In education, a cross-functional team is sometime called a multidisciplinary team. This type of teams has become important to industrial organizations as it does a variety functions for the organization.
Problem solving

These are the teams established to solve a complicated problem in an organization. They are created when a serious problem affects the organization. The managers create such teams and give the members some tasks to accomplish. The team is composed of professionals from different departments but what distinguishes this team is that team members should find a solution to a problem affecting the organization. The teams are developed to last for a given duration of time, and they are terminated after accomplishing the assigned task (Newell, 2012).

The problem solving team is also called a taskforce. Taskforces are normally formed when there is a problem, which cannot be solved by the organization's standard structure. This type of teamwork is cross-functional in that members are from different areas in a particular organization. Their main task is to find solutions for the problems arising within the organization and this makes it different (Kyonne, 2007). The advantage of such a team is that it looks into a problem and is entrusted to find unique solutions. The disadvantage of such a team is that it is developed only when there is a problem, and it is terminated once the task ends. In education, a problem solving team is used when an academic institution experiences a serious problem such as a strike. A taskforce is developed to identify the cause of the strike and to suggest solutions to the problem (Wild, Mayeaux, & Edmonds, 2008).

Self-directed

The self-directed team functions when members are given the freedom to make decisions and develop their own strategies. The top management sets the main goal to be achieved and team members determine the manner in which the goals should be achieved. Such teams have no team leader and all members have equal
responsibilities. The members should develop strategies for achieving the goals with minimal supervision. A self-directed team allows members to decide on the people to be included in the team. The members themselves decide how to assign different tasks to each member as there might be no procedure. The team should meet the goals and standards of the organization but it enjoys much freedom for self-direction. The leaders for such teams emerge automatically, and there is no formal process of selecting team leaders. Team members have also the freedom to work this out (Newell, 2012).

This type of teamwork has autonomy in making decisions on how a job is to be done. The organization gives the team the goals, but the team decides on how to realize them. In these teams, the members collaborate with a specific purpose in mind. For example, the team develops a certain project, launches it, and oversees and evaluates it (Taylor & Ryan, 2005). As mentioned previously, there are no appointed leaders for these teams and the status of the team member is usually at the same level. While these members in such teams have the freedom to conduct their own activities the way they want as far as the goals are met, the disadvantage is that the work may be conducted haphazardly because the team has no team leader (Garner, 1995). In education, a school principal may ask a team to do a certain task within a given period. The team members should select a team leader, if they want, and should develop methods of achieving the goals.

Virtual

Virtual teamwork involves conducting activities online. Technology is extensively utilized by team members. A conference system is applied to allow all team members to meet virtually. The members share information and make decisions
with no physical contact. The team members do not have to be located at the same place (Newell, 2012). This type of teamwork depends on modern technology and the face-to-face meetings are usually rare. Video conferencing is the common tool used in this type of teamwork. Accountability is usually impacted as working in a virtual team means that each member is held accountable for the task given and to the organization, which supervises the function of this team.

This type of teamwork helps to save time, lowers the cost, and quickens the process of finding solutions to problems affecting an organization. The virtual teams are advantageous in that they help people from different parts of the world to interact and exchange information. On the other hand, the virtual teamwork has some disadvantages if members get into conflicts, which cannot be solved through the virtual process. This is because physical or face-to-face interaction is essential for a team to resolve its conflicts (Hagenbach, 2011). In education, virtual teamwork is experienced in modern and elaborate learning environments.

**Teamwork and Education**

Teamwork is an essential element in education. It helps in bringing together the educators and students in an effort to combine skills, knowledge, and talents and, therefore, enhances the learning process. Teamwork also builds courage among the students through collaboration and positive contribution (Gerlach, 2002). When teachers uses teamwork, it increases their collaboration in planning and achieving the outcomes of the curriculum because they work together.

Teamwork among educators should be encouraged. The educators should work as teams and partners in the education process. This will help them to grow professionally and, thus, enhance their work and achieve success in the teaching and
learning process. The educators should be involved in the planning process, should respect diversity in the team composition, and appreciate unique personality traits in team members (Gerlach, 2002).

Teamwork plays an essential role in learning. It fosters sharing ideas, maximizing individual skills, and improving the output especially when a team member participates in long and complex projects. People learn effectively from one another and teamwork develops the students' interpersonal skills with regard to being leaders who can cope with challenges and conflicts. Teamwork also enhances learning by enhancing one's self esteem and developing interdependence and accountability skills (Gerlach, 2002).

Various studies have been conducted with respect to teamwork in education. Tarricone and Luca (2002) conducted a study on two schools to investigate the performance of two teams. They reached some attributes, which can enhance the success of teamwork in education. These attributes include an obligation to team success and the shared goals, interdependence, interpersonal skills, open communication and positive feedback, suitable team composition, commitment to leadership, and the existence of clear accountability and teamwork processes. These attributes should be considered by both the educators and students in order to achieve success in the learning process. Positive adoption of these attributes encourages collaboration and enhances success in the teaching and learning processes.

**Effectiveness of Teamwork in Education**

Learning teams or teams related to learning can be a powerful tool for accomplishing the tasks (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005; Roberts, 2005; Stahl, 2006). Hackman (1990) and McGrath (1984) found that learning teams promote engagement
of their members in critical thinking activities, which helps the members to accomplish the complex tasks and allows for social support. Hackman (1987) defines team effectiveness as "teams' production output that meets or exceeds the passing performance. He asserts, effective teams must keep enhancing the ability of team members to work together" (p. 383).

When there is effective teamwork at schools or the learning institutions, the result is an increase in teachers' morale and higher work productivity. In teachers' teams, teachers work with fellow teachers in peer meetings. A representative from school administration should be a member in the teams and his/her job is to report to the principal. If students work in teams, this leads to success and better learning. When students use teamwork to do projects, Levin (2005) argues, teamwork experiences help students acquire leadership skills and prepare them to use leadership skills in their future workplaces.

In kindergartens, teamwork among children is fostered with the use of group activities that encourage empathy and sharing. In setting the class for working in teams, the teacher should encourage all children to perform well and he/she should record children progress toward the desired outcome.

**Teamwork in Kindergarten Schools**

Among the many skills kindergarten teachers acquire during their training, teamwork is a key aspect. Teamwork skills have far reached implications on a teacher's career and the performance of their students. According to the new policies, schools try to adapt to the New School Model requirements by having effective teamwork among teachers. Fostering teacher development by engaging in teamwork has become a critical element of the new model schools. Principals, along with
teachers who have different cultural backgrounds from all over the world, are working at the same schools and interact daily with Arab teachers in bilingual teaching environments. They attend the same classes, share lessons, solve problems together, and co-plan to achieve the best performance as a team. This sustained work method should be reflected on the performance of students.

Furthermore, in a team, educators are in a position to learn and acquaint themselves with the teaching techniques of their fellow teachers who are not necessarily more experienced than they are (Polana et al., n.d; Robert, 2011). However, the teamwork advantages do not guarantee that this method is trouble-free. In other words, teams can some their challenges too. The main problem in the teamwork dynamics is the individualism of the participants. Individualism happens when there is no consensus on the way the team functions and everyone does what he/she sees right. This may affect the effectiveness of the team and delay the achievement of the goals. Behaviors of team members can cause conflict with other team members. This is true when members have different backgrounds. The other point that might instigate conflict in teams is the existence of some coercion over team members. This happens when a member forces himself/herself as the team leader. This might cause sensitivity toward this participant and a delay in implementing organizational duties.

Teamwork Effectiveness in Abu Dhabi Education Council

The establishment of the Abu Dhabi Education Council under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan in 2005 was done for several strategic reasons. The formation of the Council mainly aimed at developing educational institutions and the education system in general (Garner, 2005). This has
continued to be done through the implementation of innovative education policies, programs, and plans. The Council provides support to educational institutions in Abu Dhabi and to school staff in their effort to realize the highest educational standards for national development.

Since the establishment of ADEC, great progress has been achieved in Abu Dhabi education. This is due to the policies enacted by the Council leadership, which aimed at providing guidance to the management teams of educational institutions. According to Bensimon (2009), teamwork among stakeholders in the Abu Dhabi education system plays a great role towards the achievement and maintenance of good results. This view commends the prevailing effectiveness of teamwork that has proved to be the major strength of ADEC schools. There has been few academic studies and research papers on the effectiveness of the system since its establishment in 2005 (Thomas, 2007). However, several researchers, scholars, and news writers have written about the effectiveness of teamwork in ADEC schools.

The highest level of teamwork in ADEC schools is usually manifest in the institutional management levels. Under the umbrella body of ADEC, the heads of public schools, private schools, and higher education institutions remain united and work as a team. Individuals who head or manage institutions carry the obligation to remain united and always work as a team to solve any emergent problem and generate new ideas (Bensimon, 2009). ADEC convenes meetings of senior stakeholders of education and ensures that they always remain well informed of the national plans for education and of how to accomplish them as a team.

In Abu Dhabi, the effectiveness of teamwork may be traced to the bodies, which lead schools locally. Hughes (2005) asserts that an active teamwork in an educational institution does not only involve participation from teachers and students
but also relentless effort from the management of the institution. In spite of the fact that teachers and students carry the responsibility of delivering impressive results after examinations, school management also retains a paramount role towards the same achievement.

In ADEC schools, the management personnel have adopted the teamwork approach in executing their duties (Abu Dhabi Education Council, 2006). The adoption of teamwork helps them accomplish administrative goals easily that may include admission of students, processing of important documents, and streamlining performance of many supporting activities. As teachers and the management benefit from teamwork, teamwork also provides a better learning environment for the students and fosters effective utilization of school resources.

To complement the teams at the managerial levels of ADEC, there exist effective and organized teams at the operational levels of schools. Just like in a business organization, teams at the operational level are the main determinants of success or failure. In the school setting, the operational levels refer to classwork related activities that involve the interactions between students and teachers, students with fellow students, and teachers with their fellow teachers. According to Thomas (2007), it is quite apparent that the system recommended by ADEC encourages teachers to work as a team in order to accomplish the goals of their schools and the goals set at the national level.

Teamwork for teachers primarily emerges from their ability to set teaching programs that ensure a harmonized approach to teaching content for the good of all students. Teachers in ADEC schools also form teams depending on their subject matter specialization, areas of interest, co-curricular activities, and the classes they
teach. Such teams work tirelessly towards the achievement of goals and, hence, create value for the whole system of teaching and learning (Garner, 2005).

In addition to the teams formed by teachers, ADEC schools' policy recommends cordial relationships between students and their teachers both in and outside the classrooms. This creates room for the formation of teams through which several learning objectives get to be achieved. The most common form of teams is that of teachers and students who work together on a certain subject (Bensimon, 2009). For easy achievement of the learning objectives, teachers convert the classes they teach into teams. This eases communication among students and their teachers and ensures that students manage to grasp the concepts as they taught by their teachers who also act as team leaders or patrons.

In ADEC schools, the most perfect teamwork is found among fellow students (Hughes, 2005). Teams formed by students exist in almost all institutions of learning in the world. However, the significance of learning outcomes greatly depends on the effectiveness of the teams. Effective student teams have been associated with ADEC schools in both the lower and higher levels of learning. The teams formed by students enable them to discuss their subjects in the language they understand best and for their own good. It ensures that students get to realize their abilities in an easier way as they interact with each other (Bensimon, 2009).

There are several characteristics of teamwork employed in ADEC schools and those associate with widely documented effectiveness. The main role played by the presence of a team is the elimination of communication barriers and the absence of individualism and isolation. This happens through the creation of a forum or platform where pertinent issues get to be discussed and resolved (Hughes, 2005). Effective teamwork has proved to prevail in ADEC schools. This eliminates all obstacles to
horizontal or vertical communication at the highest level of management going through those that can be found at the level of students.

According to Thomas (2007), the effectiveness of teamwork in ADEC and its educational institutions has been realized mainly because of the presence of a shared mission. The Council periodically revises or revisits its mission and distributes it to senior stakeholders in school districts and schools who then incorporate the new mission into the workings of their institutions. This enhances senior teamwork members as they work towards achieving a mission that has been set at the national level. Additionally, the guiding principles of the mission find their way to the operational levels in educational institutions where objectives of learning are set and achievement.

Effective communication, openness, and trust among the stakeholders of ADEC schools are the factors that spur teamwork effectiveness. Teams in the Abu Dhabi education system are also characterized by a participatory approach to leadership, a sense of belonging among members, and well agreed-upon rules for decision making (Bensimon, 2009).
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of teamwork of national and expatriate KG teachers in Al Ain schools. This has been occasioned by the introduction of expatriate licensed teachers who brought with them new experiences. The main question in this study was; how effective are teams of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain Schools? Three sub-questions were used to help answer this question:

a) What are the perceptions of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain schools of their teamwork?

b) How do expatriate and national KG teachers see the barriers to having effective teams in Al Ain schools?

c) What are the lessons to be learned when forming teams of expatriate and national teachers in Al Ain KG schools?

Method and Instrument

This thesis aims to explore the essence of the lived experience of teams among the kindergarten expatriate and national teachers in Al Ain schools, United Arab Emirates. The study gives a clear understanding about teamwork and how it affects the education system—its norms and assumptions. This study also explored some of the factors that have contributed to the understanding of teamwork effectiveness.
Most of qualitative researchers reproduce views that contribute to describing or answering questions about specific experiences or perspectives of participants toward certain practices, beliefs, or events (Mahmoud & Willmott, 1998). Qualitative researchers attempt to investigate and understand a group dynamics and often their research results in new findings or insights (Andreas & Ream, 2003).

Since this study investigates teamwork effectiveness, the researcher chose qualitative method to conduct the study, as the aim is to enquire more about the lived experiences of teachers who work in teams. This thesis shall investigate four dimensions that might affect teamwork effectiveness: leadership actions, structural characteristics of the team, individual characteristics of members, and interrelationships among members (Goodwin & Halpin, 2008).

A phenomenological approach was used in this study as this approach's main propose is investigating the lived experience of a certain group or population about their experience of any types of attitudes they hold or actions they do. Quantitative research is unreliable in understanding human feelings, emotions, perceptions, and attitudes. In quantitative studies, researchers might not be able to fully explain the involvement of the participants (Cooke & Rosen, 2008). The researcher followed the procedures of the qualitative research method only. Therefore, interviewing, re-interviewing - when needed - were the main instruments used by the researcher in order to get a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of teachers in terms of teamwork effectiveness. Phenomenological interviewing is a specific type of in-depth interviewing grounded in the philosophical tradition of the study of lived experiences. This method allows us to understand those experiences and to develop our own views about them (Marchall & Rossman, 2011).
Because the study was guided by the phenomenological method, the following procedures were employed:

- The researcher reviewed the philosophical perspectives that govern the study. These included studying the different sets of teachers’ experiences regarding the teamwork.
- This review was informed by the research questions.
- Interview data were collected from national and expatriate teachers.
- Collected data were organized and structured in a way to make it ready for analysis.
- The qualitative report was prepared based on the data analysis.

To find the answers of the main question, how effective teams of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain Schools are, the researcher prepared three sub-questions and from analyzing the responses to these questions, the researcher was able to synthesize the responses to provide an answer to the main question.

To answer the first sub-question, what the perceptions of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain schools of their teamwork are, the researcher used the following interview questions:

- What is the purpose of team building among national and expatriate teachers in your school?
- What are the essential factors that contribute to teamwork effectiveness?
- Do you see that these factors exist in teams of national and expatriate teachers in your school? Give me an example.
To find answers to the second sub-question, how expatriate and national KG teachers see the barriers to having effective teams in Al Ain schools, the researcher asked the following two interview questions:

- Is there some disagreement between the national and expatriate teachers in your school?
- What are the challenges and problems that hinder teamwork to be effective in your kindergarten?

Finally, to discover the lessons to be learned when forming teams of expatriate and national teachers in Al Ain KG schools, which is the third sub-question, the researcher asked the following two interview questions:

- In what positive way has teamwork helped teachers at your school?
- How does teamwork increased effectiveness of teachers' activities?

**Validity and Trustworthiness**

The researcher reviewed the interview questions with the supervisor and two teachers: one national teacher and one expatriate teacher to insure that the questions are clear and can lead to clear answers of the research questions. During the interviews, the researcher was keen to provide any additional clarification if she felt that the question was not clear to the interviewed teacher.

The researcher tried to maximize trustworthiness of the interviews by employing different techniques. First, the researcher used clear questions and avoided leading questions. The researcher employed interviewing skills such as listening more than talking, not interrupting, judging, or debating. Data collected from interviews were recorded in audio file format. This was another technique used to increase
interview trustworthiness. The researcher used the help of an English professional who works as interpreter to transcribe the interviews of expatriate teachers to make sure that they were transcribed correctly. Finally, the researcher translated the interviews of national teachers into English because she understood their dialect and the meaning behind their use of some folk proverbs or statements.

Ethical Consideration

All participants were informed about the ethics of interviewing. The participants were free to withdraw from participation at any time. The participants had the right to drop out of the study and the researcher was clear in identifying that the participant has the right to withdraw if they feel uncomfortable during the interview. All data collected in any form have been saved based on the ethics of confidentiality and was used for this research purpose only. The researcher of the study was also keen not to cause any physical or emotional harm to the participants by forcing them to answer any questions they did not desire.

Sample

The population in this study was all female national and expatriate teachers of government kindergarten schools in Al Ain city. For the sample, the researcher identified five KG schools in Al Ain city and selected two participants from each school for the interview. Participation in the study has been completely voluntary (Seridman, 2006). Therefore, the choice of the sample was based on this principle.

The sample consists of five national and five English licensed teachers. The researcher chose to represent the National KG teachers by letter N followed by a number from one to five and for the expatriate KG teachers by the letter E followed
by a number from one to five. The following is a brief biography of participants in the study.

Teacher E1 is an expatriate teacher who has been in the U.A.E and particularly in Al Ain for two years and a half. Her major is early childhood education. In addition, she has a background in teaching science for K-12 students.

Teacher E2 is the second expatriate teacher. She has been in the U.A.E for four years. She has only experience in teaching KG level. She gained all of her teaching experience in the U.A.E.

The third expatriate teacher has only three years of teaching experience and she clarified in the interview that she taught for the last three years not only at the same KG school but also at the same classroom.

The fourth expatriate teacher who was given the symbol of E4 has a different experience. She first taught in Abu Dhabi for two years in a private school. Then, she moved to Al Ain and taught for four years in the current school. Therefore, she has the most extensive teaching experience among all expatriate teachers.

Teacher E5 is the fifth expatriate teacher. She has five years of teaching experience. Only two years of teaching experience in the U.A.E and the rest is at her country. This means that teacher E5 is the only expatriate teacher who has previous teaching experience outside the U.A.E.

Teacher N1 is the first national teacher and has six years of teaching experience. The third national teacher, teacher N3, also has six years of KG teaching experience in two KG schools.

Teacher N2 is the second national teacher and she has worked as a KG teacher for 21 years. Therefore, she has the longest teaching experience among all expatriate and national teachers in the study.
Teacher N4 is the fourth national teachers and she has 13 years of KG teaching experience. Finally, teacher N5 is a national teacher who has only three years of KG teaching experience.

The order of biographies of teachers, as mentioned above, was based on the order interviews conducted with the teachers. It was clear that national teachers have more experience in teaching at KG schools than expatriate teachers.

Data Collection

A formal letter had been sent to ADEC by the researcher requesting an approval to conduct interviews at Al Ain schools. In addition, the researcher requested a list of names of national and expatriate teachers who work in KGs in Al Ain city. After receiving the required approvals, the researcher sent a formal email to school administrators requesting their permission to conduct the study at their schools and asking them to set appointments to visit the school. In other words, the researcher made an appointment with the school principal to explain the nature of this research, how it will be conducted, and ethical implications of data collection. The researcher had two groups of teachers chosen based on their willingness to sit for the interview. The in-depth interview questions allowed the researcher to gain understanding of the participants' teamwork experience. The interviews had been conducted inside the school because the participants refused to be interviewed outside the school. Each interview lasted for about 15 to 20 minutes.
Recorders were used during the data collection process to facilitate data collection. This was done keeping in mind the ethics that accompany such a process. The researcher maintained the code of ethics while collecting data for this study. For example, collection of data for this study has been done at the convenience of participants involved.

**Data Analysis**

The process of data analysis is an important step in translating raw data into refined data to help in getting answers to the research questions. The data analysis process should consider the variables or the issues in the study. Collected data were cleaned, checked for completeness, coded, and analyzed with Nvivo10 program. Nvivo 10 is an effective program to analyze qualitative data. It enables a researcher to collect, organize, and analyze content from the interviews. Analysis of qualitative data is starts with reading the entire data set. The researcher engages with the data, reads, and rereads the data many times to achieve deep understanding and a general sense of the issues involved. The goal of data analysis is to find common themes.

In this study, the researcher transcribed the collected data from each interview into separate word files. Next, she created an interview folder in Nvivo 10 program and imported all word files to that folder. This folder becomes the source for data as shown in Figure 2.
Figure 4. Nodes and Sub-nodes.

Figure 5. Organizing responses under nodes.
One of the features in the Nvivo10 is the feature of creating files from each node where all responses that are associated to that topic are at one place. In addition, the program sorts the source of each response and its location inside that source. See Figure 6.

![Figure 6. The data organized under nodes.](image)

Furthermore, there is a choice that enables the user to get only the responses under the sub-node or to get all the responses that are available under the node. In addition, for people who prefer to work with word, Nvivo10 gives the choice to export the node into a word file. See Figure 7.
Figure 7. The flexible choices provided by Nvivo10 to utilize with nodes.

In order to probe the research questions, the researcher re-read each node separately and in aggregation with its sub nodes to synthesize the participants' perceptions around the research topic.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of teamwork of national and expatriate KG teachers in Al Ain schools. This has been occasioned by the introduction of expatriate licensed teachers who introduced new experience into the system. This was done by answering the following main question and three sub-questions:

• How effective are teams of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain Schools?

  a) What are the perceptions of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain schools of their teamwork?

  b) How do expatriate and national KG teachers see the barriers to having effective teams in Al Ain schools?

  c) What are the lessons to be learned when forming teams of expatriate and national teachers in Al Ain KG schools?

The following are the findings of the study. This chapter provides answers to each sub-question as perceived by respondents to the interview questions. Answers to the three sub-questions provide an answer to the main question of the study.

First Question

The first question was about the perceptions of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain schools of their teamwork experience. To answer this question,
qualitative analysis was done on the participants' responses to the interview questions. In general, the ten teachers showed positive perceptions toward teamwork.

The teacher E1 found teamwork a "very lovely concept, particularly in education". She clarified that teamwork is not only important but also very critical. She described it by saying it is "an essential key because teachers together can do many things". Teacher E2 agreed on the importance of teamwork if the factors that contribute to its success are available. Teacher E3 clarified that teamwork is difficult at the beginning because of the personal characteristics that each teacher has, but after being involved in teamwork practice, she found teamwork very interesting. Teacher E4 clarified that teamwork "is a great idea" because her national co-teacher helped her to understand KG students' language and worked with her "hand-by-hand". Teacher E5 explained that teamwork is essential for the classroom and students because she found her co-teacher highly supportive in encouraging students and in helping them to understand new topics by explaining them in their native language (i.e., Arabic).

Teacher N1 clarified that teamwork contributes to "co-planning, and doing the activities as a team of national and expatriate teachers and teaching together" is a positive issue but it depends on the personality of the teachers in the teams. Teacher N2 argued that teamwork was important and that both teachers in the team collaborated on planning and teaching together. Teacher N3 said, "I feel it is very useful for the children and for the teacher". Teacher N4 explained, "Teamwork is more than two persons working to achieve a goal, strategy, or plan to be accomplished together." It depends on the factors that affect its success. Teacher N5 identified that teamwork supports KG teachers to fulfill their work and to be more creative.
In addition, teachers provided many purposes behind building teams of national and expatriate teachers in their schools. From their perspective, it is clear that expatriate teachers focused on understanding the culture and on helping in translation to understand children's needs. Four expatriate teachers mentioned one or both of the previous purposes. Teacher E2 said, "The purpose is to get an understanding of a different way of thinking and different culture". Teacher E3 stated that teamwork "allows some cultural exchange" of ideas and a comfortable feeling that there is a person who understands and supports. Teacher E4 stated that "young kids need someone to translate" and teacher E5 clarified that national and expatriate teamwork help to understand kids' needs and their culture. In addition to the previous purposes that four expatriate teachers mentioned, teacher E1 added other purposes like providing children with solid understanding of two languages and improving the ability of teachers to "give the child a complete assessment from the Arabic side and the Non-Arabic side."

On the other hand, national teachers focused on co-planning, exchange of experience, achieving common goals in addition to translation and cultural exchange. Teacher N1 focused on co-planning not only for the lessons but also for the activities. She clarified that "two teachers co-planning and working with each other to prepare the activities and lessons". She gave an example of introducing an activity in the morning assembly which they prepared together to be bilingual. Moreover, teacher N2 clarified that "if a child has only an expatriate teacher, it will be hard to communicate with her/him". She explained, expatriate teachers do not always have the educational background or teaching experience and they are not always able to deal with KG students, "so an expatriate teacher needs support from the national teacher who is with her at the same class". On the other hand, teacher N3 focused on
the purpose of improving the English language for both students and national teachers. She said, "we all know that the most common language is English in the whole world so students need to learn this language at an early age... also we need to became international teachers who have the skills and the language to be better as they are". Teacher N4 stated that the purpose from such teamwork is to "exchange the cultural norms and ideas and to share the work to get the goal achieved in the end".

Finally, teacher N5 clarified that the purpose of national and expatriate teamwork is co-planning as when they co-plan a lesson about shapes, both teachers teach the same lesson but in different languages.

To summarize, the purposes behind building teams of national and expatriate teachers according to the participants are exchanging and understanding culture, co-planning lessons and activities and achieving common goals, improving bilingual teaching, exchanging ideas, improving expatriate teachers' teaching abilities, supporting national teachers to be international teachers, providing students assessment that cover both Arabic and English, and supporting expatriate teachers to feel comfortable. It is clear that these purposes serve the benefits of national and expatriate teachers in order to enhance their performance and creativity in teaching and removing any obstacles that may affect that performance. This should help maximize KG students' learning opportunities, which is considered the ultimate and the most important outcome of education.

From the interviewees' points of view, many factors affect teamwork effectiveness. These factors can be divided into three sets: personal factors, work factors, and communication factors.

With regard to the personal factors, both teachers in a team need to be comfortable with each other and respect her partner's personality and culture. A
culture of trust and good rapport between them is important. In addition to respecting each other, they should respect their students.

If we turn to work-related factors, both teachers need to understand that the goal of their team is the interest of KG students. Moreover, they need to build a common goal, be consistent in achieving the goal in the classroom, and have the spirit of togetherness. Moreover, both teachers in the team must try to complete and support each other. In addition to the previous work-related factors, it is important to have policies to organize the work between the two teachers in the team.

Finally, communication factors focus on aspects of communication or interaction between the two teachers. First, teachers should communicate in a language that both of them understand. In this case, it is English. Second, the two teachers should show willingness to communicate and to give each other the chance to express ideas and opinions by listening to each other, trying to understand, avoiding any misunderstanding, and solving any conflicts.

It was clear that the factors related to communication were the most repeated factors in the responses. Four out of five expatriate teachers and all national teachers mentioned them at some point in the interview. Teacher E1 mentioned an example to clarify how communication resolves conflict and misunderstanding. She mentioned using food in teaching and how that idea was refused by her national teammate. Then, they communicated and discussed the issue and at the end, they reached an agreement. She added, even if "this is cultural, you have to stop, and listen to what the other person is saying". Teacher E5 clarified that knowledge of English is important but the willingness to communicate is the most important. She stated, "last year, my co-teacher spoke more English than my co-teacher this year, and yeah, I have a better relationship with my co-teacher this year, I think it's just willingness to communicate
and work together is what helps the relationship". On the other hand, all national teachers' responses emphasized the importance of the common language to communicate and to understand each other. Teacher N5 clarified that "national teachers who came from the Higher Colleges of Technology are good in English. They have a main role in delivering the ideas correctly to us and saying what we think to the expatriate teachers in clear English".

The second set of factors repeated in the participants' responses was the work factors. Four expatriate teachers and three national teachers mentioned those factors. For example, teacher E5 talked about organizing the work, teacher E4 mentioned the importance of the "spirit of togetherness". Teacher E1, teacher E2, and teacher E5 focused on having a common goal and complementing each other. On the other hand, teacher N3 found that "children's learning is above everything" and planning lessons and activities together are two factors that affect teamwork effectiveness. Teacher N3 mentioned that setting common time for planning is a factor that influences teamwork effectiveness and teacher N5 emphasized the importance of having strategies and policies to organize the work and responsibilities in the team.

The third set was personal factors. This set was emphasized by four expatriate teachers and two national teachers. Teachers E1, E2 and E3 talked about respecting each other. Teacher E1 added respecting students and respecting culture to the personal factors. Teacher N4 mentioned understanding and respecting cultural differences as an important issue. Teacher N4 talked about the factor of being comfortable with each other and having trust relationship. All of these factors are important to the success of a team.
Teacher N4 combined the three set of factors in a very interesting statement. She said, "So we have to be as sisters and we must gain each other's trust to enrich the child learning".

To probe answers to the first question, which was about the perceptions of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain schools of their teamwork, the teachers were asked if they experienced the factors they mentioned in teams of national and expatriate teachers in their schools. They were asked to give examples from their own teams.

Six teachers out of ten declared that the factors existed in their teams. Teachers E3, E4, E5, N2, and N4 clarified that teachers in their teams plan together, create and use resources, do activities together, and divide the whole work. From their examples, it was clear that most of them think that doing all aspects of work together is related to teamwork effectiveness. Teacher N2 gave an example of the differences that happened, "we have committees before. The Arabic committee was alone and the
English committee was alone but this year each committee has Arabic and English teachers. I just came from a meeting at the language committee that has both Arabic and English teachers. This is what ADEC wants. We teach Arabic and English together as a collaborative team. Sometimes there is misunderstanding as you know people have individual differences, but we are still like one family. Teacher E5 stated that the three sets of factors existed in her schools, but it depends on the existence of "national teachers who came from the Higher Colleges of Technology". Those teachers, as she said, played an essential role in helping national and expatriate teachers to understand each other's ideas because they are good in English, so they acted as interpreters.

The rest of teachers from both groups clarified that the factors exist but "It is like work on progress," as teacher E1 stated. She clarified that the existence of the factors differs between schools so she thinks that the new school is better than the previous school that she worked in. Teacher E2 said, "I think there are some teams that are stronger than others". She gave this example: "in my class we took what happened well, what did not happen well, I think you would have an example of other classes, there is one Arabic lesson, and one English lesson, they are separate, may be not united, It doesn't flow, it's not cohesive". Teacher N1 said, "In my school there are some factors that exist and some are not". She clarified that teamwork effectiveness is affected by the personality of the teachers involved in the team. She talked about her experience in working with three expatriate teachers during the last three years respectively. She said that the first teacher refused to do the Arabic English lesson in a bilingual way and continued teaching English alone. The second year she worked with a teacher who accepted everything without discussing or adding any issues, but
finally, this year, she found a co-teacher who discussed and worked with her effectively.

Teacher N4 clarified that the factors partially existed in her school and they are represented in the administration teams more than in teachers' teams. It was clear that teachers think that the factors contribute to more teamwork effectiveness and that they are available but their opinions differ in rating the availability of those factors according to their personal experiences. This indicates that participants' personalities affect the team effectiveness, even if other factors like communication and work factors are available.

Teachers talked much about meetings among the teammates, so it was an issue to investigate. The researcher asked the teachers about the purposes of meetings and their schedule. Teachers E1, E2, N2, and N4 clarified that there are scheduled meetings for co-planning and discussing any issues related to lessons and activities. On the other hand, all the teachers clarified that they work together all the day and continue talking about different things, which create strong relationships between them. Teacher E3 declared that even after school, they go to their colleagues' occasions like wedding or baby shower but the rest clarified that their social relationships is only linked to school context.

Both national and expatriate teachers who participated in the study clarified that teamwork is very important in supporting teachers and increasing the effectiveness of teachers' activities.

Teacher E1 stated "teamwork has helped both the national and expatriate teachers, it has helped them with teaching strategies, behavior management, and it instilled a sense of confidence within each other on both sides". She added that teachers who work together are more able to become model teachers and share their
successful practices and activities with other teachers. Teacher E2 clarified that working in a team makes the work easier and the workload tolerable. Teacher E3 focused on the importance of having different points of views and ideas that support the activities and assist in observing children development. Teachers E4 and E5 focused on the importance of teamwork in co-planning, preparing and improving activities, and exchanging experiences. Teacher E5 clarified that she has many ideas and her national co-teacher has many years of experience in teaching, so they complemented each other and brought up creative ideas for class activities.

Teacher N4 clarified that teamwork helps in completing the missing parts that each teachers may miss in their work. She clarified that expatriate teachers have new ideas because they come from different countries and cultures. She added that national teachers support their expatriate co-teachers to make these ideas suitable to the U.A.E. culture. Moreover, teacher N5 mentioned the benefits of teamwork when teammates cooperate to make a workshop. Both teachers bring creative ideas and assist each other to prepare all equipment and issues related to the workshop. She mentioned that this makes the work easier and well-organized. She added that teachers with less years of experience like herself gained rich ideas from other teacher who has more years of experience. In addition to classroom activities, both teachers work together to arrange assembly activities or activities related to a special occasion like the National Day or Al Haj, as teacher N1 stated.

From the interviews, it seems that teachers from both groups believe that teamwork makes their work better and easier, provides them with support, a feeling of belonging, enhances their abilities in teaching and designing better activities, and contributes to gaining new ideas and experiences.
All of the previous helped answer the first question about the effectiveness of national and expatriate teachers' teamwork in KG schools in Al Ain Education Office. It appeared from the responses of the teachers that teamwork is effective and contributes to the development of both national and expatriate teachers. In addition, it is good for students' development and for gaining the skills to speak both Arabic and English languages. Finally, some barriers affect the effectiveness of some of the teams. These barriers will be explored in the second question of this study.

Second Question

The second question investigated how expatriate and national KG teachers perceived the barriers to having effective teams in Al Ain schools.

Most national and expatriate teachers highlighted that acceptance exists among teachers but at the same time, disagreement emerges. For example, teacher E1 clarified that "There are some disagreements in terms of which approach to take. How many minutes does one teach one subject. The other point of disagreement was what the appropriate teaching resources are". In addition, teacher N5 said, "I started in 2008 and my school did not have an English teacher or expatriate teacher. She added, "In my new school, there are English teachers but I did not accept them because I was thinking of the language barrier and the cultural differences. Living as one group in school, however, made us become thoughtful of each other". She added, "First, we did not understand why expatriate teachers are here and what they do, but in the end, they helped the students to gain a new language plus the Arabic language". Teacher N4 clarified that acceptance of expatriate teachers in her school was partially available. She clarified that the reason behind this partial existence of acceptance is instability of expatriate teachers. Teachers E1 agreed with this issue and explained
that expatriate teachers work for two years because they "have a two-year contract" or for one year because sometimes some expatriate teachers can "decide to return to their home countries". This made it difficult to create a strong rapport.

Most teachers mentioned the language as a barrier that influences the effectiveness of teamwork dynamics, regardless of any effort to eliminate any misunderstanding and to find assistance in interpretation. Teacher E2 clarified that spending three years with the same national teacher contributed to decreasing the language problem. She added that it is important to "make sure that the message is delivered and understood in your mother tongue, but understanding what is delivered in a second language is the challenge that we have here". Another teacher clarified that willingness to communicate helps eliminate the impact of the language problem.

Many teachers mentioned differences in personality as one challenge. The other challenge that might affect teamwork effectiveness is how a teacher adapts with another teacher who may be totally different. Teacher E3 said, "some people are organized, some people are not organized, some people are, you know, neat, some people aren't neat". Similarly, selfishness and the desire to do all the work without sharing with others were barriers mentioned by teacher N1.

Another important issue was the problem of co-planning, which was mentioned by teacher E1. She said, "two people can co-plan, but if they do not do it correctly, or in a proper manner, it doesn't mean anything, and that can hurt not only the teachers' ability and effectiveness of her teaching but it impacts students achievement too."

Many barriers were mentioned by teachers in the interviews. Some of these are related to the school context like an old building and lack of resources that may affect teamwork effectiveness. Other factors are related to the school community like
gossiping, which mentioned by teacher N1. She clarified that teachers gossip about work and compare between the work of the two teachers in the team. She said, teachers rated one teacher as better than the other, which spurs negative competition between teachers in the team, and might lead to ineffective teamwork relationships.

Some barriers were related to time and the workload like the lack of scheduled meetings, which might conflict with daily or routine tasks. Absenteeism of both teachers and students affected the plan and activities as teachers E1 and N3 mentioned. Teacher E1 talked about medical absenteeism as a challenge that affected teamwork and teacher N3 said, "Student absenteeism affects our plan of teaching. For example, this week, our plan was delayed to the next term (after the spring holiday) because there are many students who were absent".

The barriers to having effective teams of national and expatriate teachers in KG schools in Al Ain Education Office can be ordered according to their frequency in the following manner: the lack of skills of both teachers and the lack of a common language, problems in communication, the differences in personality between the two members, differences in teaching styles, problems related to cultural misunderstanding, the school setting problems such as having old buildings or insufficient resources, the lack of time for meetings, teachers' or students' absenteeism, selfishness and gossiping, expatriate teachers' instability, imperfect co-planning, and the additional tasks added to team members' schedules.

Third Question

The third question was, what are the lessons to be learned when forming teams of expatriate and national teachers in Al Ain KG schools? To answer this question,
interview findings were synthesized to get the best practices and teachers' suggestions who participated in the interviews.

The answers were divided into two parts. First, the lessons that helped in solving the problems. Second, the suggestions and practices that contributed to building more effective teamwork.

Teacher E1 suggested providing training for teachers on communication. She said, "it is vital to teach the art of communication, how to ask a question when you don't know, to say sorry when you have to, to jump in and help when you should, and to back off when you need to". She added, "learning what to say, when to say it, and how to say it are really important to teamwork to overcome the obstacle of disagreement". Teacher E3 agreed on the importance of having effective communication skills to overcome any misunderstanding. She clarified that, "I think a third party sometimes can help at this time". Teacher E4 suggested that the head of faculty could play the role of the third party. She should listen to both sides and support them to solve their problems. You should "connect them with someone who can deal with, someone they are comfortable with, and if this doesn't work, then, I guess the person should be taken to another school because if you cannot work with this group of people, then you're not going to be effective in your teaching". Teacher E3 agreed that the head of faculty could play the role of the third party. Teacher E5 clarified that it is better if the two teachers are comfortable with each other to continue as a team. This strengthens the relationships inside the team. It is better for "the whole school, it is a solid foundation for the students. Instead of having to learn and, you know, try to build a relationship not only with your students but with a new teacher".
Teachers N5 focused on having clear rules and laws, which should be provided for all teachers to organize their relation and define acceptable and non-acceptable matters and duties. In this way, "disagreement will not happen because everything is clear".

Participants suggested certain practices to improve teamwork effectiveness. These include increasing the time teachers spend with each other. For example, teacher E2 suggested, "it will be more effective if the Arabic and English small groups work together, it would make planning more cohesive, and it will make the co-planning even faster and more effective". She clarified that the small Arabic and English group is different from the co-planning team.

Teacher E5 focused on the role of the administration to support teamwork by providing teachers with chances to work with each other in different situations. For instance, to give them the chance to work together in professional development courses and to continue working together even on Islamic religion lessons. She suggested that the team is better if it is assigned by the administration. Good teams who have good relationships can continue, she added.

Teacher N3 clarified that "We need more workshops for the new staff for both the national and expatriate teachers to improve the relation of these partners and how to plan the lessons." Similarly, teacher E5 suggested, "it's really good for new teachers to get a chance to go to a school that's been running for a while and see experienced teachers and what their co-teaching is like".

Two national teachers suggested that teaching Arabic and English separately is better for children. It does not affect the team when teachers continue sharing the ideas and co-plan with each other. Teacher N5 stated, "I think KG children need 40 minutes for each activity if it is Arabic or English. Students need time to learn and
understand". She added, "Mixing both Arabic and English will distract children off both languages". Similarly, teacher N2 said, "we noticed that children always try to get the help of the national teachers. We noticed also that when the expatriate teacher was teaching children alone without the existence of the expatriate teacher, children accepted her and looked more active. They try to talk in English." What these two teachers mean is that there is another interpretation of an effective team. Team members can work together without being at class together. They provided their rationale on this issue. This idea, it is clear, contradicts the ideas of the other eight teachers.

Teacher N2 suggested welcoming the expatriate teachers when they arrive to the U.A.E. and introducing them to the local culture, acceptable behaviors, and norms in the community. She added, this would contribute to "having a good relationship". She also suggested "inviting expatriate teachers to social occasions like the National Day in the school. They should be invited to occasions outside the school too. Sharing time with them in special occasions could make them feel more welcome. We will understand and know that we are with them, which can strengthen the relation and affect us when working on school activities". In line of the previous suggestion, teacher N2 suggested holding training courses about the Islamic and Arabic tradition.

Teacher E2 mentioned that there is not an equal distribution of workload between national and expatriate teachers. She stated, "We're here just to support, not to be the main leaders who are doing the majority of the tasks". Therefore, she suggested that national teachers should handle more tasks.

To answer the main question of how effective teams of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain Schools, the findings highlighted that most teachers stated that teamwork is very important and beneficial to both national and expatriate teachers. It
helps both parties to minimize the gaps they have and helps them unify their goals so they are more focused on students' interest. The previous statement does not mean that there are no difficulties in forming the teams in the beginning and that there are no barriers that affect team effectiveness.

Teachers realized that teamwork helped them a lot by making the work easier than before. Obviously, teachers had become aware of the obstacles that affected teamwork effectiveness and they tried to find opportunities to tackle them. Moreover, they suggested ideas and shared experience about the successful practices that made their teamwork more effective. These practices can be shared with other schools to help them with their teams. Teachers in other schools can investigate if these practices helped teachers maximize the benefits of teamwork and improved their teaching and professional development.

Furthermore, it was obvious from the findings that teachers' teamwork has approximately the same life cycle that Tuckman model clarified. In other words, it followed the stages of Tuckman's model. Teachers mentioned that school administration forms the teams at the beginning of the academic years. Some teachers talked about the idea that successful teams complete each other. This assisted in creating strong rapport among team members. However, as mentioned in Tuckman's model, the constant interaction between members made them close to each other. That said, as teachers mentioned when they discussed the factors affecting teamwork effectiveness, the different characteristics of team members may affect the teamwork formation. According to Tuckman and Jensen (1977), the guidance and directions at the end of this stage could assist members to work together and feel acceptance and safe, which come in line with the demand of one teacher to have clear rules that organize the relationship among the teams of teachers.
The storming stage is the second stage in Tuckman's model. At this stage, communication appears as an important factor. With effective communication, members can understand each other, avoid and resolve conflict, promote personal relationship, and exchange experiences. Members can learn to share their day-to-day responses and activities. Through this process, there is an articulation of problems and a creation of problem-solving mentality, which is significant for solidifying the team. At the storming stage, members work together and storm the ideas around them, conflict might occur and competitions might happen to prove who is the best among the members. All these features, which are part of the model, appeared in teachers' ideas about the team, especially when they talked about how their teams began. Therefore, it was obvious that some of the barriers mentioned by the teachers like conflict and selfishness are parts of the early stages of a team's life cycle. It can be handled easily through continuous and effective communication, participants in this study mentioned.

After the storming stage, the norming stage begins. At this stage, members build trust relationship, share their creative ideas, and become cohesive and able to work with each other. Teachers' interviews clarified that most of them passed this stage successfully by having a common goal and working together in the class and schools activities.

At the performing stage, members became more united and achievement of the tasks strengthens their relationship. Teachers mentioned that they become very close to each other, especially in school, to the degree that some of them wanted to be at the same team the next year. This is considered one of the features of the performing stage, where group members feel that their group is unique—as one teacher said "a model".
At the adjourning stage, there should be a chance to end engagement in roles and tasks and to provide an opportunity for members of the group to end their personal relations (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Teachers' responses tell that the administration is not well prepared for this stage. Some teachers talked about the instability of expatriate teachers as one barrier to teamwork effectiveness. If this stage is handled perfectly, it will be part of the life cycle of the teamwork. Some teachers suggested that this stage is better done if team members complete it together.

To conclude, the findings from the teachers' interviews clearly demonstrated that teamwork among national and expatriate teachers in Al Ain KG is a successful practice for both the national and expatriate groups. Teamwork coincides with all stages of Tuckman's model, except for the last stage, which may need to be revised to guarantee a healthy adjourning for the team.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of this study was to investigate teamwork effectiveness among national and expatriate KG teachers in Al Ain schools. This study purpose has resulted from the introduction of expatriate foreign teachers into the ADEC education system. Teams were formed from both national and expatriate teachers and this study qualitatively investigated the dynamic of their teams and its effectiveness.

This chapter includes a discussion of the findings of the study. Discussion will be for each of the three questions. Finally, the study will provide recommendations for research and practice.

Discussion of Question One

This study revealed that teamwork is important for ADEC schools. Teams are built by the administration and the main purpose of these teams is to exchange the new ideas and interact to build better learning environments for the students. Based on the teachers' perceptions, three factors, which affect team effectiveness, were discovered: communication factors, work factors, and personal factors. Therefore, the findings of the study support findings of Tarricone and Luca's (2002) study, which was conducted to investigate the performance of two teams. Their study indicated that some attributes could enhance the success in teams in an educational setting. Both studies highlighted the importance of having effective communication skills and a common understanding in order to have effective teamwork. In addition, the findings
of this study agreed with those of Hughes' (2005) that the administration of the school plays an essential role in creating the context that supports teamwork to flourish.

The study gave importance to the communication factors. One of the most essential tips to communicate is to have a common language through which all members in the team can understand and use. In the case of this study, it was the English language.

From the researcher's point of view, a common language is very essential for the team partners because if they do not share the basics for a medium of communication, they will not be able to communicate, let alone work together effectively. A language gap could lead to conflict and miscommunication between the partners. According to Koehler (2009), communication behaviors underline all team interactions and affect all team processes. In addition, Maginn (1995) clarified that a team basically means that all individual interact dynamically. Language is the most important tool to start interaction. Discussing students' needs, lesson plans, activities, and all other issues require a medium for interaction—or a common language. Furthermore, building rapport among people cannot happen without a language. The existence of a basic common medium of interaction will enable teammates to accomplish and fulfill the needs of students. In addition, students need to learn and have the basic language to communicate with the teachers. Therefore, the researcher believes that training all stakeholders to have at least a beginner level of a common language will improve the communication process. As a result, the team effectiveness will increase because team members will be able to exchange the ideas, practices nuances, and understand each other's needs and those of their students.

Beyond this point, even when the team members had had a common language, they need to have the willingness to communicate with each other. If there is no such
willingness, communication process will be futile and fail. Willingness to communicate with other partners makes teamwork more effective and assists in removing any obstacles that could arise. The findings of this study gave evidence that communication helps teachers to brainstorm and develop new language and technical skills. This is also mentioned as one finding in Larson and Frank (1989) study.

Moreover, listening to and trying to understand the other teammate helps avoid any misunderstanding and solve any conflicts. This is one of the most important aspects in effective communication. Teachers were aware of this point and mentioned it repeatedly as a remedy to many problems that faced their teams. The team members can achieve a common goal if both partners understand and listen to each other. As a result, the level of conflict will be reduced. From the researcher's point of view, the manner in which listening and understanding happens is very important. Team members need to know that the message is affected by the two speakers' backgrounds and their different cultures. If listening and understanding are employed correctly, the messages are received well and the effectiveness of the teamwork will increase. This discussion complies with the definition of teamwork, which entails collaboration of several individuals to achieve a common goal. In other words, each team member has a role to play in contributing to the team's ultimate goals (CIPD, 2012; Betty et al., 1997).

From the previous discussion, it is obvious that the three factors of communication are very important to provide the team members with tools that enable them to have a common goal and achieve it. Each factor supports the other. They are all needed a common language is important but without acceptance of the other team members, it will be useless. Acceptance is essential as teacher N4 said, "We have to be as sisters and we must gain each other's trust to enrich the children
learning". This is a very interesting statement, which means that if there is acceptance between the two teachers, the work will be done effectively and team tasks will be accomplished. On the other hand, teacher N5 stated that she did not accept expatriate teachers when she started her career because of the language barrier. She was worried about how she will communicate with them. The researcher believes that acceptance and willingness to communicate are important cornerstones to bridge between the two teachers. These are important aspects of teamwork, and no doubt, they will improve teamwork effectiveness.

It is obvious that the communication-related factors supported team members to pass the development stages of the team composition. They helped in the forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning stages as presented by Tuckman's model.

The second factors are related to work. Work-related factors include understanding that the goal of forming teams should be children's interest. Helping children was viewed through building common learning goals, being consistent in putting goals into practice inside the classrooms and, having the spirit of togetherness. Teammates should feel that they complement each other. Communication appears once more as an important factor for this to happen. Moreover, work-related factors are mutually supportive of each other. For example, teachers work together to build a common goal and they attempt to be consistent in achieving goals in classrooms. According to Thomas (2007), the effectiveness of teamwork in ADEC schools happened because there was a shared mission in place. The shared mission has led to having common goals.

The researcher believes that teachers needed the spirit of togetherness that was mentioned by teacher E4. This spirit helped lead the teamwork to become more
effective than just working together inside a classroom. According to Paris et al. (2000), teams are more than just collections of individuals. Teamwork is more than the aggregate of their individual behaviors. Teachers in this study mentioned that they spend most of their time together in the class, in the assembly, and in meetings and professional development sessions. All these occasions contributed to making the teamwork more effective on a daily basis. Teammates socialized and gained more skills and teaching techniques by interacting with their partners. This aligns the findings of other studies where researchers assigned teachers in teams with an aim to learn and acquaint themselves with teaching techniques of their fellow teachers who might not have been necessarily more experienced than they were (Polanaet al., n.d; Robert, 2011).

An interesting point in work-related factors was the demand voice by teachers to have policies to organize the work between the two teachers in the team. In the researcher’s own words. Having regulations or bylaws is because in KG schools, there are no polices about what teams must do and what their responsibilities are. Having a policy, which details the obligations of team members, will help make the teamwork more effective and the work more achievable. Having directions as mentioned in the Tuckman’s model should happen at the end of the forming stage so the team members feel safer. The findings showed that the teamwork has a vital role in achieving the goals and tasks and improving teachers’ skills and enhance the success of the children (Barnes, 2001). DuFour, DuFour, et al. (2008) clarified that the team is group of people working interdependently to achieve common goals for which members are held mutually accountable. The researcher believes that building accountability on a clear policy and procedures is better than leaving it to the opinions of team members or their principals. This will help in standardizing the practices and countering the
differences in teams interactions and in schools. This point was stressed by the respondents in the interviews.

The last set of factors was related to personal factors such as trust building, creating rapport and good relationship between teachers, being comfortable with the other teacher, and respecting the other's personality and culture. The researcher believes that if the two partners are comfortable in working with each other, the spirit of togetherness will affect the teamwork and make it more efficient than working just as team in a classroom.

Respecting other individuals' background and culture is very crucial as one teacher stated. She added, national teachers are trying to help the expatriate teachers to make their ideas suitable to the U.A.E. culture. In addition, having different cultures and backgrounds can enrich the learning environment with new ideas and new strategies. This is important for the team to pass the norming stage, as in Tuckman's model of team development (Tuckman, 1965).

Another interesting finding was exchanging the cultural norms and ideas and sharing in achieving the goal at the end. This idea supports the findings of another study conducted by Cotty (2009), which showed that cultural diversity within the teams affected performance. ADEC adopted the idea of having teams that consist of members from different cultural background in order to tackle the problem of cultural diversity and encourage both national and expatriate teachers to improve their performance (Beal, 2003).

Teamwork in schools has a positive impact on teachers and students. Working as teams enriched the knowledge of teachers and made them get out of there small circles as individual to start to work in a new way, no matter the differences in culture or background.
One of the teachers disagreed with the above point on diversity. She perceived diversity a barrier because, as she hypothesized, expatriate teachers do not understand our culture and how to deal with our students. Diversity has positive and negative sides depending on how a person perceives it. It depends on their comfort zone. If you accept diversity in a positive way, the performance of the individual will improve. This is how Polana et al. (n.d) study found. They argue interactive teaching approaches ensure sharing of responsibilities. They lead to professional and personal growth for teachers.

To sum up, it was clear that the three sets of factors are available in varying degrees in some teams of national and expatriate teachers and in some schools. There is a need, however, to sustain and improve them more. This can happen by standardizing and generalizing rules to all of the teams. The three factors were important and influenced one another. Therefore, we have to be concerned with them all. These factors will enhance each other and affect the overall team effectiveness positively and dramatically. This finding comes in line with the results of Thomas (2007) where he stated that the system recommended by ADEC encourages teachers to work as a team in order to accomplish the goals of their schools and also those goals set at the national level.

Discussion of Question Two

According to Goodwin and Halpin (2008), four factors can affect teamwork effectiveness. These are leadership actions, structural characteristics of work group, individual characteristics of members, and interrelationships among members. Deficiencies in these factors are barriers to teamwork effectiveness. The findings of this study revealed that the most important barrier affecting teamwork was that of the
language. Language is a system of communication used by people in a particular country or type of work. It is a system of communication comprising of sounds, words, and grammar (Cambridge Dictionary Online, n.d.). Most teachers stated that language affects the effectiveness of teamwork regardless of efforts to eliminate any misunderstanding or finding assistance in interpretation. Therefore, language caused problems in communication. Teachers who do not have the basic level of language proficiency cannot send the right messages to the other teacher. This might lead the other teacher to misunderstand the message and perhaps conflict might happen. The researcher agrees with this point because language is very important for both teams to communicate and understand each other's point of view. The lack of a basic level of language will affect all dynamics of teamwork. In addition, language enables both team members to discuss and solve the problems by exchanging ideas about the solutions.

Another barrier that affected teamwork effectiveness was personality differences among the team members. As a team, the acceptance of each other is important and if one teacher has a tough or difficult personality and does not agree to work in a team, this is a critical situation. Some people think that they do more and that they have longer or better experience. This situation will lead to feelings of selfishness and undesirable or unhealthy competition. Teaching as a team entails collaboration of both teachers in transferring skills to the learners (Polana et al., n.d). This is cannot happen if the two teachers did not put some effort to create rapport and try to accept each other.

The previous barriers may appear at the beginning of the team's development stages like forming and storming according to Tuckman's model (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Those barriers should be eliminated to pass to the norming and performing
stages effectively. Elimination of those barriers can be easily done if communication, continuous interaction, and policies are available. On the other hand, failure in eliminating those barriers will affect teamwork effectiveness in later stages.

Teaching as a team necessitates collaboration of teachers in planning, exchanging of teaching strategies, and executing lessons to ensure responsibility sharing and professional and personal growth (Polana et al., n.d). Difference in the teaching styles between the two teachers in the team is another barrier that appeared because of differences in teachers' years of experience and their backgrounds. Sometime, the expatriate teacher has teaching styles that are not suitable for the U.A.E. students. In addition, there exists the old teaching style teaching and the new one. Some senior UAE teachers teach using the traditional teaching style that is based on memorization. Her expatriate partner tries to teach using a modern style, so the conflict in viewpoints about teaching happens. When this disagreement occurs, it influences the effectiveness of the team and the accomplishment of the common goal they need to achieve.

The school setting is one of the barriers to effective teamwork experience. The setting includes factors such as the old buildings and the lack of resources or supporting personnel. In addition, absenteeism of the teachers can affect teamwork effectiveness and can delay achievement of the goals. Absenteeism of students can affect team effectiveness too because when teachers are prepared and ready to teach and many students are absent, they have to postpone their lessons. The motivation to teach will be less and the effectiveness will be less too because teachers know that even if they explain the lesson to this small number of students, they will repeated it later to the other students.
Teachers need to know about team development stages according to Tuckman's model. This is because some teachers feel that terminating the teams is a bad experience. Further, the instability of expatriate teachers and changing partners accordingly are frequent barriers that affect the performance. In the original model of team development, it is normal for this to happen when the goal behind forming the team is accomplished (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Therefore, teachers should know that this is acceptable.

The not so good co-planning and the additional tasks that pop up every day are also examples of the barriers that minimize team effectiveness. If co-planning or executing of lessons are not effective, then the teamwork will not be either.

The administration and their daily demands and not giving the teacher a dedicated time in the schedule for team meetings will minimize teamwork effectiveness. In such a case, the two teachers will try to accomplish all the tasks and co-plan when they have limited time. This is not a good strategy because there will be further tasks to be accomplished, and they might feel that there is no time to plan. Needless to say, planning helps accomplish the tasks in a short time and less effort. It seems that this situation is serious since planning must be a priority and the school administration should recognize its importance and give time for the teams to plan together.

**Discussion of Question Three**

The discussion of the third question focused on analyzing the suggestions and the recommendations that the teachers mentioned in the interviews as examples of best practices they propose to improve teamwork.
One of the repeated suggestions was providing training to teachers on communication. One of the national teachers mentioned that expatriate teachers need training in communication skills. Communication skills are very important in enhancing teamwork effectiveness and it is essential for all national or expatriate teachers, regardless to their experience. It will help them understand and solve the problems better when they are trained on how to deal with one another.

Having a third party such as the head faculty or an administrative staff to solve problems arising between the team members is one of the suggested strategies to resolve problems when it is become difficult for the team members alone to deal with them. Sometimes teachers face obstacles and cannot plan a lesson or work together. This is easy to handle. However, if the barrier is selfishness, it can affect that team and then, the administration must step in and found a solution for this matter. This can be done through a third party or even transferring one of the teachers to another class or another team. If the problem is still not resolved, the administration should fact find why one of the teachers cannot work with anyone. Transferring teachers or changing team members is not a solution in the researcher's point of view because teachers should be professional enough and flexible in dealing with each other if they come from different backgrounds. If the teacher could not deal with another teacher, this is a bad indication of her abilities to manage many students, of course, will have different personalities and abilities. Teachers should be prepared and trained to deal with different kinds of students. This means that they can easily deal with different kinds of people, including their own colleagues at schools. The failure of a teacher to continue in the team may indicate that there is a problem in her competency—an issue that might need further attention.
If there is a strong team in the school, it may be right to let them work together year after year as some of the teachers suggested. However, from the researcher’s point of view, letting each teacher co-teach with a new teacher is better as this will help refresh or renew their teaching techniques. They will learn from each other and at the same time, varied partnerships will lead to generalization of good practices. In addition, swapping teachers every year will help teachers to gain more experiences and they will learn to adapt with different cultures and backgrounds and with different teachers. Further, students will have a varied experience too when they interact with different teams of teachers. Many studies clarified that the power of teamwork comes from giving people the chance to work together, exchange ideas, solve problem, accomplish complex tasks, exchange experiences, support each other, and build social relations (Gerlach, 2002; Hackman, 1990; McGrath, 1984; Polana et al., n.d; Robert, 2011). The suggestion of keeping the same teams because they seem strong and not changing the members only supports the creation of good relationship. Changing team members every one or two years may guarantee that collaboration in new rounds of teamwork will renew teachers’ talents when their knowledge and experiences are transferred effectively within the whole organization. This point is supported by research done Wallace and Wallace (2007).

Time is an important part of teamwork effectiveness. If teams have the time to schedule their activities, co-plan, and discuss the learning needs of students, and how to meet those needs in their lessons, they will be able to increase the effectiveness of their teamwork. Some teachers did not agree with the ten minutes of Arabic and ten minutes of English where teachers swap after teaching 10 minutes each.

The researcher believes that children need enough time to understand “at least 40 minutes to understand one idea” as mentioned by one national teacher. If a lesson
is two using two languages at the same time, it will cause confusion and students will not get the ideas easily because not all students have the language to communicate with the expatriate teacher. In addition, translating what the expatriate teacher says will waste the time of the national teacher's lesson share. Therefore, the researcher believes that teaching each language separately is better to improve the performance of students and their understanding of each language. When this is done, teachers will have the time to make the right activities at the right times rather than mixing both language activities—a strategy that will confuse students. This idea was mentioned by two teachers only. The rest of teachers feel comfortable teaching together using the mixed activities, so the case needs more discussion. Different teams and ADEC people should investigate this point to reach a standardized strategy in teaching both languages in a way that supports students to master both languages and at the same time be sure that children feel safe and comfortable.

The answer to the main question of the effectiveness of teams of expatriate and national KG teachers in Al Ain schools showed that teachers mostly perceive that their teamwork is effective and contributed to their development and students' achievement. This result supports several previous articles and news reports, which were done on teamwork effectiveness in ADEC schools (see Thomas (2007). Examples of these studies include Bensimon (2009) who stated that teamwork among stakeholders in the Abu Dhabi education system plays a great role to improve achievement and keep good results. Further, Hughes (2005) stated that ADEC schools are institutions where effective teamwork has proved to prevail because ADEC was keen to eliminate all obstacles that affect vertical and horizontal communication from the highest levels of management to that of students.
Recommendations for Practice

Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) works hard to achieve its vision to have its education "recognized as a world class education system that supports all learners in reaching their full potential to compete in the global market" (ADEC, 2012). Having teams of teachers, who work effectively in the KG schools, is one of those efforts. The following recommendations for practice can help as well.

First, the results of this study need to be shared with administration and teachers. The findings are important for them to know the degree of teamwork effectiveness they achieved, the obstacles that affect their teamwork effectiveness, and the best practices that contribute to enhancing teamwork effectiveness.

Second, principals need to be aware of their role in encouraging teams and providing opportunities for team members to be together for a suitable period of time. This can be achieved through providing them with dedicated time to plan and discuss and time to attend professional development together.

Third, ADEC needs to develop policies and procedures that organize the work among team members, make these policies clear to all teachers, and standardize the work of teams in all KG schools.

Fourth, additional professional development sessions should be presented to improve teachers' communication skills and English language to improve their ability in communicating more dynamically and removing any language barriers.

Fifth, additional professional development sessions should be presented to improve teachers' knowledge about team building, developmental stages of teams, and benefits of team. This will make them more flexible in dealing with the current ADEC changes.
Finally, sharing experiences of the best teamwork practices among principals and teachers is important. This can be done through regular meetings and exchanging visits among schools.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Further research should be conducted using in-depth qualitative methods to consider how school teams are working and to what degree they are performing effectively. The current study can be replicated with a focus on views of students, parents, and partners toward the effectiveness of teamwork at various schools. An experimental study can be conducted to examine which method of teaching English and Arabic separately or together is better for children.
References


APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of team building among national and expatriate teachers at your school?

2. What are the essential factors that contribute to teamwork effectiveness? (in general)

3. Do you see that these factors exist in teams of national and expatriate teachers at your school? Give me an example.

4. Is there any disagreement between the national and expatriate teachers at your school? (or let me say it this way: do you feel that the two groups are receptive of each other?)

5. What measures can be taken to solve problems affecting teamwork at your KG school? How could you make it work more efficiently?

6. In what positive ways has teamwork helped teachers at your school?

7. How did teamwork increased the effectiveness of teachers’ activities?

8. What are the challenges that hinder teamwork effectiveness at your kindergarten? If there were some problems or challenges of teams working together at your school, what would they be? (challenges)
Date: 30th October 2013
Ref:

To: Public Schools Principals,

Subject: Letter of Permission

Dear Principals,

The Abu Dhabi Education Council would like to express its gratitude for your generous efforts & sincere cooperation in serving our dear students. We would like to extend our thanks to you for your continuous support and encouragement.

You are kindly requested to allow the researcher Maitha Khalifa Hamdan Salmeen Al Mansoori, to complete her research on: Investigating Teamwork Effectiveness Among KG Teachers After the Incorporation of Teachers (LT’s) in Al Ain School District

Please indicate your approval of this permission by facilitating her meetings with the sample groups at your respected schools.

For further information: please contact Mr Helmy Seada on 02/6150140

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Mohamed Salem Mohamed Al Othman
Director of the Teaching Next Stage in the Schools Department

Date: 30th October 2013
لوضع معايير موحدة لهذه الفرق كي تتمكن من توحيد النتائج التي من شأنها تحسين تعلم الطلاب والوصول إلى دراسة إجراء المزيد من الدراسة المتعمقة النوعية والتجريبية حول فعالية العمل الجماعي واستراتيجياته في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية والعربية.

و الله ولى التوفيق...
فعالية العمل الجماعي ضمن فرق المعلمين الوافدة والمواطنية في مدارس رياض الأطفال في مدينة العين

(ملخص)

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة فعالية العمل الجماعي ضمن فرق المعلمين الوافدة والمواطنية في مدارس رياض الأطفال في مدينة العين.

استودعت الدراسة بسواحل بحثي رئيسي وثلاثي أسئلة فرعية واستخدمت أسلوب البحث النوعي.

وقد تم جمع البيانات المتعلقة بهذه الدراسة عن طريق مقابلات شبه منظمة وسجّلت البيانات التي تم جمعها على صيغة ملف صوت وطبّقت المقابلات في 5 مدارس وعلى 10 مدرسين، 5 منهم مواطنين و5 وافدين. وتم جمع البيانات وتمييّصها والتآكد من اكتمالها وترميزها وتحليلها باستخدام برنامج الفيفو.

وقد بَينت النتائج إدراك المعلمين لأهمية العمل الجماعي ومزاياه لكل من المعلمين العرب والأجانب. وعلاءوة على ذلك، وضحت النتائج الأثر الإيجابي للعمل الجماعي على الطلاب وخاصة في مجال استجابتهم لغة جديدة. وكشفت النتائج كذلك عن العوامل التي تُسهم في تعزيز فعالية العمل الجماعي والعوائق التي قد تؤثر على هذا العمل.

وقد شارك المعلمين خبراتهم في العمل الجماعي وأوردوا العديد من الأمثلة على ذلك من حياتهم العملية. وتم اقتراح العديد من الأفكار التي تطور من فعالية العمل الجماعي وطرق معالجة العوائق التي قد تحد من فعالية العمل الجماعي. وقد ناظست الدراسة هذه الاقتراحات، وأوصت بتوفير المزيد من فرص التدريب المهني للمعلمين والإداريين في مجال العمل الجماعي، وطرق التواصل، واللغة الإنجليزية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كشفت الدراسة عن الحاجة
جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة
كلية التربية
قسم أصول التربية
برنامج الماجستير في التربية

عنوان الرسالة
فعالية العمل الجماعي ضمن فرق المعلمين الوافدة والمواطنة في مدارس رياض الأطفال في مدينة العين

اسم الطالبة
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رسالة مقدمة من الطالبة

ميثاء خليفة المنصوري

إلى

جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

استكمالاً للمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في التربية

أصول التربية – القيادة التربوية

February 2014

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